

The Drinking Gourd

Contributed by The Preservation Society of Newport County

RI – SS – GSEs:

- HP 2
- HP 3
- HP 4

Recommended for Grade(s) 4 – 12

This lesson can be adapted and added upon for each grade level.

Description:

Using imagery and stories, students will discuss the Underground Railroad and Slavery through the traditional story of The Drinking Gourd.

Objective:

Students will be able to discuss difficult histories and understand how someone's surroundings can inform their view of nature.

Green Animals Connection:

Follow the Drinking Gourd, by Jeanette Winter can be read in the Gourd Arbor at Green Animals

Background:

Students should have a background in discussing slavery and the Underground Railroad.

Some resources:

- <http://www.followthedrinkinggourd.org/>
 - Resources here for all grade levels
- <http://www.pbs.org/black-culture/shows/list/underground-railroad/classroom/>
- http://www.undergroundrailroadresources.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8&Itemid=468

A copy of the lyrics can be found here:

- http://www.followthedrinkinggourd.org/Appendix_Teachers_Guide.htm

Procedure:

1. Upon arrival, the instructor will discuss the day's lesson with the students
2. Any key words should be written on the white board for discussion
3. Instructor will bring the class up to the gourd arbor and read Jeanette Winter's *Follow the Drinking Gourd*
4. An open discussion about how students' experience with the story/song upon returning to the classroom

Take – Home:

Students will write a reflection on their understanding and experience.

The lesson can be expanded by having students research Rhode Island's slavery history.