

ROAD TO FREEDOM

CHARACTER SKETCH HANDOUT

The purpose of this assignment is to help you to use the information you gathered in your online research to create a well-developed fictional character who may have lived during this time period. Begin by brainstorming your fictional character using the categories below. You should work with your group to share ideas as you complete this character sketch.

Character's full name:

Gender:

Age:

Physical appearance:

Education:

Occupation:

Social status (e.g., very poor, moderately poor, wealthy, very wealthy):

Marital status:

Ethnicity:

Accent:

Other relationships:

Home (where does he or she live?):

Possessions:

Beliefs:

Ambitions:

Superstitions:

Fears:

Attitudes:

Weaknesses:

Strengths:

Talents or special skills:

Unusual physical characteristics (e.g., scars, limp, birthmarks):

Using the information you have just brainstormed, write a character sketch. Use the student sample on the next page as a guide. Include also a color picture of your character to match the character sketch.

CHARACTER SKETCH: STUDENT SAMPLE

Ficus Owens is a 17-year field hand living on the Powers Plantation in Bucks County Maryland. Ficus is six-feet tall and has dark brown skin, made darker by his days in the sun. He has an open smile and warm eyes, although his eyes are often marked by wariness when the overseer is around. Ficus has a huge scar running the length of his back that he got when the Master took a cane to him when he was seven-years-old. Ficus has three brothers and two sisters. One of his brothers was sold “down south” to work on a cotton plantation to help pay off debts when Master Power’s father died. Working all day in the fields has made Ficus strong and he is able to do the work of three men. He knows that he is valuable to the Master, but is also afraid that he may be sold if things on the plantation do not improve.

Ficus has no formal education, although he knows how to hunt, fish, and use the stars to travel at night. His mother also taught him passages from the Bible, which he has memorized along with some important gospel songs. Unfortunately, he is not allowed to sing anymore because of strict regulations following a slave uprising. He has one set of clothing and a pair of shoes that he received last Christmas from the Master. Ficus is not very superstitious, but he does believe that spirits or “haunts” live in the woods. Ficus is not married. He would like to marry Letitia Smith, another slave who works in the Master's house, but he is afraid that if they were to have children, his children would also be slaves.

Ficus believes that any form of slavery is wrong and he desperately wants to be free. He is willing to do anything to gain his freedom, but he will not leave the plantation without Letitia.