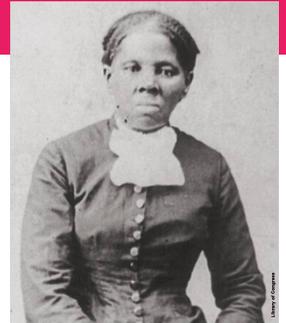


Harriet Tubman:

Conductor on the Underground Railroad

Biography by Ann Petry



Close Reading: Driving Question

- As you read, look for clues about the kind of person Harriet Tubman was. What qualities led others to trust her as a leader? Write down examples of direct or indirect characterization of Tubman.

Close Reading: Annotations while reading

- Annotate for structure: take note of repeated grammatical constructions (lists with all verbs or all nouns), write down repeated words, write the effect of individual sentences that are powerful.
- Annotate for biography: make notes when you see a subject's thoughts, feelings, or qualities, note actions that provide clues about the subject's qualities, and write your own thoughts or reactions about the subject.

Notes Today

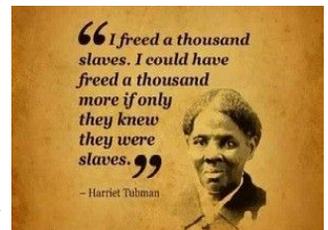
Words in BLUE are notes for you! Remember, you should put the notes in YOUR OWN WORDS, not write word for word what I've written.

Analyze Text: Biography

- A **biography** is a true account of a person's life that is told by someone other than the subject.
- This text is an excerpt, or a small chunk, from a biography begins with information about how the subject-Harriet Tubman- is viewed by others.
- Re-read lines 1-6. What is revealed about the subject?
 - Tubman is known as "Moses" and is a figure of mystery to the masters of slaves in Maryland.
- How does the structure of the paragraph show the masters' illogical reaction to Moses?
 - The first sentences say that the masters did not believe Moses existed, but later sentences indicate that they watched for him and offered rewards for his capture.

Analyze Text: Biography

- How does the structure of the paragraph show the masters' illogical reaction to Moses?
 - The first sentences say that the masters did not believe Moses existed, but later sentences indicate that they watched for him and offered rewards for his capture.
- How is this ironic?
 - This is ironic because the masters didn't initially believe in "Moses," but eventually, they went to look for "him."
- What type of irony?
 - Dramatic irony: We know that "Moses" is Tubman and not a man, but the supposedly all knowing masters were



Analyze Text: Biography

- Authors use **characterization** to reveal what a person is like.
- Characterization can be shown through traits or descriptions and actions of the person or through how the person is seen by others.
- The author's characterization of Tubman shifts from the viewpoint of the masters to the viewpoint of Tubman herself.
- Her **actions** reveal her qualities.

Analyze Text: Biography

- Re-read lines 33-46. In your notes, summarize Tubman's actions in "running off slaves."
- What do those actions reveal or show about her character?
 - She announces her arrival by singing the spiritual "Go down, Moses" near the slaves' quarter.
 - She spends days planning the trip and selecting the slaves.
 - She waits for a clear Saturday night and then calls like a whippoorwill or a hoot owl to signal time for departure.
 - The actions show how careful, organized, and brave Tubman really is.

Analyze Structure

- The **author's craft** refers to the methods authors use to make their writing lively and vivid.
- Re-read the paragraph beginning with line 42, which describes Tubman's voice.
- What is the effect of the author's choice to describe her voice in this vivid way?
 - By comparing Tubman's voice to a murmur borne on the wind," the author is suggesting a secrecy and also helping readers hear a gentle, soft, low song.

Analyze Text: Biography

- **Characterization** in a **biography** includes information about the subject's thoughts and feelings.
- Re-read lines 71-78 to tell how Tubman seems to deal with feelings of fear.
 - She knows that the group is being pursued and is "half-afraid" of being caught, knowing that she will be hanged. But she doesn't let these fears control her and keeps going.
- How does the author compare Tubman's possible fate to that of the runaways?
 - While the runaways will be whipped and sold South, Tubman will be hanged.

Analyze Structure

- An author may use sentence fragments, or incomplete sentences, for their effects.
- A fragment may suggest a powerful idea or a short burst of thought.
- Re-read the text that begins on line 74 to identify the sentence fragments.
- What effect do these fragments have on the reader?
 - “Eleven of them. Eleven thousand dollars’ worth of flesh and bone and muscle that belonged to Maryland planters.” The fragments have an emotional impact because they emphasize that eleven human beings are not individuals, just “flesh and bone and muscle,” property worth one thousand dollars each.

Analyze Structure

- A **parallelism** is when a sentence has equal grammatical structures, often seen in a list.
- If a list starts out listing nouns, it has to continue listing nouns.
- If a list starts listing verbs, it must continue listing verbs.
- Example with nouns: Julie bought **flowers**, **trees**, and **chairs** for her new patio.
 - Flowers, trees, and chairs are all nouns, so this sentence has parallel structure or a parallelism.
- Example with verbs: Julie **bought** flowers, **left** the store, and **went** home.
 - Bought, left, and went are all verbs, and they are all in the same tense, past tense.

Practice Parallelisms

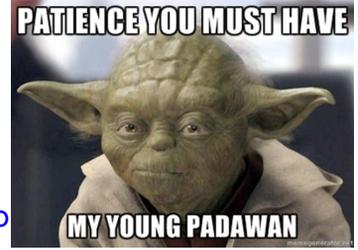
- Look at lines 104-108. Read the sentence to yourself and then listen as I read it aloud. Listen for the effects of repetition.
 - “Somehow she would have to instill courage into these eleven people, most of them strangers, would have to feed them on hope and bright dreams of freedom.”
- What is the parallelism?
 - Parallel verbs- would have to instill, would have to feed
- What is the effect of this parallelism?
 - This parallelism emphasizes the challenge Tubman is facing. The repetition forces the reader to hear those words over and over, which lets the reader know it is important.

Analyze Text: Biography

- The author is providing historical information about a person and place on the Underground Railroad.
- Re-read lines 132-148 and explain the connection between Thomas Garrett and Tubman. Identify details that suggest Tubman’s view of Garrett.
 - Garrett’s show store was a stop on the Underground Railroad where Tubman brought back fugitives for rest and safety.
 - She viewed him as a kind, generous person doing God’s work: “kept a pail of milk and a loaf of bread... for any of God’s poor.”
 - She thought he was clever: “boxes of shoes--so that you would never guess that the wall actually opened.”

Analyze Structure

- **Syntax** is the arrangement of words, phrases, and clauses within sentences.
- There are many correct ways to shape a sentence, and the way an author chooses to do that expresses his or her style.
- Re-read the sentence that begins on line 133, “He was a big man,” and pay special attention to word order or syntax.



Why do you think the author chose this particular syntax?

- Instead of writing, “He was a big, strong man,” the author writes, “He was a big man and strong.”
- Instead of writing, “He used his strength only to help people and never to harm them,” the author uses a less straightforward syntax, “He had never used his strength to harm anyone, always to help people.”
- The effect is to emphasize the contrast between harm and help; this syntax also has the storytelling effect, as if Tubman is telling a story

Analyze Structure

- The author is using a variety of techniques to make sound-meaning connections, including syntax, repetition, and punctuation.
- Re-read the sentence that begins on line 157 (“She hesitated before”) and listen for word order, repetition, and pauses. What is the impact of these techniques?
 - The author interrupts the sentence, “She hesitated before she approached the door...and knocked softly” with words between *door* and *and knocked*. The commas, repeated word *suppose*, and bigger thought between dashes all emphasize the hesitation she feels.

Analyze Text: Biography

- In an earlier chapter of the biography, readers learn that Tubman had prayed for the death of her master because she feared that he was going to sell her South on a chain gang, so when her master actually died, she felt responsible for his death.
- Go back to lines 216-221 and find information that connects to earlier events.
 - As Tubman aims a gun to threaten a follower, she experiences “a feeling of guilt, remembering that time, years ago, when she had prayed for the death of Edward Brodas, the Master.”
- What does this comparison to an earlier event suggest about Tubman?
 - She still has respect for human life, even of those who enslaved her.

Analyze Text: Biography

- The author describes Tubman’s action toward a despairing fugitive to reveal another aspect of her character.
- Re-read 225-239. Cite Tubman’s words and other details in those lines to tell whether you think she would have killed the “despairing slave.”
 - Tubman repeats, “Go on with us or die” and “We got to go free or die.” She would have killed him in order to protect the larger group and all the helpers on the Underground Railroad, who would be “ruined, fined, imprisoned.”
- How does this situation connect, or fit in with, what we have already learned about Tubman?
 - It supports the determination she has shown; it adds a new dimension by showing that she will do whatever it takes to get the runaways to freedom.

Analyze Structure



- The author's careful word choice has an emotional impact in lines 240-243.
- Re-read these lines to note words that describe the Middle Passage.
 - "long agony" and "black horror"
- What is the impact of these word choices?
 - They suggest the terrible misery experienced by the people's forebears.
- How does the first sentence develop the text's key idea: that the escape from slavery was terrifying?
 - The comparison to the Middle Passage brings the idea full circle; their people's slavery began in terror and agony, and their escape from it will be difficult as well.

Analyze Structure

- After the incident in which Tubman threatens to shoot the runaway, the group seems to have changed its view of her. Why do you think this happened?
- Re-read lines 261-268 to identify a sentence that expresses the fugitives' changed attitude.
 - "They had come to trust her implicitly, totally."
- What do you think the impact of the use of the synonyms *implicitly* and *totally*?
 - These words emphasize the complete trust.

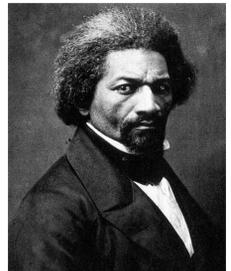


Analyze Text: Biography

- A biographer's research includes **primary sources**, which are documents and other materials produced by people who witnessed or took part in historical events.
- Explain what is suggested by the author's research in lines 273-285.
 - The author read William Still's record of fugitive slaves, which he published in 1872 with the title *The Underground Railroad*.
 - The author has identified Still as a member of the Philadelphia Vigilance Committee in lines 189-190.

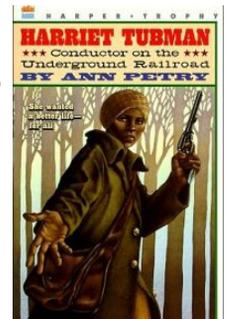
Analyze Text: Biography

- Biographers draw conclusions based on their research.
- Re-read lines 300-316 and note the words that show the author's reasoning.
 - "Here they almost certainly stayed with Frederick Douglass" shows that she is using details in Douglass's autobiography to reason that the eleven fugitives who stayed with Douglass were in fact the people Tubman was leading north.



Analyze Text: Biography

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- Readers use what the biographer tells and shows, along with what they can figure out, to answer the question, “What is this person like?”
 - What can you tell about Tubman from the information provided in lines 321–331?
 - She was hardworking, generous, strong, encouraging, and independent.



Analyze Structure

- In lines 332–335, the author is contrasting Tubman’s destination with her starting point. Look at the description of Canada in those lines.
- Identify the details that develop the contrasts, or differences, between Canada and Maryland. What is the impact of the author’s word choices, parallelism, and repetition?
 - “Canada was a strange frozen land, snow everywhere, ice everywhere, and a bone-biting cold the like of which none of them had ever experienced before.”
 - “Often she found herself thinking of the beauty of Maryland, the mellowness of the soil, the richness of the plant life there. The climate itself made for an ease of living that could never be duplicated in this bleak, barren countryside.”
 - The overall impact is to create a series of stark contrasts, which reinforces the idea that Tubman is able to adapt to her environment.

Analyze Structure

- An author's word choices impact both the meaning and the tone, or feeling, in a text.
- Look at the comparison in lines 352-357. What is the comparing? Explain how this comparison develops the concept of freedom.
 - The author is contrasting the warmth of summer--and Maryland--with the severe cold of Canada to emphasize the the price the escaping slaves paid for their freedom.
- How do word choices such as "bone-biting cold" impact the tone in the paragraph?
 - Word choices that describe the extreme cold create a harsh feeling that suggests what life will be like for the newly freed slaves.

Closure

On page 163 in the top box, there are three bullet points that list how biographers characterize their subjects. Go back through the story and find one example of each method of characterization from the text on Harriet Tubman.

Turn this in as you leave.