

**Lesson Plans for  
Dr. Sue Eakin's  
The Autobiography of Solomon Northup: Twelve Years a Slave**

**Unit Estimated Class Time:** 1 Day per Week over 5 Weeks

**Common Core Requirements, as defined by the Common Core State Standards Initiative:** Other standards may apply in addition to the ones listed here. Standards regarding Grade 10 have been chosen as the earliest requirements met, however standards for Grades 10 and 11 would also apply.

**Reading: Literature**

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

**Speaking and Listening**

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1a Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1c Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1d Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.2 Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.5 Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

## **Language**

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.2c Spell correctly.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.3 Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.4a Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.4c Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, or its etymology.

Students will participate in independent activities and group discussions, in addition to utilizing audio technology, internet research, and visual aids.

## **Overview:**

Day 1: Section 1 *From Free Man to Slave*

Chapters 1-5

Day 2: Section 2 *Learning to Live as a Slave*

Chapters 6-9

Day 3: Section 3 *Surviving a Tyrant for a Master*

Chapters 10-14

Day 4: Section 4 *Hope Rises and Falls*

Chapters 15-18

Day 5: Section 5 *The End of His Slavery*

Chapter 19-22, with the addition of the “After Freedom: What Happened?”, “Original Appendices”, and “Image and Map Gallery”

## **Opening Question Prior to Section 1 Lesson:**

What is your overall impression of the narrative?

Has your overall opinion of slavery changed upon reading this narrative?

If so, how? Provide examples from the book.

Has your overall opinion of slave owners changed upon reading this narrative? If so, how?



## **Day 1**

### **Section 1: From Free Man to Slave**

Chapters 1-5

#### **Vocabulary and Terms:**

Suffrage- *the political right or act of voting*

Quadroon- *a person of one-quarter blood of African descent, three quarters Caucasian*

Fetters- *shackles*

Free Papers- *documents proving the free status of an individual*

Slave Pen- *a small building and yard, similar to a barnyard, used in the business of buying, selling, and trading slaves*

Cat-O'-Nine-Tails - *a rope of many unraveled strands with a knot tied at the end of each*

Dram- *a small drink, especially of spirits*

Mulatto- *the offspring of a black person and a white person*

Brig- *a square-rigged sailing ship*

Levee- *an embankment confining a river*

**Passage to be Completed (Cloze):**

“I directed the letter to \_\_\_\_\_ of Sandy Hill, stating that \_\_\_\_\_ had been kidnapped, was \_\_\_\_\_ on board the brig \_\_\_\_\_, bound for New Orleans, that \_\_\_\_\_ was then impossible for \_\_\_\_\_ to conjecture my ultimate \_\_\_\_\_, and requesting he take \_\_\_\_\_ to rescue me. The \_\_\_\_\_ was sealed and directed, and \_\_\_\_\_, having read it, promised \_\_\_\_\_ deposit it in the \_\_\_\_\_ post office. I hastened \_\_\_\_\_ to my place under the \_\_\_\_\_, and in the morning, \_\_\_\_\_ the slaves came up \_\_\_\_\_ were walking around, \_\_\_\_\_ out unnoticed and mingled with \_\_\_\_\_.”

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## **Detail Questions:**

### **Chapter 1**

- 1. Given that Solomon Northup's father was born a slave, how is Solomon Northup a free man?**
- 2. Who is Henry Northup, the man who helps free Solomon from his slavery?  
How do the two men know each other?**
- 3. Was Solomon's manner and level of education ordinary for black people of the times?  
Why or why not?**
- 4. What did Solomon envision for his future?**
- 5. In what industry was Solomon involved in contract work?  
Did this knowledge help or hinder him later under Master Ford? How?**
- 6. Were he and his wife living in poverty in New York with conditions similar to slaves?  
Describe their living conditions.**
- 7. Why did Solomon and his family move to Saratoga?  
Did they find what they were looking for?**
- 8. The stores in Saratoga that Solomon frequented were owned by Cephas Parker and William Perry, two gentlemen who ultimately played an incredibly important role in Solomon's life later. What was that role, and why did Solomon choose it for these men?**
- 9. Before his capture, Solomon had conversations with slaves traveling with their masters.  
What did he learn from these conversations?  
Did the insider's view he later acquired change this view? If so, how?**

### **Chapter 2**

- 10. What was Solomon's skill that the two men, Brown and Hamilton, said would secure his employment with them?  
What did they offer Solomon that he accepted immediately?  
How did Solomon feel leaving with the two men for a job?**
- 11. Did Solomon inform his wife he was leaving for a job? Why or why not?**
- 12. Was he suspicious of Brown and Hamilton's motives or intentions?**

- 13. How many times did Solomon actually play his violin for Brown and Hamilton, the two men who had “hired” him to play violin in a circus?**
- 14. Solomon went with Brown and Hamilton to New York, what he believed to be his final stop before heading home. When he agreed to continue with them to Washington, how quickly was his decision made?  
Why did he accept, rather than returning home?**
- 15. What suggestion did Brown and Hamilton make that further legitimized their seemingly honest intentions and claims of employing Solomon?**
- 16. Did Solomon feel as if he were in danger with Brown and Hamilton? Why or why not?**
- 17. The night Solomon became sick and incoherent at the hotel, he was told he needed a doctor’s care and was led away from the hotel to a doctor’s office, he thought. When he finally regained consciousness, where was he?**
- 18. Did Solomon immediately realize what had happened?  
What made him realize he had been kidnapped?**

### **Chapter 3**

- 19. Who was Burch?  
Which figure in Solomon’s future was connected to Burch?  
How were the two connected?**
- 20. What was notable about the location of Williams’ Slave Pen, where Solomon’s cell was located? Describe the pen.**
- 21. Upon being told by Burch that he had been purchased and was now Burch’s slave, what is Solomon’s response?  
What, then, is Burch’s response?  
Through all of this, what does Solomon say?  
Did he say he was a free man or agree he was a slave?**
- 22. What did Radburn, Burch’s lackey, do to show some kindness to Solomon?  
What advice did Radburn give Solomon?**
- 23. Did Solomon believe his situation was hopeless? How do you know?**
- 24. Upon meeting fellow slaves in the pen, what advice did they give to Solomon?**

25. Regarding what subject did the other slaves in Williams' Slave Pen ask Solomon multiple times? Could they speak freely, or did the conversations occur only when Burch and Radburn were not around?
26. Were all of the slaves in Williams' Slave Pen adult? Were they all male? Describe them.
27. Was Eliza a typical slave? Why or why not?  
Why were she and her daughter at the slave pen if they had been promised freedom?

#### Chapter 4

28. What struck Solomon as quite contradictory as he and the other slaves were led in the darkness to the boat bound for the South?
29. Eliza and Clem Ray bemoaned what was being left behind while heading South on the boat. What was Solomon's mind-set; what was he thinking?
30. Does Solomon still assert his free status? Why or why not?
31. What does Goodin's Slave Pen have that Williams' Slave Pen did not?
32. What question by Goodin did Solomon answer instinctively, before thinking about his circumstances?  
Why did he adjust his answer, giving the implication he came through New York last as opposed to being originally from New York and a free man?
33. Solomon knew he must keep quiet about his freedom for his own safety. Why did Burch want Solomon to keep quiet about his free status?
34. Why did Solomon and Robert, a slave at Goodin's pen, become friends?  
What is Robert's fate? Does he return home to his family?
35. What connection does Clem Ray subsequently have to Solomon's family in New York?
36. Burch left the journey South at Richmond and headed back to Washington with Clem Ray in tow. What were Burch's circumstances the next time Solomon saw him?

#### Chapter 5

37. One slave on the brig Orleans with Solomon and the others had a story similar to Solomon's - a free man, a family at home, and unfairly detained as a slave in a slave pen. What realization regarding slave pens did Solomon make learning this?

38. On the brig Orleans, what name and job was Solomon given by the captain?
39. Which experience did Solomon find more desirable - the slaves dying if the brig Orleans sank in the storm, or the life that he knew awaited them in the South?
40. What did Solomon and Arthur (the slave with a background similar to Solomon's) discuss on the boat that raised Solomon's hopes?  
Were the plans carried out? Why or why not?
41. Solomon took a chance and trusted someone on the brig Orleans with his whole true story. Who did he trust, and what came of that trust?  
Did the letter reach Henry Northup? What happened next with the letter?
42. Did Arthur continue to the New Orleans slave pen with Solomon and the others?  
Why or why not?
43. Who was the owner of the New Orleans slave pen to which Solomon and the others were delivered?
44. What did Freeman call Solomon? Why?
45. As his new reality sank in deeper and he was overcome with sadness and disbelief, what did Solomon do?

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. In your opinion, why was Solomon not suspicious of Brown and Hamilton? Take into account the racial relations of the times and their destination of a slave state.
2. In your opinion, why did Solomon go with Brown and Hamilton? They were two white men that he did not know, taking him into slave territory.
3. As Solomon gets further and further from home, he still entertains the possibility of escape, both in detailed plans with Arthur and in writing the letter to be delivered to Henry Northup. Other slaves have resigned themselves to their fate and do not fight it. In your opinion, why does Solomon continue to fight for his freedom? Why does he not tell everyone he is a free man?

**Section 1 Project:**  
**Art Project**

Recall the detailed descriptions of the slave pens in which Solomon Northup found himself. Williams' Slave Pen was his first experience with such a place, and the description is located in Chapter 3. This was followed by Goodin's Slave Pen, as written in Chapter 4. There are similarities and differences between these two pens. A drawing of Williams' Slave Pen is included in the back of the book. To the best of your ability, draw Goodin's Slave Pen as accurately as possible given the descriptions in the book.

## **Passage to be Completed (Cloze): Key**

“I directed the letter to Henry B. Northup of Sandy Hill, stating that I had been kidnapped, was then on board the brig Orleans, bound for New Orleans, that it was then impossible for me to conjecture my ultimate destination, and requesting he take measures to rescue me. The letter was sealed and directed, and Manning, having read it, promised to deposit it in the New Orleans post office. I hastened back to my place under the long-boat, and in the morning, as the slaves came up and were walking around, crept out unnoticed and mingled with them.”

From page 37

Percentage Correct to Indicate Comprehension:

58-100% - Independent Level

Student reads selection with competence. Student will read independently without difficulty.

44-57% - Instructional Level

Student shows some competency, and reading with additional assistance would be helpful.

0-43% - Frustration Level

Student will require substantial assistance with comprehension of material, indicating selection is likely too challenging.

## **Detail Questions: Key**

### **Chapter 1**

**1. Given that Solomon Northup’s father was born a slave, how is Solomon Northup a free man?**

*His father was emancipated (given his freedom) upon the death of his owner, as dictated in the owner’s will. (p. 1)*

**2. Who is Henry Northup, the man who helps free Solomon from his slavery? How do the two men know each other?**

*Henry Northup is a relative of the owners of Solomon’s ancestors. (p. 2)*

**3. Was Solomon’s manner and level of education ordinary for black people of the times? Why or why not?**

*No, his father educated him and his brother. His father taught them integrity and a work ethic, among other things. Solomon’s father understood the system of slavery but knew the system was unfair to his people. (p. 2)*

*“...surpassing that ordinarily bestowed upon children in our condition” (p. 2)*

**4. What did Solomon envision for his future?**

*He saw a simple life of work, growing old with his family, living in his own home on his own farm. He saw himself being happy and comfortable.*

*"..life of industry...a good time coming, when the possession of some humble habitation, with a few surrounding acres, should reward my labors, and bring me the means of happiness and comfort." (p. 3-4)*

**5. In what industry was Solomon involved in contract work?**

*He was employed in rafting, building canals, and navigation, and lead assistants.*

**Did this knowledge help or hinder him later under Master Ford? How?**

*It helped him build a raft that ultimately saved Ford transportation costs. (p. 54)*

**6. Were he and his wife living in poverty in New York with conditions similar to slaves?**

**Describe their living conditions.**

*They were prosperous and comfortable. (p.5) They had a farm, a cow, a swine, oxen, and crops of corn and oats. Solomon earned money farming and playing violin, his wife Anne earned money cooking.*

**7. Why did Solomon and his family move to Saratoga?**

*They went to find more opportunities to work. (p. 5-6)*

**Did they find what they were looking for?**

*No, thus the eagerness for the apparent opportunity for employment with the two men who ultimately kidnapped him. (p. 6)*

**8. The stores in Saratoga that Solomon frequented were owned by Cephas Parker and William Perry, two gentlemen who ultimately played an incredibly important role in Solomon's life later. What was that role, and why did Solomon choose it for these men?**

*The letter that led to Solomon's rescue was directed to them. Solomon chose these men for such an important task because he had a great deal of respect for them for the kindnesses they had shown him. (p. 6)*

**9. Before his capture, Solomon had conversations with slaves traveling with their masters.**

**What did he learn from these conversations?**

*They almost all wanted freedom, asking advice on escaping, but they were afraid enough of the repercussions not to actually chance it. But, Solomon couldn't understand how anyone could be "content" (p.6) with such a life as not to fight it. He had not grown up with slavery, had always been free, so being owned by another and not rebelling was incomprehensible to him. (p. 6)*

**Did the insider's view he later acquired change this view? If so, how?**

*He became more sympathetic to the slaves' predicament, the position they were in. Solomon realized they were not content, necessarily, they were just resigned to the circumstances, and knew it was their lot in life, however unfair.*

## Chapter 2

**10. What was Solomon's skill that the two men, Brown and Hamilton, said would secure his employment with them?**

*The skill was playing violin. (p. 8)*

**What did they offer Solomon that he accepted immediately?**

*Brown and Hamilton said they were well-connected with a circus traveling through Washington that needed music. They offered to pay him per day and the expenses of his return home from the circus's stop in New York.*

**How did Solomon feel leaving with the two men for a job?**

*He was happy, "elated." (p. 8)*

**11. Did Solomon inform his wife he was leaving for a job? Why or why not?**

*No, because he thought he would only be gone a short time. (p. 8)*

**12. Was he suspicious of Brown and Hamilton's motives or intentions?**

*Not at all, but upon recalling the events of that day he clearly realizes there were red flags.*

**13. How many times did Solomon actually play his violin for Brown and Hamilton, the two men who had "hired" him to play violin in a circus?**

*He played for them only once, on the first night of their trip. (p. 9)*

**14. Solomon went with Brown and Hamilton to New York, what he believed to be his final stop before heading home. When he agreed to continue with them to Washington, how quickly was his decision made? Why did he accept, rather than returning home?**

*His decision took much consideration, and he finally accepted after they offered him more money and more advantages. (p. 10)*

**15. What suggestion did Brown and Hamilton make that further legitimized their seemingly honest intentions and claims of employing Solomon?**

*They suggested to Solomon to acquire his free papers, as they would be entering a slave state. (p. 10)*

**16. Did Solomon feel as if he were in danger with Brown and Hamilton? Why or why not?**

*Not at all, he felt safe to the point that he thought getting his free papers was almost unnecessary. (p. 10) They were very kind, seemingly very conscientious of his safety and well-being. They suggested getting his free papers, paid him more than they promised, and their manner towards him was kind. He had no reason to think they were not who and as they said they were.*

**17. The night Solomon became sick and incoherent at the hotel, he was told he needed a doctor's care and was led away from the hotel to a doctor's office, he thought. When he finally regained consciousness, where was he?**

*He was in a dark basement, in chains, with no money and no free papers. Brown and Hamilton were gone. (p. 13-14)*

**18. Did Solomon immediately realize what had happened?**

*No, at first he thought it must have been a mistake because he was a free man.*

**What made him realize he had been kidnapped?**

*He thought through the recent events and his current circumstances more, and realized that his free papers and money were gone. (p. 14)*

### **Chapter 3**

**19. Who was Burch?**

*He was a slave-dealer in Washington, in the business of buying, selling, and trading slaves. (p.15)*

**Which figure in Solomon's future was connected to Burch? How were the two connected?**

*Burch was connected to Theophilus Freeman in the slave-trading business.*

**20. What was notable about the location of Williams' Slave Pen, where Solomon's cell was located? Describe the pen.**

*The pen was in full view of the Capitol building in Washington, a symbol of the country built on liberty. The pen was behind what looked to passers-by as a private residence. There was a narrow yard behind the house, with a structure similar to a shed. The yard and shed were surrounded by a tall wall to stay hidden from the outside world.*

*"...like a farmer's barnyard...the outside world could never see the human cattle..." (p.16)*

**21. Upon being told by Burch that he had been purchased and was now Burch's slave, what is Solomon's response?**

*Solomon says he is a free man from Saratoga with a wife and children, and tells Burch his name. He also vows to rectify the wrong of his imprisonment.*

**What, then, is Burch's response?**

*Burch tries to quiet Solomon for fear of his being heard, then proceeds to a verbal onslaught and physical beating. (p. 17)*

**Through all of this, what does Solomon say? Did he say he was a free man or agree he was a slave?**

*He continues to say he is a free man, until he is in so much pain he cannot respond at all. "All his brutal blows could not force from my lips the foul lie that I was a slave." (p.18)*

**22. What did Radburn, Burch's lackey, do to show some kindness to Solomon?**

*He brought food, unlocked the fetters, opened a window, and gave Solomon advice. (p.19)*

**What advice did Radburn give Solomon?**

*He strongly suggested that Solomon not speak of being a free man, for his own safety.*

**23. Did Solomon believe his situation was hopeless? How do you know?**

*He still dreamed of his family and being back with them. He believed once other people knew of his free status they would release him. Solomon still thought well enough of Brown and Hamilton at this point that he believed that not only were they not responsible for his circumstances, they would help free him. (p.19)*

**24. Upon meeting fellow slaves in the pen, what advice did they give to Solomon?**

*As Radburn had advised, the slaves also advised to keep his true free status hidden. (p.20)*

**25. Regarding what subject did the other slaves in Williams' Slave Pen ask Solomon multiple times? Could they speak freely, or did the conversations occur only when Burch and Radburn were not around?**

*They asked him about his free life in New York, how black people were treated by others, and about owning their own homes without being oppressed. They could not speak freely, as beatings or worse would occur if Burch or Radburn overheard. (p.20)*

**26. Were all of the slaves in Williams' Slave Pen adult? Were they all male? Describe them.**

*When Solomon arrived, there were two grown men (Clem Ray and John Williams) and a young boy (Randall). (p. 20) Soon, a woman (Eliza) and a little girl (Emily) came, and they were the young boy's mother and half-sister. (p.21)*

**27. Was Eliza a typical slave? Why or why not?**

*No, she had lived with her master, born his child, had servants for herself, dressed well, and lived in luxury with her daughter (the master's child). She had been promised emancipation for both her and her daughter as a condition of living with her master. (p.22)*

**Why were she and her daughter at the slave pen if they had been promised freedom?**

*Her master's property had been divided, and Eliza and Emily both went to the master's daughter's home, and the daughter disliked Eliza intensely. The master's daughter promised freedom papers were to be drawn up for Eliza and Emily, but instead what was drawn up was a bill of sale.*

## Chapter 4

**28. What struck Solomon as quite contradictory as he and the other slaves were led in the darkness to the boat bound for the South?**

*They were slaves, walking through the capital of a country founded on liberty. "...a nation, whose theory of government, we were told, rests on the foundation of man's inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." (p.26)*

**29. Eliza and Clem Ray bemoaned what was being left behind while heading South on the boat. What was Solomon's mind-set; what was he thinking?**

*Though it was difficult, he kept his attitude positive, thinking of multiple escape plans. (p26)*

**30. Does Solomon still assert his free status? Why or why not?**

*No, but he does not say he is a slave, either. He hides his true free status for his own safety. (p27)*

**31. What does Goodin's Slave Pen have that Williams' Slave Pen did not?**

*It had two small houses in the yard, used for prospective owners to come and examine the slaves very closely before deciding whether or not to complete a purchase. (p27)*

**32. What question by Goodin did Solomon answer instinctively, before thinking about his circumstances?**

*Goodin asked where he came from, and his honest answer was New York.*

**Why did he adjust his answer, giving the implication he came through New York last as opposed to being originally from New York and a free man?**

*He remembered his circumstances and caught the expression on Burch's face. (p28)*

**33. Solomon knew he must keep quiet about his freedom for his own safety. Why did Burch want Solomon to keep quiet about his free status?**

*Burch knew there would be severe penalties and punishment for himself and his own crimes of selling a free man into slavery. (p29)*

**34. Why did Solomon and Robert, a slave at Goodin's pen, become friends?**

*They had similar background stories - a family up North, taken by two men under guise of employment, and no freedom papers. (p29)*

**What is Robert's fate? Does he return home to his family?**

*He does not return home, he dies of small-pox on the boat to New Orleans. (Ch.5, p36)*

**35. What connection does Clem Ray subsequently have to Solomon's family in New York?**

*After escaping and heading to Canada, Clem Ray stays a night in Saratoga and tells Solomon's family where he is. (p31)*

- 36. Burch left the journey South at Richmond and headed back to Washington with Clem Ray in town. What were Burch's circumstances the next time Solomon saw him?**  
*Burch was an arrested criminal himself, in court for his crimes. (p31)*

## **Chapter 5**

- 37. One slave on the brig Orleans with Solomon and the others had a story similar to Solomon's - a free man, a family at home, and unfairly detained as a slave in a slave pen. What realization regarding slave pens did Solomon make learning this?**  
*He realized slave pens were common in cities in the South. (p33)*

- 38. On the brig Orleans, what name and job was Solomon given by the captain?**  
*He was called "steward", as he was put in charge of the cooking and food distribution. (p33)*

- 39. Which experience did Solomon find more desirable - the slaves dying if the brig Orleans sank in the storm, or the life that he knew awaited them in the South?**  
*He knew beatings, brutal work, and harsh masters were in their future, so to him death would have been preferable.  
"..had the compassionate sea snatched us that day from the clutches of remorseless men."(p34)*

- 40. What did Solomon and Arthur (the slave with a background similar to Solomon's) discuss on the boat that raised Solomon's hopes?**  
*They discussed how to overtake the crew of the brig Orleans and escaping, and plans were made in great detail.  
Were the plans carried out? Why or why not?  
The plans were not carried out because Robert, the only other slave they trusted with knowledge of the plan, contracted small pox and died. (p34-35)*

- 41. Solomon took a chance and trusted someone on the brig Orleans with his whole true story. Who did he trust, and what came of that trust?**  
*He trusted a sailor named John Manning, who offered Solomon help. Manning provided him with pen and paper, sat with him as he wrote the letter to Henry B. Northup explaining his current circumstances, and brought the letter to the post office.  
Did the letter reach Henry Northup? What happened next with the letter?  
The letter did reach Henry Northup, who brought it to the governor. However, with no definite location information, only general, no action was taken in the belief that more location details would come. (p37)*

- 42. Did Arthur continue to the New Orleans slave pen with Solomon and the others? Why or why not?**  
*He did not continue with them, because men from Arthur's home of Norfolk came to rescue him, telling him that his kidnappers had been arrested. (p 38)*

**43. Who was the owner of the New Orleans slave pen to which Solomon and the others were delivered?**

*Theophilus Freeman.*

**44. What did Freeman call Solomon? Why?**

*Freeman called Solomon "Platt", which was the only name from Burch's list that no other slave answered to, and there was a description of "Platt" that matched Solomon.*

**45. As his new reality sank in deeper and he was overcome with sadness and disbelief, what did Solomon do?**

*He begged God for strength in the face of his situation and for mercy for all of the slaves. (p39)*

### **Discussion Questions: Key**

Correct answers include the following, and additional correct answers are possible.

**1. In your opinion, why was Solomon not suspicious of Brown and Hamilton? Take into account the racial relations of the times and their destination of a slave state.**

*The two men showed Solomon great kindness and consideration. They suggested the safeguard of getting his freedom papers, they paid him more than they initially promised, and Solomon had great confidence in the two men. (p11)*

**2. In your opinion, why did Solomon go with Brown and Hamilton? They were two white men that he did not know, taking him into slave territory.**

*Perhaps he trusted them that much to put his safety in their hands, perhaps he thought he could handle the situation even if they were dishonest. Solomon was possibly that naive, or that foolish, or he was so confident in what he could handle that his overconfidence impaired his judgment.*

**3. As Solomon gets further and further from home, he still entertains the possibility of escape, both in detailed plans with Arthur and in writing the letter to be delivered to Henry Northup. Other slaves have resigned themselves to their fate and do not fight it. In your opinion, why does Solomon continue to fight for his freedom? Why does he not tell everyone he is a free man?**

*He knows he is a free man and puts much effort into regaining that freedom. However, he also knows that he is seen as a slave and he has to live as a slave in order to survive.*