

***Minty, A Story of Young Harriet Tubman*** by Alan Schroeder and Jerry Pinkney (Puffin Books, New York, 1996) ISBN0-14-056196X

**Literature Annotation:** Although this book is a fictional account of Harriet Tubman’s childhood, the basic facts are true. She was a slave on the Brodas plantation on Maryland’s Eastern Shore in the 1820s and was considered a “problem” slave by her master. Her dream of freedom was the only thing that made life bearable for her.

**Note:** Teachers should be careful about using the “Author’s Note” as recent scholarship has discovered that the number of trips that Tubman took and the number of people that she helped to freedom are not as high as previously thought. For more current information on Tubman, see *Bound for the Promised Land* by Kate Larson.

**Grade Level:** 4

**Duration:** 2 class periods

### **Maryland State Curriculum**

**Economics Standard:** Students will develop economic reasoning to understand the historical development and current status of economic principles, institutions, and processes needed to be effective citizens, consumers, and workers participating in local communities, the nation, and the world.

4.A.1.a Identify the costs, including opportunity cost, and the benefits of economic decisions made by individuals, businesses and governments

**History Standard:** Students will examine significant ideas, beliefs and themes; organize patterns and events; and analyze how individuals and societies have changed over time in Maryland, the United States and around the world.

5.C.4 Analyze how the institution of slavery impacted individuals and groups in Maryland

**Reading Standard:** Students will use a variety of strategies to understand what they read (construct meaning).

1.E.4 Use strategies to demonstrate understanding of the text (after reading) (Grade 4)

3.A.1.a Listen to critically, read, and discuss a variety of literary texts representing diverse cultures, perspectives, and ethnicities and time periods (Grade 4)

**Objectives:** Students will be able to...

- describe the life of Harriet Tubman.
- define opportunity cost.
- identify the opportunity cost of each of several choices made by Harriet Tubman.

### **Vocabulary**

**opportunity cost:** the foregone benefit of the next best alternative when an economic decision is made

**Additional Vocabulary:** abolitionist, conductor, overseer, Underground Railroad, conductor, fugitive, humanitarian, suffrage, contraband

### **Teacher Materials**

A copy of the book: *Minty, A Story of Young Harriet Tubman*  
Teacher Resource Sheet #1: *Harriet Tubman Stamp*  
Teacher Resource Sheet #2: *Opportunity Cost*  
Teacher Resource Sheet #3: *Harriet Tubman's Choice: Group Summary*

### **Student Materials**

Student Resource Sheet #1: *Harriet Tubman's Choices*  
Student Resource Sheet #2: *Biography of Harriet Tubman, Part One: Escape to Freedom*  
Student Resource Sheet #3: *Biography of Harriet Tubman, Part Two: Underground Railroad Activities*  
Student Resource Sheet #4: *Biography of Harriet Tubman, Part Three: The Civil War*  
Student Resource Sheet #5: *Biography of Harriet Tubman, Part Four: Other Reform Activities*  
Student Resource Sheet #6: *Harriet Tubman's Choice: Group Summary*

### **Additional Teacher Resources**

Humez, J. *Harriet Tubman: The Life and the Life Stories*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003.

Larson, Kate. *Bound For the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2003.

<http://harriettubmanbiography.com/index.html>

Kate Larson's website on Harriet Tubman

### **Additional Student Resources**

Koestler-Grack, Rachel. *The Story of Harriet Tubman*. Philadelphia: Chelsea Clubhouse, 2004.

### **Motivation**

Display Teacher Resource Sheet #1: *Harriet Tubman Postage Stamp*. Explain to students that Harriet Tubman was the first African American woman to be honored with a U.S. Postage Stamp. Ask them to brainstorm reasons that Tubman was honored in this way. Discuss student responses.

### **Development**

1. Tell students that Harriet Tubman had many choices to make in her life. Distribute Student Resource Sheet #1: *Harriet Tubman's Choices*. As you conduct a Read-Aloud of *Minty: A Story of Young Harriet Tubman*, have students complete the "Choices" box for the topic "Early Childhood (Minty)". After reading the story, ask students to identify the choices Tubman made.
2. Tell students that for each choice Minty made, she had an opportunity cost. Display Teacher Resource Sheet #2: *Opportunity Cost*. Discuss.
3. Display Teacher Resource Sheet #3: *Harriet Tubman's Choice: Group Summary*. Have them look at the picture of Minty and recall the choice that she made and the opportunity cost of that choice. Work with students to identify additional decisions and opportunity costs discussed in the book.

4. Tell students that they will be learning more about the life of Harriet Tubman and the choices that she made and the opportunity cost of each of those choices. Break students into four groups. Assign each group a different part of the biography of Harriet Tubman. Distribute a copy of Student Resource Sheet #6: *Harriet Tubman's Choice: Group Summary* and the appropriate part of the Biography of Harriet Tubman (Student Resource Sheets #2-5) to each group. Groups should read their assigned biography, identify at least one choice that Harriet Tubman made and the opportunity cost of that choice. After doing this, they should create an illustration that shows the choice they identified.
5. After all groups have completed Student Resource Sheet #6, they should report out to the class. As each group presents, students should fill in the appropriate sections of Student Resource Sheet #1: *Harriet Tubman's Choices*.

### **Assessment**

Have students respond to the following prompt.

Your teacher has asked your class to prepare a presentation for the third grade students in your school about Harriet Tubman and the economic concept of opportunity cost. You have been assigned the task of creating a poster for the presentation. As you create your poster, remember that you must include the following:

- A definition of the term “opportunity cost”
- A short description of Harriet Tubman
- An example of a choice that Tubman made and the opportunity cost of that decision

### **Closure**

Have student volunteers present their posters to the class. After students have presented, lead a class discussion on the choices that they may have personally made and the opportunity cost of those decisions.

Teacher Resource Sheet #1

***Harriet Tubman Stamp***



# ***Opportunity Cost***

The next best alternative; the one that is given up when a choice is made. (Second best choice)

Teacher Resource Sheet #3  
***Harriet Tubman's Choice: Group Summary***

**Year/Time Period:**

***1830's***

**Alternatives:**

***Take the buckskin horse  
and escape to freedom  
or remain in slavery***

**Decision:**

***Remain in slavery***

**Opportunity Cost:**

***Freedom***



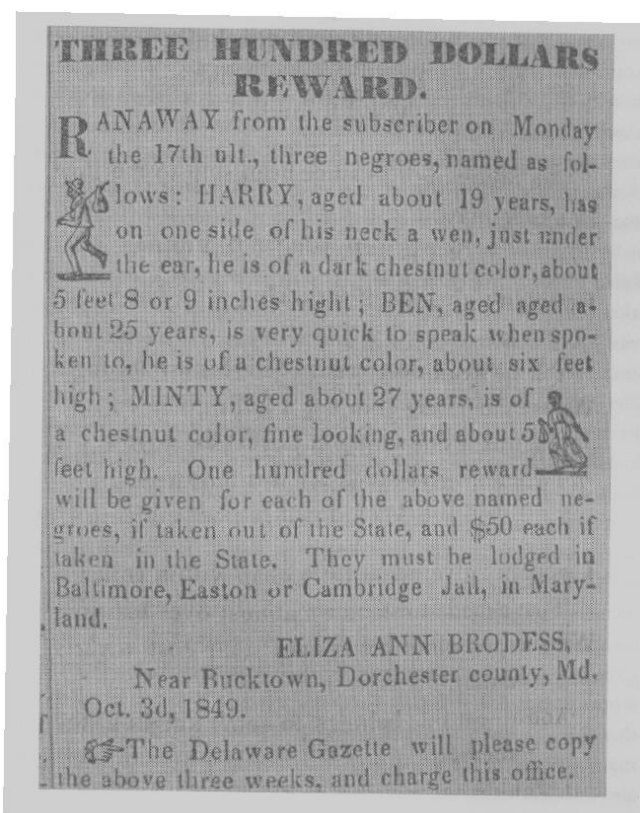
Student Resource Sheet #1

**Harriet Tubman's Choices**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Time Period</b>	<b>Alternatives</b>	<b>Choice</b>	<b>Opportunity Cost</b>
<b>Early Childhood (Minty)</b>	Circa 1830's	Take the buckskin mare and run away to freedom or Remain in slavery	Remain in slavery	Freedom from enslavement
<b>Biography Part One: Escape to Freedom</b>				
<b>Biography Part Two: Underground Railroad Activities</b>				
<b>Biography Part Three: Civil War</b>				
<b>Biography Part Four: Other Reform Activities</b>				

## **Biography of Harriet Tubman Part One: Escape to Freedom**

Araminta Ross, who came to be known as Harriet Tubman, was born into slavery in 1822, in Dorchester County, Maryland. As a child she was called “Minty,” and she was often hired away by her master to other plantation owners who were cruel and who forced her to live under very harsh conditions. When Harriet was a young teen, she refused to help an overseer trying to discipline an enslaved person, and was seriously injured when she was hit in the head by a heavy object thrown by the overseer. The severe injury left her suffering from headaches, seizures, and sleeping spells that affected her for the rest of her life. At the age of 22, Harriet married John Tubman, a free African American.



Eliza Brodas' runaway advertisement for Minty and her brothers, 1849.

In 1849, afraid that they would be sold South, she and her brothers ran away.

Her brothers, more afraid of the consequences of being caught than a life in slavery, decided to turn back. They dragged Harriet back with them.

Not long after that attempt, Harriet decided to runaway again, this time by herself. Receiving help from many black and white abolitionists, she settled in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where she met William Still, Philadelphia's most famous African American “Stationmaster” on the Underground Railroad. With help from Still and other members of the Philadelphia Anti-Slavery Society, she learned about the workings of the Underground Railroad. This Underground Railroad network had been operating very successfully for decades, and its members included both African American and white agents throughout Maryland,

Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York.

**Biography of Harriet Tubman**  
**Part Two: Underground Railroad Activities**



Immediately after escaping slavery, Harriet became involved in the Underground Railroad movement and began helping other enslaved peoples to freedom. In 1859, she bought a home on the outskirts of Auburn, New York and settled her aged parents and other family members there. To finance her activities as a conductor on the Underground Railroad, she worked as a cook and domestic worker in private homes and hotels in Philadelphia. She returned to Maryland approximately thirteen times to rescue sixty to seventy friends and members of her family. She also passed along valuable information to many more family and friends on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, so they could use the Underground Railroad to find their way to freedom on their own. Historians believe that Tubman either rescued personally or provided information to approximately 120-140 people.

**Source #1**

**Harriet: The Moses of Her People (1886)**  
**Sarah Bradford**

“In 1857 she made her most venturesome journey, for she brought with her to the North her old parents, who were no longer able to walk such distances as she must go by night. Consequently she must hire a wagon for them, and it required all her ingenuity to get them through Maryland and Delaware safe. She accomplished it, however, and by the aid of her friends she brought them safe to Canada, where they spent the winter...”

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/harriet/harriet.html>

**Source #2**

**Thomas Garrett**  
**Underground Railroad Station Operator, Wilmington, DE**

She brought away her aged parents in a singular manner. They started with an old horse, fitted out in primitive style with a straw collar, a pair of old chaise wheels, with a board on the axle to sit on, another board swung with ropes, fastened to the axle, to rest

their feet on. She got her parents on this rude vehicle to the railroad, put them in the cars, turned Jehu herself, and drove to town a style that no human being ever did before or since.

Sterling, D. (ed). We Are Your Sisters: Black Women in the Nineteenth Century. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1984.

### **Source #3**

**Martha Wright**

**Letter to Ellen Wright**

**Auburn, NY, December 30, 1860**

...We have been extending our sympathies, as well as congratulations, on seven newly arrived slaves that Harriet Tubman has just pioneered safely from the Southern Part of Maryland. One woman carried a baby all the way and brought two other children that Harriet and the men helped along. They brought a piece of old comfort and a blanket, in a basket with a little kindling, a little bread for the baby with some laudanum to keep it from crying during the day. They walked all night carrying the little ones, and spread the old comfort on the frozen ground, in some dense thicket where they all hid, while Harriet went out foraging, and sometimes did not get back until dark, fearing she would be followed. Then, if they crept further in, and she couldn't find them, she would whistle, or sing certain hymns and they would answer.

Lerner, G. (ed). Black Women in White America: A Documentary History. New York: Vintage Books, 1973.

**Biography of Harriet Tubman**  
**Part Three: The Civil War**

After the outbreak of the Civil War, Harriet served as a soldier, spy, and nurse for the Union army in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. In early 1862, Tubman joined Northern abolitionists in support of Union activities at Port Royal, South Carolina. Throughout the Civil War she provided badly needed nursing care to black soldiers and hundreds of newly liberated slaves who crowded Union camps.

Tubman's military service expanded to include spying and scouting behind Confederate lines. In early June 1863, she became the first woman to command an armed military raid when she guided Col. James Montgomery and his 2nd South Carolina black regiment up the Combahee River, routing out Confederate outposts, destroying stockpiles of cotton, food and weapons, and liberating over 700 slaves.



**Source #1**

**Harriet: The Moses of Her People (1886)**

**Sarah Bradford**

[S]peaking of the valuable assistance Harriet was rendering our soldiers in the hospital, and our armies in the field. At this time her manner of life, as related by herself, was this:

"Well, Missus, I'd go to de hospital, I would, early eb'ry mornin'. I'd get a big chunk of ice, I would, and put it in a basin, and fill it with water; den I'd take a sponge and begin. Fust man I'd come to, I'd thrash away de flies, an' dey'd rise, dey would, like bees roun' a hive. Den I'd begin to bathe der wounds, an' by de time I'd bathed off three or four, de fire and heat would have melted de ice and made de water warm, an' it would be as red as clar blood. Den I'd go an' git more ice, I would, an' by de time I got to de nex' ones, de flies would be roun' de fust ones, black an' thick as eber." In this way she worked, day after day, till late at night; then she went home to her little cabin, and made about fifty pies, a great quantity of ginger-bread, and two casks of root beer. These she would hire some contraband to sell for her through the camps, and thus she would provide her support for another day... At one time she was called away from Hilton Head, by one of our officers, to come to Fernandina, where the men were "dying off like sheep," from dysentery. Harriet had acquired quite a reputation for her skill in curing this disease, by a medicine which she prepared from roots which grew near the waters which gave the disease. Here she found thousands of sick soldiers and contrabands, and immediately

gave up her time and attention to them. At another time, we find her nursing those who were down by hundreds with small-pox and malignant fevers. She had never had these diseases, but she seems to have no more fear of death in one form than another. "De Lord would take keer of her till her time came, an' den she was ready to go."

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/bradford/bradford.html>

## **Source #2**

### **George Garrison (1864)**

I went with Mr. and Mrs. Severance, Miss Iveson, Miss Lee and Col. Hartwell to see Harriet Tubman... We had a very interesting conversation with her. She is just now cooking and washing clothes at Gen. Terry's quarters, who is now in command of Morris and Folly Islands. She wants to go North, but says Gen. Gilmore will not let her go...he thinks her services are too valuable to lose. She has made it her business to see all contrabands escaping from the rebels, and is able to get more intelligence from them than anybody else.

Humez, J. Harriet Tubman: The Life and the Life Stories. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003.

## **Source #3**

### **Harriet: The Moses of Her People (1886)**

#### **Sarah Bradford**

When our armies and gun-boats first appeared in any part of the South, many of the poor negroes were as much afraid of "de Yankee Buckra" as of their own masters. It was almost impossible to win their confidence, or to get information from them. But to Harriet they would tell anything; and so it became quite important that she should accompany expeditions going up the rivers, or into unexplored parts of the country, to control and get information from those whom they took with them as Gen. Hunter asked her at one time if she would go with several gunboats up the Combahee River, the object of the expedition being to take up the torpedoes placed by the rebels in the river, to destroy railroads and bridges, and to cut off supplies from the rebel troops... Harriet, with several men under her...accompanied the expedition...

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/bradford/bradford.html>

## **Source #4**

### **Harriet Tubman**

In our late expedition up the Combahee River, in coming on board the boat, I was carrying two pigs for a poor sick woman, who had a childe to carry, and the order "double quick" was given, and I decided to run, stepped on my dress, it being rather long, and fell and tore it almost all off, so that when I got on board the boat, there was hardly anything left of it but shreds. I made up my mind then I would never wear a long dress on another expedition of the kind, but would have a bloomer as soon as I could

get it... You have, without doubt, seen a full account of the expedition I refer to. Don't you think we colored people are entitled to some credit for that exploit, under the lead of the brave Colonel Montgomery? We weakened the rebels somewhat on the Combahee River, by taking and bringing away seven hundred and fifty-six of their most valuable [slaves] and this, too, without the loss of a single life on our part...

Humez, J. Harriet Tubman: The Life and the Life Stories. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003.

### **Source #5**

#### **Harriet: The Moses of Her People (1886)**

#### **Sarah Bradford**

This fearless woman was often sent into the rebel lines as a spy, and brought back valuable information as to the position of armies and batteries; she has been in battle when the shot was falling like hail, and the bodies of dead and wounded men were dropping around her like leaves in autumn; but the thought of fear never seems to have had place for a moment in her mind. She had her duty to perform, and she expected to be taken care of till it was done.

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/bradford/bradford.html>

**Biography of Harriet Tubman**  
**Part Four: Other Reform Activities**

After the war, Tubman returned to Auburn, New York. Tubman helped settle her parents and other family and friends in the community. In Auburn, she began another career as a community activist, humanitarian, and suffragist. Her humanitarian work triumphed with the opening of the Harriet Tubman Home for the Aged, located on land abutting her own property in Auburn, which she successfully purchased by mortgage and then transferred to the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in 1903. Active in the suffrage movement since 1860, Tubman continued to appear at local and national suffrage conventions until the early 1900s.



*Harriet Tubman with family and friends, standing by the side of her barn in Auburn, New York, circa 1887.*

Harriet Tubman died in 1913 and was buried with military honors in Fort Hill Cemetery in Auburn. She has received many posthumous honors, including the naming of the World War II Liberty Ship Harriet Tubman.

**Source #1**  
**“The Suffragists”**  
***Auburn Morning Dispatch***  
**March 15, 1888**

The Non-Partisan society for political education for women held their regular meeting...yesterday afternoon...

At this point Harriet Tubman the noted woman, scout and soldier of the late rebellion, called and was introduced by the president to the society...

The lessons learned in the late war by her, as scout, soldier, nurse, and protector of her people, recited in her graphic and quaint way, added much to the interest of her story; her experience was indeed thrilling...Her recital of the brave and fearless deeds of women who sacrificed all for their country and moved in battle when bullets mowed down men, file after file, and rank after rank, was graphic. Loving women were on the scent to administer to the injured, to bind up their wounds and tend them through weary

months of suffering in the army hospitals. If those deeds do not place woman as man's equal what do? The speaker said that her prayers carried her through and they would eventually place women at the ballot box with man, as his equal.

Humez, J. Harriet Tubman: The Life and the Life Stories. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003.

**Source #2**  
**“Plans for Tubman Home”**  
***Auburn Daily Advertiser***  
**February 9, 1907**

For a number of years Harriet Tubman and her friends have been waiting for a home and school for colored people to materialize but no effectual effort has been undertaken, heretofore... Special effort is now to be given to the opening and maintaining of a school for the purpose of training and fitting colored girls for domestic service in this state.

It is well known that the field of operation for the colored girl is to be in the family and here is an almost unlimited opportunity. The demand today for competent domestic help is widespread. The object of the domestic science school is to train and fit colored girls as to be able to do everything belonging to household service. They are to be fitted in every way to make them reliable and know their duty and responsibilities... The plot of land given by Mrs. Harriet Tubman and the building thereon are to be used for this purpose.

Humez, J. Harriet Tubman: The Life and the Life Stories. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003.

**Source #3**  
**“Tubman Home Open”**  
***Auburn Citizen***  
**June 24, 1908**

With the stars and stripes wound about her shoulders, a band playing national airs and a concourse of members of her race gathered about her to pay tribute to her lifetime struggle in behalf of the colored people of America, aged Harriet Tubman Davis, the Moses of her race, yesterday experienced one of the happiest moments of her life, a period to which she has looked forward for a score or more of years, the dedication of a home for aged and friendless colored people. The delays in the consummation of her effort have been many and tedious, but the Harriet Tubman Home is today and accomplished fact, and her 95 years have at last been crowned with success...

Humez, J. Harriet Tubman: The Life and the Life Stories. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003.

***Harriet Tubman's Choice: Group Summary***

**Year/Time Period:**

**Alternatives:**

**Decision:**

**Opportunity Cost:**

**Illustration:**