RECLAIMING
JOHN BROWN
AMERICA’S 1st WHITE ALLY FOR BLACKS & TRAITOR TO WHITE SUPREMACY

Kevin Dua (he/him)
Practicum Supervisor
Donovan Urban Teaching Scholars Program M.Ed. ’12
Lynch School of Education & Human Development at Boston College

Digital Commonwealth
Massachusetts Collections Online
“Governor Baker Signs Bill to Promote Civic Education for Students”
(2018)

MA public high schools & school districts serving 8th grade students will provide at least 1 student-led, non-partisan civics project for each student

• “Civics education is about both learning & doing, & effective civic engagement is not simply about advocacy or action, it’s about listening, questioning, respectful dialogue, & compromise.” (Edu. Sec. Peyser)

• “Comprehensive civics education will equip our students with the tools they need to become the informed, active citizens our forefathers imagined when they created our systems of government.” (Sen. Pres. Spilka)
GEORGE WASHINGTON
THOMAS JEFFERSON
JAMES MADISON
JAMES MONROE
ANDREW JACKSON
MARTIN VAN BUREN
WILLIAM HARRISON
JOHN TYLER
JAMES K. POLK
ULYSSES S. GRANT
JEFFERSON DAVIS
ROBERT E. LEE
LEADERS.
PATRIOTS.
STANDARD.
PRESIDENTS.
WAR HEROES.
AMERICANS.
COMPLICATED.
PRODUCT OF THEIR TIME.
JOHN BROWN
MADMAN. TERRORIST. LUNATIC. MARTYR. PATRIOT? AN ABOLITIONIST?
“He done more in dying, than 100 men would in living.”
Harriet Tubman (2x)

“The true question is: did John Brown draw his sword against slavery & thereby lose his life in vain? And to this I answer 10,000x, No! No man fails, or can fail, who so grandly gives himself & all he has to a righteous cause.”
Frederick Douglass (6x)
Topic 1. Early colonization and growth of colonies [5.T1]
Supporting Question: To what extent was North America a land of opportunity, and for whom?
1. Explain the early relationships of English settlers to Native Peoples in the 1600s and 1700s, including the impact of diseases introduced by Europeans in severely reducing Native populations, the differing views on land ownership or use, property rights, and the conflicts between the two groups (e.g., the Pequot and King Philip’s Wars in New England).
2. Compare the different reasons colonies were established and research one of the founders of a colony (e.g., Lord Baltimore in Maryland, William Penn in Pennsylvania, John Smith in Virginia, Roger Williams in Rhode Island, John Winthrop in Massachusetts).
3. Analyze the reasons why English colonists had the strongest influence on the language, political institutions, and political principles of the country that became the United States of America, even though other major European nations also explored North America (e.g., the relatively small number of colonists from other nations, England’s history of self-governance, high rates of literacy, and strong economic, and military position in the world).
4. On a map of the United States, locate the first 13 colonies and describe the impact of regional differences in climate on the types of crops that could be grown or harvested profitably in the Northern, mid-Atlantic, and Southern colonies; describe varied sources of labor (e.g., self-employed colonists, apprentices, employees, indentured servants, free and enslaved Africans).
5. Describe the origins of slavery, its legal status in all the colonies through the 18th century, and the prevalence of slave ownership, including by many of the country’s early leaders (e.g., George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, George Mason).
6. Describe the triangular trade and the harsh conditions of trans-Atlantic voyages (called the Middle Passage) for enslaved Africans.

Topic 5. The Civil War and Reconstruction: causes and consequences [USL.T5]
Supporting Question: How did sectional differences over slavery in the North, South, Midwest, and West contribute to the Civil War?
1. Describe how the expansion of the United States to the Midwest contributed to the growing importance of sectional politics in the early 19th century and significantly influenced the balance of power in the federal government.
2. Analyze critical policies and events leading to the Civil War and connections among them (e.g., 1820: the Missouri Compromise; 1831–2: the South Carolina Nullification Crisis 1840s: the Wilmot Proviso; the Mexican-American War; 1850: the Compromise of 1850; the Kansas-Nebraska Act; the Supreme Court decision in Dred Scott v. Sandford; the Lincoln-Douglas debates; John Brown’s raid on Harper’s Ferry, the election of Abraham Lincoln).
“What can we (students, teachers, schools) learn from John Brown’s sacrifice for Black liberation today?”

Using Digital Commonwealth primary source set & archive, students & their teacher will: create a ‘civics project’ on how schools can integrate standards on how to be an informed active citizen to help everyone via summarizing on John Brown’s life; comparing & contrasting how he is presented in local/state curricula with other White enslavers & anti-abolitionists; & drawing an action plan to enact their project.
“JOHN BROWN” - 4,265 pages

SOURCE: Digital Commonwealth Massachusetts Collection Online
John Brown, born on the threshold of the 19th century, was a man of deep faith. His religious feeling was not carried as an ornament or a disguise, but as something which was part of his life and which he sought to realize by his deeds. His faith was based on the Old Testament, the Hebrew Scriptures and on belief in a personal ruling God of Justice.

He was a poor man who worked in the soil with his hands, and knew the great outdoors and the peculiarities of land. He was a man of family, with wife and many children. Yet he was never limited by his work or his poverty or his family life, from conceiving himself as an instrument to "make straight the way of the Lord!"

His attention was early called to the anomaly of Negro slavery and in particular to the Free Soil controversy in Kansas. He took himself and his growing sons into the battle to make the West free of slavery. He fought there with his own hands and in blood, to accomplish this; and then turning from Kansas, he conceived that he must fight not simply on the periphery of slavery but must attack the slave system itself.

For this John Brown needed help and money. For help he turned to the Abolitionists and to the Negroes; to the Negroes in Canada and New England; to the Abolitionists everywhere. He found support and opposition, bravery and cowardice; but he went forward to his great plan.

That plan has been often misconceived. Most people and most books even to this day, think that John Brown planned an insurrection of slaves and planned it not in the midst of slave territory, but on the outskirts where there were comparatively few slaves and where the system itself was decadent. This was not true. John Brown's plan was a masterpiece. It was based upon the great Appalachian range of mountains, stretching from Alabama to the Great Lakes.
RECLAIMING JOHN BROWN

AMERICA'S 1ST WHITE ALLY FOR BLACKS & TRAITOR TO WHITE SUPREMACY