

Can Words Lead to War?

Supporting Question 1: How did Harriet Beecher Stowe describe slavery in Uncle Tom's Cabin?

Source Analysis Chart

| Summary | | |
|--|---|--|
| (Featured source A) | | |
| What is the plot of <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> ? | | |
| Details | | |
| Featured Source B | What are the main ideas in the selected passages? | What details support those main ideas? |
| Passage 1 | | |
| Passage 2 | | |
| Passage 3 | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Passage 4 | | |
| Featured Source C | What are the main ideas in the selected illustrations? | What details support those main ideas? |
| Illustration 1 | | |
| Illustration 2 | | |
| Tone | | |
| What emotions are evident in the text passages and the illustrations ? | | |
| Intention | | |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>What do you think Harriet Beecher Stowe was trying to accomplish in her writing?</p> | |
| <p>Reactions</p> | |
| <p>How do you think people reacted to the ideas in the text and the illustrations ?</p> | |

Supporting Question 1: Text and Illustrations (Featured Source A,B, and C)

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|--|---|
| <p><i>Supporting Question 1</i></p> | |
| <p><i>Featured Source A</i></p> | <p><i>Source A: Summary of the book Uncle Tom’s Cabin by Harriet Beecher Stowe</i></p> |

Uncle Tom’s Cabin opens on the Shelby plantation in Kentucky as two enslaved people, Tom and four-year-old Harry, are sold to pay Shelby family debts. The story focuses on two main characters: Tom, a strong, religious man living with his wife and three young children, and Eliza Harris, an intelligent and brave enslaved women and mother of Harry.

When the novel begins, Eliza’s husband, George Harris, unaware of Harry’s danger, has already escaped, planning to purchase his family’s freedom later. After overhearing that

her master, Mr. Shelby, is planning to sell Tom and Harry to a slave trader, Eliza runs away, making a dramatic escape over the frozen Ohio River with Harry in her arms. Eventually, George, Eliza, and Harry are reunited and make it to freedom in Canada.

Tom decides not to run away to protect his family, who might be sold in his place. After he is sold south, Tom meets Topsy, a young black girl whose mischievous behavior hides her pain; Eva, a young white girl whose death is a dramatic moment in the book; the charming, elegant, but passive Augustine St. Clare; and finally, the cruel, violent Simon Legree. Tom's deep faith gives him an inner strength that frustrates his enemies as he moves toward his fate in Louisiana.

The novel ends when both Tom and Eliza escape slavery: Eliza and her family reach Canada, but Tom's freedom comes with death. Simon Legree, Tom's third and final master, has Tom whipped to death for refusing to deny his faith or betray the hiding place of two fugitive women.

Adapted from the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center's synopsis, <https://www.harrietbeecherstowecenter.org/utc/>.

Supporting Question 1

Featured
Source B

Source B: Harriet Beecher Stowe, novel about antebellum slavery in the United States, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (excerpts), 1852

Passage 1 (Excerpt from Chapter 3)

Summary: George Harris is speaking with his wife, Eliza, about his cruel master. After enduring abuse, George eventually escapes. His wife and his son, Harry, who have a different master, later escape to Canada.

Mrs. Shelby had gone on her visit, and Eliza stood in the verandah, rather dejectedly looking after the retreating carriage, when a hand was laid on her shoulder. She turned, and a bright smile lighted up her fine eyes.

“George, is it you? How you frightened me! Well; I am so glad you ‘s come! Missis is gone to spend the afternoon; so come into my little room, and we’ll have the time all to ourselves.”

Saying this, she drew him into a neat little apartment opening on the verandah, where she generally sat at her sewing, within call of her mistress.

“How glad I am!—why don’t you smile?—and look at Harry—how he grows.” The boy stood shyly regarding his father through his curls, holding close to the skirts of his mother’s dress. “Isn’t he beautiful?” said Eliza, lifting his long curls and kissing him.

“I wish he’d never been born!” said George, bitterly. “I wish I’d never been born myself!”

Surprised and frightened, Eliza sat down, leaned her head on her husband’s shoulder, and burst into tears.

“There now, Eliza, it’s too bad for me to make you feel so, poor girl!” said he, fondly; “it’s too bad. O, how I wish you never had seen me—you might have been happy!”

“George! George! how can you talk so? What dreadful thing has happened, or is going to happen? I’m sure we’ve been very happy, till lately.”

“So we have, dear,” said George. Then drawing his child on his knee, he gazed intently on his glorious dark eyes, and passed his hands through his long curls.

“Just like you, Eliza; and you are the handsomest woman I ever saw, and the best one I ever wish to see; but, oh, I wish I’d never seen you, nor you me!”

“O, George, how can you!”

“Yes Eliza, it’s all misery, misery, misery! My life is bitter as wormwood; the very life is burning out of me. I’m a poor, miserable, forlorn drudge; I shall only drag you down with me, that’s all. What’s the use of our trying to do anything, trying to know anything, trying to be anything? What’s the use of living? I wish I was dead!”

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Passage 2 (Excerpt from Chapter 9)

Summary: Fugitive slave Eliza is speaking with a friendly white woman who has taken her in after escaping Kentucky and crossing the Ohio River into the free state of Ohio. Eliza flees after finding out that her master is going to sell her son, Harry, to an unscrupulous slave trader. Eliza and Harry are eventually joined by her husband, George, in Canada.

“I have lost two, one after another,—left ‘em buried there when I came away; and I had only this one left. I never slept a night without him; he was all I had. He was my comfort and pride, day and night; and, ma’am, they were going to take him away from me,—to sell him,—sell him down south, ma’am, to go all alone,—a baby that had never been away from his mother in his life!”

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Passage 3 (Excerpt from Chapter 19)

Summary: In this passage, a slave owner named Augustine St. Claire shares his frustrations with slavery with his cousin.

“I declare to you,” said he, suddenly stopping before his cousin, “(it’s no sort of use to talk or to feel on this subject), but I declare to you, there have been times when I have thought, if the whole country would sink, and hide all this injustice and misery from the light, I would willingly sink with it. When I have been travelling up and down on our boats, or about on my collecting tours, and reflected that every brutal, disgusting, mean, low-lived fellow I met, was allowed by our laws to become absolute despot of as many men, women and children, as he could cheat, steal, or gamble money enough to buy,—when I have seen such men in actual ownership of helpless children, of young girls and women,— I have been ready to curse my country, to curse the human race!”

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Passage 4 (Excerpt from Chapter 30)

Summary: At a slave auction house, Uncle Tom is sold to a cruel master named Simon Legree. Another slave, Susan, is separated from her daughter, Emmeline, when they are sold to different masters.

Tom hardly realized anything; but still the bidding went on,—rattling, clattering, now French, now English. Down goes the hammer again,—Susan is sold! She goes down from the block, stops, looks wistfully back,—her daughter stretches her hands towards her. She looks with agony in the face of the man who has bought her,—a respectable middle-aged man, of benevolent countenance.

“O, Mas’r, please do buy my daughter!”

“I’d like to, but I’m afraid I can’t afford it!” said the gentleman, looking, with painful interest, as the young girl mounted the block, and looked around her with a frightened and timid glance.

The blood flushes painfully in her otherwise colorless cheek, her eye has a feverish fire, and her mother groans to see that she looks more beautiful than she ever saw her before. The auctioneer sees his advantage, and expatiates volubly in mingled French and English, and bids rise in rapid succession.

“I’ll do anything in reason,” said the benevolent-looking gentleman, pressing in and joining with the bids. In a few moments they have run beyond his purse. He is silent; the auctioneer grows warmer; but bids gradually drop off. It lies now between an aristocratic old citizen and our bullet-headed acquaintance. The citizen bids for a few turns, contemptuously measuring his opponent; but the bullet-head has the advantage over him, both in obstinacy and concealed length of purse, and the

controversy lasts but a moment; the hammer falls,—he has got the girl, body and soul, unless God help her!

Her master is Mr. Legree, who owns a cotton plantation on the Red River. She is pushed along into the same lot with Tom and two other men, and goes off, weeping as she goes. The benevolent gentleman is sorry; but, then, the thing happens every day! One sees girls and mothers crying, at these sales, always! it can't be helped, &c.; and he walks off, with his acquisition, in another direction.

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Supporting Question 1

Featured Source C

Source C: Hammatt Billings, illustrations from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe, 1852, with introductory descriptions

Image 1

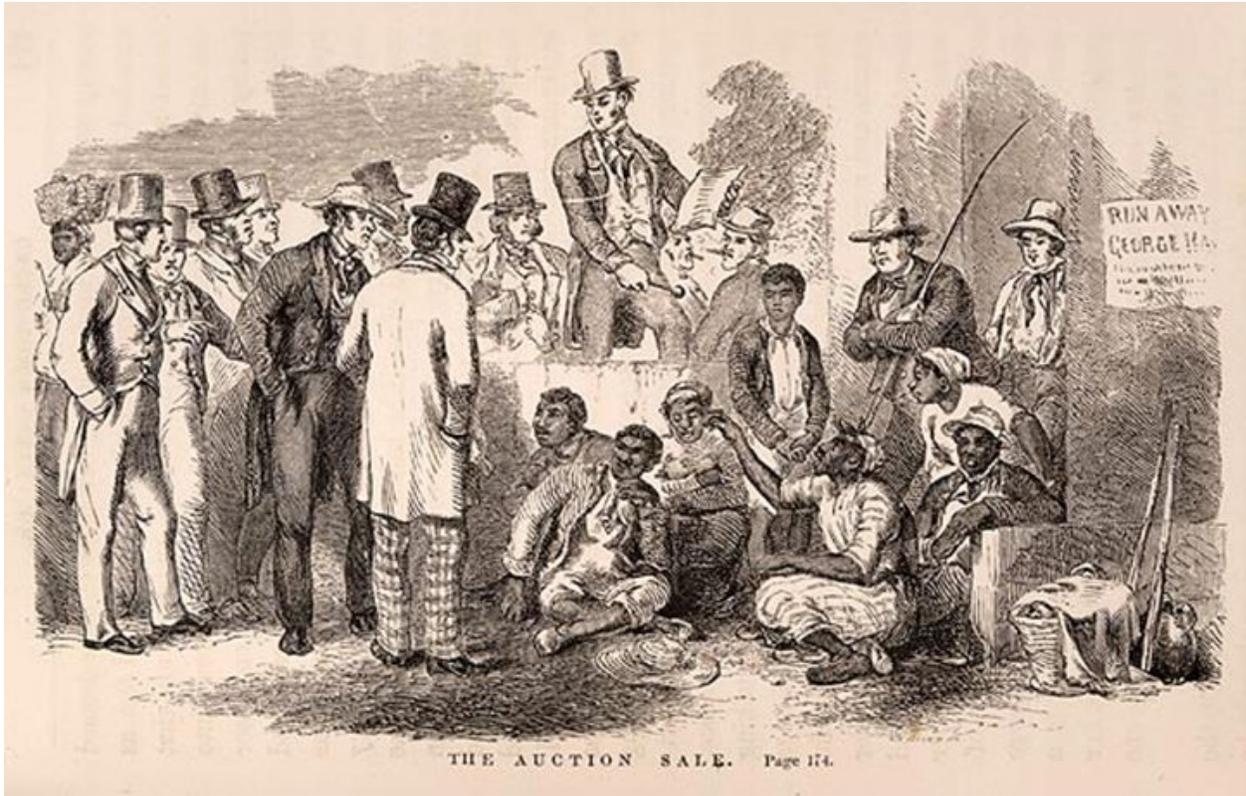
Summary: In this illustration, Eliza comes to tell Uncle Tom and his wife, Chloe, that Tom and George and Eliza's son, Harry, have been sold to a slave trader. Eliza has just overheard the news from her master, Mr. Shelby, that the trader will arrive in the morning to take Tom and Harry away. In a panic, Eliza plans to run away that night.



Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 1st ed. Boston: John P. Jewett and Company, 1852. Public Domain. <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/uncletom/illustra/52illf.html>.

Image 2

Summary: A slave auction featuring several characters from the book, including the auctioneer, Hagar, Albert, Haley, and other slaves and slave buyers.



Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 1st ed. Boston: John P. Jewett and Company, 1852. Public Domain. <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/uncletom/illustra/52illf.html>.