Freedom Train: The Story of Harriet Tubman by Dorothy Sterling
Reading Guide

Before you read:
Make a prediction for what this chapter will be about: Little Girl, Little Girl! (1)

Preview the comprehension questions:
1. What is the setting of the beginning of the story? (p. 7)
2. Describe Harriet’s family history. (p. 7)
3. How old is Harriet? What was her daily life like at this age? How is that different from most children at that age? (p. 7-8)
4. Describe the transition for Harriet into becoming a slave. (p. 9-11)
5. Why did Harriet end up in the pig’s pen? (p. 13-15)
6. Harriet asks Ben about the North Star. Why is that significant? How is this foreshadowing? (p. 16)

Read your assigned pages

After you read: Answer the comprehension questions:
1. What is the setting of the beginning of the story? (p. 7)
2. Describe Harriet’s family history. (p. 7)
3. How old is Harriet? What was her daily life like at this age? How is that different from most children at that age? (p. 7-8)
4. Describe the transition for Harriet into becoming a slave. (p. 9-11)
5. Why did Harriet end up in the pig’s pen? (p. 13-15)
6. Harriet asks Ben about the North Star. Why is that significant? How is this foreshadowing? (p. 16)
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Before you read:
Make a prediction for what this chapter will be about: **Peck of Trouble (2)**

Preview the comprehension questions:
1. Draw a picture of the cabin Harriet’s family lived in. (p. 17-18)
2. What was Harriet’s punishment for how she had behaved in the dining room? (p. 22-23)

Read your assigned pages

After you read: Answer the comprehension questions:
1. Draw a picture of the cabin Harriet's family lived in. (p. 17-18)
2. What was Harriet’s punishment for how she had behaved in the dining room? (p. 22-23)
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Before you read:
Make a prediction for what this chapter will be about: School Days (3)

Preview the comprehension questions:
1. On page 25, a woman says, “We work from can to can’t”. What does this mean?
2. How did the slave owners feel about the slaves singing?
3. Why were the songs important to the slaves?
4. Who was Cudjoe and what was his important role for the slaves?
6. List some laws that were made / strengthened after the incident with Nat Turner.
7. Make a prediction – why is it critical that Harriet’s dad taught her how to navigate through the woods?

Read your assigned pages

After you read: Answer the comprehension questions:
1. On page 25, a woman says, “We work from can to can’t”. What does this mean?
2. How did the slave owners feel about the slaves singing?
3. Why were the songs important to the slaves?
4. Who was Cudjoe and what was his important role for the slaves?
6. List some laws that were made / strengthened after the incident with Nat Turner.
7. Make a prediction – why is it critical that Harriet’s dad taught her how to navigate through the woods?
**Before you read:**
Make a prediction for what this chapter will be about: **The Train Whistle Blows (4)**

Preview the comprehension questions:
1. Who was Jim?
2. Explain how the Underground Railroad got its name.
3. How did Harriet help Jim?

**Read your assigned pages**

**After you read:** Answer the comprehension questions:
1. Who was Jim?
2. Explain how the Underground Railroad got its name.
3. How did Harriet help Jim?
Before you read:
Make a prediction for what this chapter will be about: **Not Worth a Sixpence (5)**

Preview the comprehension questions:
1. Explain the healing process for Harriet.
2. Harriet’s owner said he was going to sell her after the incident. How did Harriet avoid that from happening?
3. What does “hire her own time” mean?
4. Who is John Tubman? How is he different from Harriet? Explain their differences in opinion.

Read your assigned pages

After you read: Answer the comprehension questions:
1. Explain the healing process for Harriet.
2. Harriet’s owner said he was going to sell her after the incident. How did Harriet avoid that from happening?
3. What does “hire her own time” mean?
4. Who is John Tubman? How is he different from Harriet? Explain their differences in opinion.
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Before you read:
Make a prediction for what this chapter will be about: Bound for the Promised Land (6)

Preview the comprehension questions:
1. How did the Quaker help Harriet?
2. What happened when they set out for their escape? What decision did Harriet make after this?
3. How did Harriet say her goodbyes?

Read your assigned pages

After you read: Answer the comprehension questions:
1. How did the Quaker help Harriet?
2. What happened when they set out for their escape? What decision did Harriet make after this?
3. How did Harriet say her goodbyes?
Before you read:
Make a prediction for what this chapter will be about: **Following the Star (7)**

Preview the comprehension questions:
1. Nature was Harriet’s map to the north. What was her “compass” when traveling by night? What was her “compass” when traveling by day?
2. Describe Harriet’s journey so far.
3. Why do you think the woman responded to the letter in the way she did?

Read your assigned pages

After you read: Answer the comprehension questions:
1. Nature was Harriet’s map to the north. What was her “compass” when traveling by night? What was her “compass” when traveling by day?
2. Describe Harriet’s journey so far.
3. Why do you think the woman responded to the letter in the way she did?
Before you read:
Make a prediction for what this chapter will be about: **Riding on the Railroad (8)**

Preview the comprehension questions:
1. Why had the woman tell Harriet to sweep the house?
2. Describe Harriet’s next steps in her journey, including the obstacles.
3. Describe Harriet’s emotions at the end of the chapter.

Read your assigned pages

After you read: Answer the comprehension questions:
1. Why had the woman tell Harriet to sweep the house?
2. Describe Harriet’s next steps in her journey, including the obstacles.
3. Describe Harriet’s emotions at the end of the chapter.
Before you read:
Make a prediction for what this chapter will be about: In a Strange Land (9)

Preview the comprehension questions:
1. How was becoming free different than Harriet had pictured?
2. What was Harriet’s first job as a free person? In what city?
3. What did she buy for Christmas with her earnings?
4. Who was Harriet’s first friend of the north?
5. What did they discuss, leading to Harriet’s ultimate decision?

Read your assigned pages

After you read: Answer the comprehension questions:
1. How was becoming free different than Harriet had pictured?
2. What was Harriet’s first job as a free person? In what city?
3. What did she buy for Christmas with her earnings?
4. Who was Harriet’s first friend of the north?
5. What did they discuss, leading to Harriet’s ultimate decision?
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Before you read:
Make a prediction for what this chapter will be about: “Why Not Every Man?” (10)

Preview the comprehension questions:
1. How did Harriet’s sister’s family escape to the north?
2. What happened during her brother James’ escape?
3. How did Harriet reach out to her brother William Henry?
4. Describe the Christmas escape.

Read your assigned pages

After you read: Answer the comprehension questions:
1. How did Harriet’s sister’s family escape to the north?
2. What happened during her brother James’ escape?
3. How did Harriet reach out to her brother William Henry?
4. Describe the Christmas escape.
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Before you read:
Make a prediction for what this chapter will be about: Ship of Zion (11)

Preview the comprehension questions:
1. What was the significance of the letter talking about the “old ships of zion” coming?
2. Why was it important that Harriet's dad, Ben, wore a blindfold when she came back for her brothers?

Read your assigned pages

After you read: Answer the comprehension questions:
1. What was the significance of the letter talking about the “old ships of zion” coming?
2. Why was it important that Harriet’s dad, Ben, wore a blindfold when she came back for her brothers?
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Before you read:
Make a prediction for what this chapter will be about: The Old Folks (12)

Preview the comprehension questions:
1. Why was Harriet’s dad put in jail?
2. How did Harriet’s mother able to inform her husband that Harriet was coming to get him out?
3. Why couldn’t Harriet go with her parents on the train?
4. How did Harriet disguise herself to allow her to drive the carriage by day?

Read your assigned pages

After you read: Answer the comprehension questions:
1. Why was Harriet’s dad put in jail?
2. How did Harriet’s mother able to inform her husband that Harriet was coming to get him out?
3. Why couldn’t Harriet go with her parents on the train?
4. How did Harriet disguise herself to allow her to drive the carriage by day?
Before you read:
Make a prediction for what this chapter will be about: The Lion’s Paw (13)

Preview the comprehension questions:
1. The Fugitive Slave Law was passed in 1850. How did this impact Harriet and the escaped slaves?
2. What does Harriet mean when she says, “I couldn’t trust Uncle Sam with my people any longer”?

Read your assigned pages

After you read: Answer the comprehension questions:
1. The Fugitive Slave Law was passed in 1850. How did this impact Harriet and the escaped slaves?
2. What does Harriet mean when she says, “I couldn’t trust Uncle Sam with my people any longer”?
Before you read:
Make a prediction for what this chapter will be about: Moses (14)

Preview the comprehension questions:
1. What was Harriet’s nickname? Why?
2. What did Harriet use for signals to others?
3. Harriet’s last trip was in December 1860. How many trips had she made?

Read your assigned pages

After you read: Answer the comprehension questions:
1. What was Harriet’s nickname? Why?
2. What did Harriet use for signals to others?
3. Harriet’s last trip was in December 1860. How many trips had she made?
Before you read:
Make a prediction for what this chapter will be about: “The Most of a Man” (15)

Preview the comprehension questions:
1. While the north and south debated the issue of slavery, Harriet spoke up for her people. Contrast how the slaveowners/south reacted compared to the Abolitionists/north reacted.
2. Explain what happened with Charles Nalle.
3. Describe the actions of John Brown.

Read your assigned pages

After you read: Answer the comprehension questions:
1. While the north and south debated the issue of slavery, Harriet spoke up for her people. Contrast how the slaveowners/south reacted compared to the Abolitionists/north reacted.
2. Explain what happened with Charles Nalle.
3. Describe the actions of John Brown.
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Before you read:
Make a prediction for what this chapter will be about: Department of the South (16)

Preview the comprehension questions:
1. Harriet joins the army. What is her special role in Beaufort?
2. Who are the “contrabands”?

Read your assigned pages

After you read: Answer the comprehension questions:
1. Harriet joins the army. What is her special role in Beaufort?
2. Who are the “contrabands”? 
Before you read:
Make a prediction for what this chapter will be about: “Our Time is Coming” (17)

Preview the comprehension questions:
  1. How did Harriet win the trust of the people of Beaufort?
  2. How did conditions in Beaufort change during this time?
  3. What significant act did President Lincoln announce on January 1, 1863?

Read your assigned pages

After you read: Answer the comprehension questions:
  1. How did Harriet win the trust of the people of Beaufort?
  2. How did conditions in Beaufort change during this time?
  3. What significant act did President Lincoln announce on January 1, 1863?
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Before you read:
Make a prediction for what this chapter will be about: Mr. Lincoln's Army (18)

Preview the comprehension questions:
1. What significant role did Harriet have in the war?

Read your assigned pages

After you read: Answer the comprehension questions:
1. What significant role did Harriet have in the war?
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**Before you read:**
Make a prediction for what this chapter will be about: **Victory (19)**

Preview the comprehension questions:
1. What was unfair for black soldiers fighting in the war?
2. What happened to Harriet on the train ride home after the war ended? How do you think she felt? Explain.

**Read your assigned pages**

**After you read:** Answer the comprehension questions:
1. What was unfair for black soldiers fighting in the war?
2. What happened to Harriet on the train ride home after the war ended? How do you think she felt? Explain.
Before you read:
Make a prediction for what this chapter will be about: The Years of Peace (20)

Preview the comprehension questions:
1. How was the unfair treatment of the government during the war finally made right for Harriet?
2. What great honor did Harriet receive in the mail?

Read your assigned pages

After you read: Answer the comprehension questions:
1. How was the unfair treatment of the government during the war finally made right for Harriet?
2. What great honor did Harriet receive in the mail?