



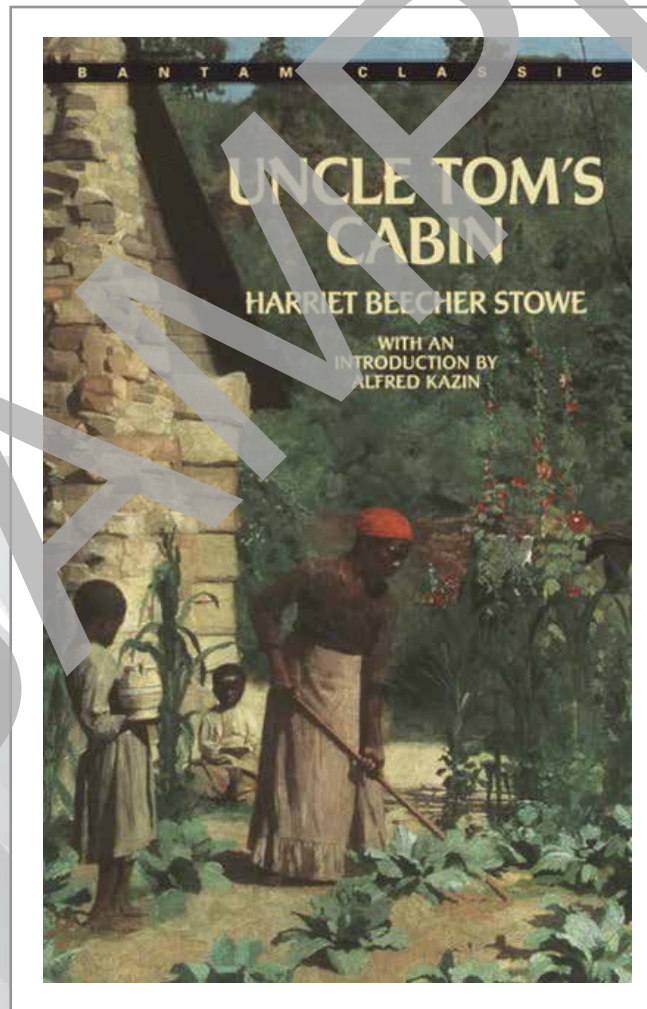
**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 9-12**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# Uncle Tom's Cabin

Harriet Beecher Stowe



**READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT**

# Uncle Tom's Cabin

Harriet Beecher Stowe

## TEACHER GUIDE

**NOTE:**

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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## Skills and Strategies

### Thinking

Compare/contrast, brainstorming, research, analysis, critical thinking, evaluation

### Comprehension

Predicting, inference, cause/effect, plot development, thematic development

### Writing

Poetry, prose, TV script, editorial, journal entry

### Vocabulary

Target words, definitions, applications

### Listening/Speaking

Discussion, reports, speech

### Literary Elements

Simile, metaphor, allusion, symbolism, foreshadowing, irony, characterization, mood, setting, theme, genre

### Across the Curriculum

Music—ballad, appropriate selections; Art—collage, sketch; Current Events—magazine and newspaper articles

**Genre:** fiction

**Setting:** Kentucky, Louisiana, Canada; 1850s

**Point of View:** primarily third-person omniscient, occasionally second person

**Themes:** slavery, good vs. evil, courage vs. cowardice, pride vs. survival, active vs. passive existence, love, faith

**Conflict:** person vs. person, person vs. self, good vs. evil

**Protagonists:** Uncle Tom, primary plot; Eliza and George Harris, subplot

**Antagonist:** slavery, epitomized by Simon Legree and the slave hunters

**Style:** narrative

**Tone:** serious, contemplative, reproachful

**Mood:** solemn, tense

**Date of First Publication:** as a serial in the *National Era*: June 5, 1851–April 1, 1852; as a book: March 20, 1852

## Summary

Faced with the prospect of losing his entire estate because of heavy debts, Arthur Shelby, who maintains a warm relationship with his slaves, agrees to sell two of them to Haley, a crude slave trader. Haley buys Uncle Tom, a strong, middle-aged worker, and Harry, the small child of Mrs. Shelby's maid, Eliza.

In the primary plot, Uncle Tom must leave his wife, Aunt Chloe, and their children. While traveling by boat down the Mississippi River to the slave market, Uncle Tom rescues a lovely little girl, Eva, from drowning. Her father, Augustine St. Clare, buys Tom from Haley. Tom and Eva develop a loving relationship that is enhanced by their mutual Christian faith. After the untimely deaths of Eva and St. Clare, Tom is sold to Simon Legree, a cruel plantation owner. Legree beats Tom mercilessly when he refuses to disclose his knowledge about the escape of Cassy, Legree's mulatto mistress, and the young girl Emmeline. George Shelby, the son of Tom's former owner, comes to buy Tom's freedom but finds him dying from the vicious beating. He vows to free all his slaves.

In the subplot, Harry's mother, Eliza, overhears Shelby's plans to sell her child and escapes with him. Her husband, George, whose owner is cruel and vindictive, also escapes, and the family is eventually reunited. Members of the Quaker faith aid them in their escape to Canada. The two plots merge in the denouement. George Shelby assists Cassy in her escape to Canada. Cassy discovers that Eliza is her long-lost daughter.

## Characters

**Uncle Tom**—protagonist; maintains his deeply devout Christianity even when persecuted cruelly; dies a martyr's death

**Aunt Chloe**—Uncle Tom's wife; creatively works to earn money to buy his freedom

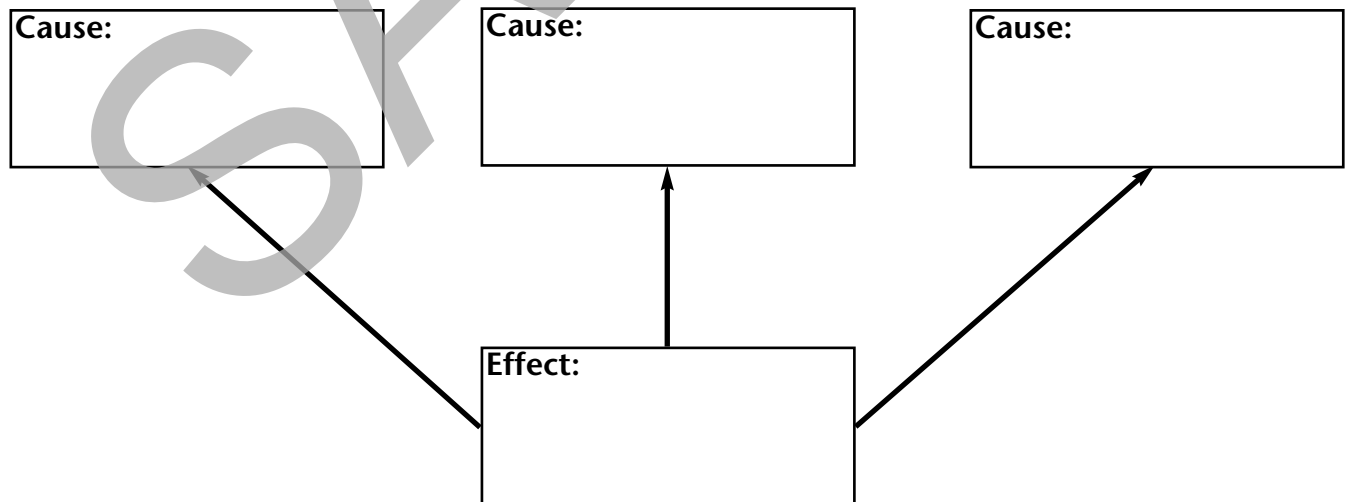
**Arthur Shelby**—Kentucky farmer who owns Tom; kind master; sees flaws in owning slaves but still condones slavery

## Cause/Effect

**Directions:** To plot cause and effect in a story, first list the sequence of events. Then mark causes with a C and effects with an E. Sometimes in a chain of events, one item may be both a cause and an effect. Draw arrows from cause statements to the appropriate effects.

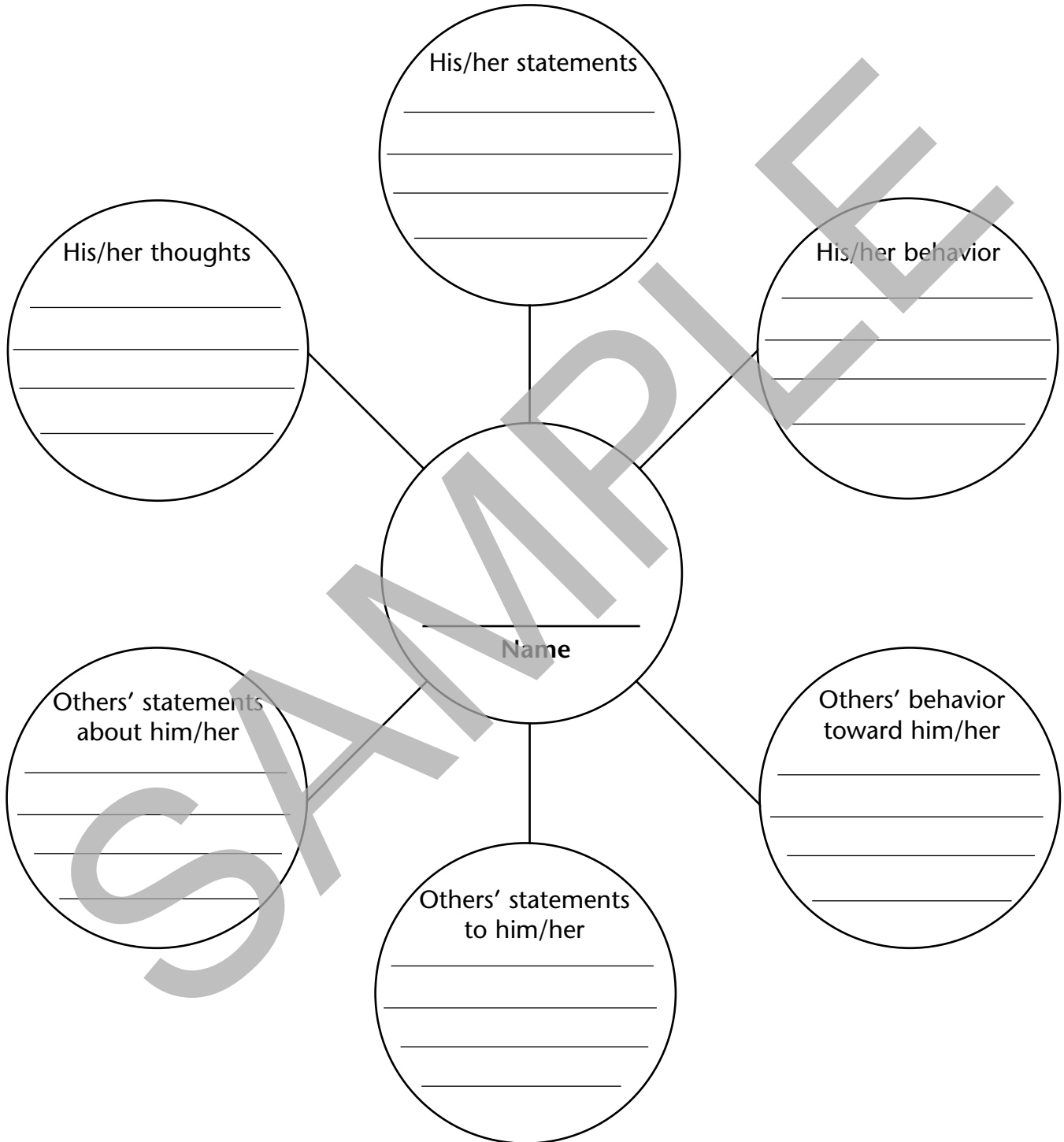
Events in the story	Cause	Effect
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

Another way to map cause and effect is to look for an effect and then backtrack to the single or multiple causes.



# Character Web

**Directions:** Complete the attribute web below by filling in information specific to a character in the book.



**Note:** Examples of foreshadowing and cause/effect are presented in several of the Discussion Questions. It may be helpful for students to use the Foreshadowing Chart on page 9 of this guide and the Cause/Effect chart on page 10 of this guide as they identify additional examples throughout the novel.

### Chapters 1–3, pp. 3–28

Because of heavy debts, Arthur Shelby unwillingly sells two of his slaves. A slave trader named Haley buys Tom, a devoted and obedient man, and Harry, the young son of Mrs. Shelby's personal maid, Eliza. Eliza's husband, George, plans to flee to Canada to escape his cruel master. He tells Eliza he will work and buy Harry's and her freedom.

#### Biblical Allusions

"is thy servant a dog" (p. 13, 2 Kings 8:13), "life is bitter as wormwood" (p. 23, Lamentations 3:15), "a sword will pierce through your soul" (p. 27, Luke 2:35)

Vocabulary	
	portentous (3)
	opulent (4)
	pious (4)
	quadroom (7)
	elucidations (10)
	patriarchal (13)
	imprudence (13)
	magnanimity (15)
	mulatto (17)
	ebullition (19)
	indubitable (20)

#### Discussion Questions

1. Contrast the two "gentlemen" who are introduced in Chapter 1 and analyze their observations about slaves. (*Shelby's manners, appearance, and speech are typical of a wealthy gentleman. Haley's features, ostentatious dress, and pretentious manners mark him as a low man who is trying to attain a higher status. His crude speech is interspersed with profanity. Shelby takes good care of his slaves and is concerned about their welfare. He despises Haley but must do business with him. Haley is a slave trader who views slaves as property that can be handled any way he chooses. He is primarily interested in making money on them and has no remorse about taking them away from their families. He thinks Kentucky slave owners spoil their slaves. pp. 3–12*)
2. Discuss the business agreement between Shelby and Haley. Examine Shelby's rationale for the transaction, as well as the implications of the agreement. (*Shelby has accrued overwhelming debts and must sell some of his slaves or lose everything he has. Haley has acquired a large amount of the notes for Shelby's debts, and the two men negotiate the redemption of these notes. Haley wants Tom, Shelby's most trusted slave, and Eliza, Mrs. Shelby's personal maid. Shelby refuses to sell Eliza but agrees to let Haley have Tom and little Harry, Eliza's son, as payment for his debts. pp. 4–12*)
3. Analyze Shelby's opinion of Tom and its effect on Haley. (*He speaks highly of Tom's honesty and spirituality, telling Haley that he trusts Tom to do business for him. He believes Haley's acquisition of Tom should cover the entire debt. Haley implies that, because Tom is a slave, his honesty is questionable. Tom's spirituality is important to Haley only in that it might make him more valuable for resale. pp. 4–5*)
4. Discuss the exposition of both the primary plot, Uncle Tom, and the subplot, George and Eliza Harris. Note the foreshadowing. (*The initial setting for both plots is in Kentucky. Shelby sells Tom to Haley, foreshadowing his trip "down river" to be sold to the highest bidder, with little hope of ever returning to his family. Eliza overhears Shelby discussing the sale of Harry, which foreshadows her attempt to escape to save her child. George plans to escape, hoping to eventually earn enough money to buy Eliza and Harry. This foreshadows the couple's immediate separation and the uncertainty of their future. throughout*)

5. Discuss why Shelby calls Harry “Jim Crow” and the effect of this on Haley. Note: in the 1880s, Jim Crow laws required separation of races in many public places in the South. (*The name Jim Crow originally referred to a black character in a popular song composed in 1830. Harry sings, dances, and mimes various characters. Harry’s talents intrigue Haley, leading to his offer to buy the child. pp. 5–7*)
6. Examine the undercurrents of the impact of slavery in this section. (*Shelby’s concern for his slaves does not keep him from selling Tom and sending him away from his family or from separating Harry from his mother. Regardless of how well they are treated, slaves live under the “shadow of the law” and are helpless to control their own destiny. Slaves are considered to be objects. They can be sold and their lives changed from kind protection to hopeless misery in an instant. Shelby recognizes the drawbacks of slavery but feels powerless to free his slaves. George Harris exemplifies an intelligent, handsome slave whose master hires him out, then recants because of jealousy of the respect and success George achieves. He forces George to become a menial farm laborer, with no hope for anything except a life of drudgery. George and Eliza’s marriage is not binding by law, and his master tells George he can no longer visit Eliza and must take a wife from the Harris estate. George sees no alternative except to escape to Canada. throughout*)
7. Examine the information about Mrs. Shelby and what this reveals about the role of women in the 1850s. (*She exhibits intellectual and moral excellence. She compassionately looks after her servants and thinks her husband would never sell any of the slaves to a slave trader. Although her husband respects her religious sensibility, her benevolence, and her opinion, he does not consult her about his decision to sell the slaves. She is unaware of his heavy debts. Women of the 1850s were expected to care for the home, look after the children, and be obedient to their husbands. pp. 15–16*)
8. Analyze examples of irony in this section. (*Mr. Shelby calls himself a “humane man,” yet he buys and sells slaves. Haley considers his “humanity” to be the pillar of his management of slaves. He compares himself to Wilberforce, an abolitionist who supported emancipation of slaves in the British colonies in the early 1800s, because he tries to do the “humane” thing, such as allowing a mother to cry when he sells her child. Although he considers himself to be much more civilized toward the slaves than most, it is only because he doesn’t want to ruin his slaves before he can sell them. pp. 9–11*)
9. **Prediction:** What will happen to Tom? to George, Eliza, and Harry?

### Supplementary Activity

1. List one simile and one metaphor from this section. Continue this activity throughout the novel. Examples are given in each section. **Similes**—“large dark eyes flashed like live coals” (p. 19), “system of ethics...seemed to bend like a reed” (p. 25); **Metaphor**—George: dray-horse (p. 24)