

Assessing with Primary Sources

Grade Level: Middle School (6-8)
Standard(s) or Objectives: CCSS.RI.6.6 - Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how and explain how it is conveyed in the text

Library of Congress Resources:



Unknown author, 1859- 1861 (Old John Brown- "A Song for Every Southern Man.") <http://www.loc.gov/item/amss001014/>

Specific Pages Used:

<http://www.loc.gov/resource/amss.as110220.0/?sp=1>
<http://www.loc.gov/item/amss001014/>

Topic Background:

John Brown (May 9, 1800 – December 2, 1859) was a white American abolitionist who believed armed insurrection was the only way to overthrow the institution of slavery in the United States. The main goal of abolitionist movement was to abolish slavery in all its forms and aspects, promote the moral and intellectual improvement of the colored people.

Excerpted from: http://www.americaslibrary.gov/aa/douglass/aa_douglass_leader_2.html and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Brown_%28abolitionist%29

Source Used:

The source used for this assessment includes a song sheet written after the execution of abolitionist John Brown (December 2, 1859). In this song sheet, the author reveals his opinion about the abolitionist John Brown. The author believes that John Brown and other abolitionists are untruthful and have no right to free slaves in the South.

Multiple Choice Answer Key:

Question 1 – B
 Question 2 – C

Old John Brown: A Song for Every Southern Man

Now all you Southern people, just listen to ray song,
It's about the Harpers' Ferry affair, it is not very
long.

To please you all I do my best, I sung it in other
towns,
And while I am in Richmond, I'll tell you about old
Brown.

*Chorus. Old Ossawattomio Brown ! old
Ossawattomic Brown !*

*That will never pay,
Trying to come away down South,
And run the niggers away.*

Old Brown and Cook, and a dozen more, to
Harpers' Ferry went,
They got into the arsinel there, they did not have no
right;
Old Governor Wise heard of this, he started from
Richmond town,
He went to Harpers' Ferry, and there he caught old
Brown.

Chorus

They took him down to Charlestown, and into
prison throw'd him;
They put two chains upon his legs, Oh yes ! it was
to hold him,
They put two chains upon his legs and two upon his
arms,
The virdict of the jury was, old Brown he should be
hung.

Chorus

Cook and Coppie were in prison, they thought about
escaping,
They got upon the wall, but they could not save their
bacon!
The guard he saw them up there, at them throw'd
his pill
OKI Cook tumbled over just like he had been killed.

Chorus

Now they all are dead and gone to heaven some do
say,
The angels standing at the gate to drive them right
away;
The devil standing down below, he calls them for to
come,
It's no use now old John Brown, you can't get a
chance to run.

Chorus

Now all you Southern people a little advice I give;
Patronize the South and the State in which you live;
And not unto Northern people your money never
pay,
They have their agents in the South, to run your
slaves away.

Chorus

Now all you Southern darkies, a word to you I'll say;
Always mind your masters, and never run away.
And don't mind these Northern agents, they tell to
you a lie.
They get you at the North, and starve you 'till you
die.

Chorus

Questions:

1) Which statement best states the author's point of
John Brown" song? (CCSS-RI6.6)

- A. The author supports John Brown.
- B. The author is against John Brown
- C. The author neither supports nor opposes John
Brown.
- D. The author glorifies and praises John Brown.

2) Which statement best describes the author's
purpose in the underlined verse? (CCSS-RI6.6)

- A. The author tries to describe the life of slaves in
southern areas.
- B. The author tries to encourage slaves to move to
the north.
- C. The author tries to persuade slaves to stay with
their southern master and not to believe northern
agent's promises.
- D. The author tries to describe the relationship
between southern darkies and their masters.