

# Student Experience at Harper's Ferry NHP

Written By:

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## The Big Picture

### Learning Goal(s):

- Explain how John Brown's actions at Harper's Ferry impacted an entire nation

### Success Criteria:

- Expert:
  - Explanation uses numerous facts, pieces of evidence, and conclusions to make a global connection between national politics at the time, John Brown's personal beliefs, the history of the institution of slavery, causes of the Civil War, and current events.
- Practitioner:
  - Explanation uses facts and evidence to make connections between at least three of the concepts noted above.
- Apprentice:
  - Explanation uses a few facts and/or pieces of evidence to make connections between two of the concepts noted above. Explanation may lack depth and/or clarity.
- Novice:
  - Explanation attempts to use facts in a logical manner to support an idea about John Brown's influence on history using one of the concepts noted above. Explanation is narrow in scope and lacks depth/clarity.

### Learning Progression:

- Phase 1
  - Discuss the institution of slavery – History, politics, geography,

human experience

- Phase 2
  - A biography of John Brown – Who he was and what he believed
- Phase 3
  - Politics of the time – North vs. South, Slave states vs non-slave states, upcoming election of 1860, secession, etc
- Phase 4
  - Telling the story of John Brown’s raid
- Phase 5
  - How did we go from John Brown’s raid to a Civil War
- Phase 6
  - Discussion of related current events
- Phase 7
  - Synthesis of concepts to develop a facts/evidence based explanation of John Brown’s impact on our nation

## The Task

### **Describe the Task/Experience:**

- Students will take a walking tour of lower town at Harper’s Ferry National Historical Park (bus shuttle to fort) with the focus on John Brown’s fort. Students will engage in three separate mini-lessons with a ranger and experience three separate exploration activities. This experience is planned for 75 minutes. It is expected that teachers will provide students with background knowledge on slavery using the pre-visit materials. It is also strongly encouraged that teachers use the post-visit materials to extend learning to modern-day connections.

## Formative Assessment Checkpoints/Adjustments:

Topic	Checkpoint Method	Possible Adjustment
John Brown biography	Questioning	Expand knowledge of John Brown's unique character <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Religion</li><li>• Abolition</li><li>• Violence</li><li>• Uncompromising</li></ul>
Politics of the Time	Discussion	Clarify Knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Slaveholders vs abolitionists</li><li>• Slave states vs non-slave states</li><li>• Possible election of Abraham Lincoln</li><li>• Secession</li><li>• Civil War</li></ul>
John Brown's Raid	Questioning, Observation, Discussion	Provide insight on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Events</li><li>• Perspective</li><li>• Outcome</li></ul>
From John Brown to Civil War	Written Response	Clarify conclusions drawn on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• John Brown's effect on abolitionists</li><li>• John Brown's effect on slave holders</li><li>• How should John Brown be remembered</li></ul>

## The Learning Plan

### Hook/Engagement Question:

- How will you elicit evidence from this question?
  
- What would be willing to do for something you believed in? How much would you be willing to sacrifice to help another person?
  - Evidence elicited – Sense of perspective and sense of reflectiveness of group.
    - Can they put themselves in that situation
    - Can they actually give concrete examples of things they would be willing to do/sacrifice?

### Breakdown of Activities within the Experience:

- How will you elicit evidence from each activity?
  - What will you do if students are not where you want them to be?
- 1) Hook Question/Discussion – 5 minutes
  - 2) Walk to John Brown's fort pointing out historic buildings – 5 minutes
  - 3) Mini-lesson with questioning outside of fort – 10 minutes
    - a. Who was John Brown and what did he believe about slavery?
    - b. What is happening in the United States around 1859 that has so many people talking about slavery?
  - 4) Student exploration of inside and outside of fort – 10 minutes
    - a. Students are taken to John Brown's fort and asked to spend 5 minutes exploring both the inside and outside of the fort with a learning partner. You tell students to consider what it might have been like for John Brown to be inside the fort and what it might have been like for the soldiers outside the fort.
    - b. As students explore the inside/outside, have a checklist of important artifacts/items that are essential to telling the story of John Brown. Note how many students actually stop and look at/touch the key items
    - c. As students talk with their learning partner, jot down below the checklist interesting/insightful things that students said
  - 5) Mini-Lesson with questioning – 10 minutes
    - a. Which single influence was most important to John Brown's decision to raid the armory?
    - b. Why do you think John Brown chose this building for his raid?
  - 6) Discussion of raid results- 10 minutes
    - a. After walking around John Brown's fort and completing a mini-lesson on John

Brown's raid, you hand each student a one paragraph laminated newspaper article about what happened to John Brown after the raid. You read the article aloud to students to ensure equal access to the information. You tell students that they will talk in groups of 4 and that each person will get exactly 30 seconds to share their thoughts. You then tell them that they will get 2 minutes after everyone has shared to discuss their thinking with each other. You explain that good discussion is supported by evidence and ideas and that if/when we disagree on something it sounds like this (model disagreement tone and language). You then ask the students to discuss whether or not treason is a fair word to use and whether the punishment issued to John Brown is fair. You give students 4 minutes to talk in their groups while keeping track of the 30 second intervals. At the end of 4 minutes you gather the group back together in an inquiry circle and state that you are going to give 5 people each one minute to share their thoughts. You as the facilitator will decide if more students can share at the end of 5 minutes.

7) Discussion of Implications – Questioning and Discussion

a. Facilitated Dialogue

i. Was John Brown right to raid the armory at Harpers Ferry?

ii. How do you think John Brown should be remembered? Why?

8) Wayside Design – Written Response

a. I have handed you each a piece of paper on a clipboard with a template for a new wayside at Harpers Ferry. You and a partner (or you can work by yourself if you want) have the last 15 minutes to begin to draft what should go on the wayside which will be placed in front of John Brown's fort. This wayside is meant to be for students your age. You want to tell the most important stuff but also make it look good. I will be walking around to support you as you work. You will submit your final plan to your teacher back at school.

## Materials/Resources:

- 1) Observation notebook/template
- 2) Laminated primary source document copies – Treason! Newspaper article
- 3) Clipboards
- 4) Wayside templates on copy paper

## Key Vocabulary:

- Sacrifice
- Raid
- Perspective
- Influence
- Abolitionist
- Violence

