

## Inquiry Design Model (IDM) Blueprint™

<b>Compelling Question</b>	What negotiations and/or strategies does Anna's story suggest enslaved women initiated to claim their autonomy and freedom?	
Nebraska State Standards	SS 8.4.2 (US) Students will analyze the impact of people, events, ideas and symbols upon US history using multiple types of sources.	
Staging the Question	Students view an <a href="#">image of Anna</a> leaping from a third-floor window and speculate about factors that may have caused a person to take such an extreme course of action.	
<b>Supporting Question 1</b>	<b>Supporting Question 2</b>	<b>Supporting Question 3</b>
What were the pivotal moments in Anna's life, e.g. finding love, learning traditional Igbo/Benin style of weaving, etc. - what do they tell us about the ways in which enslaved people created conditions for their survival?	What strategies and strengths did enslaved people use to maintain and express their personal autonomy in the face of slavery's constraints?	What motivated Ann Williams to sue for her freedom in court, and how do you think she was able to win?
<b>Formative Performance Task</b>	<b>Formative Performance Task</b>	<b>Formative Performance Task</b>
After viewing the film " <a href="#">Anna</a> " complete a storyboard of six pivotal moments in Ann's life that you think most influenced her personal growth.	Working from the six pivotal moments on your storyboards, consider how much personal autonomy or freedom Ann Williams had in each moment and rank the various degrees of autonomy Ann had in each moment.	Write a one-paragraph argument to explain the jury's decision, citing at least two primary documents as supporting evidence.
<b>Featured Sources</b>	<b>Featured Sources</b>	<b>Featured Sources</b>
<a href="#">Anna film</a>	<a href="#">"Her Story: From Anna to Ann Williams"</a>	<a href="#">Public exchange between William Gardiner and George Miller</a> <a href="#">Excerpts from "Slavery and the Domestic Slave-Trade in the United States" (1836) by Ethan Allen Andrews</a> <a href="#">Ann Williams case summary from "O Say Can You See"</a>
Summative Performance Task	<b>Argument</b>	Construct an argument to answer the question: "What were the social, political, and legal resources Ann Williams used to navigate from enslavement to freedom? How did she use them?"
Taking Informed Action	<p><b>UNDERSTAND</b> How should we remember Ann Williams? What parts of her life should we highlight if we want to understand the experiences of enslaved people in the United States?</p> <p><b>ASSESS</b> Determine which parts of Ann Williams' life received either too much or not enough attention in the film "Anna."</p> <p><b>ACTION</b> Based on your new understanding of Ann Williams life and the experience of slavery, use your storyboard to create a presentation (animation or persuasive speech) that emphasizes the events and choices you think best represent our remembrance of Ann Williams.</p>	

## Overview

### Inquiry Description

This inquiry allows students to explore the experience of enslavement in the nineteenth-century United States by examining the institution's influence on individuals' personal choices as they negotiated the conditions and outcomes of their lives.

### Structure of the Inquiry

In addressing the compelling question, “What negotiations and/or strategies does Anna’s story suggest enslaved women initiated to claim their autonomy and freedom?” students examine sources and media representative of the biography and lived experience of Ann Williams, an enslaved woman who sued for and ultimately won her freedom in court. The supporting questions and embedded tasks are intended to spotlight pivotal moments in Ann’s life and encourage students to consider how they contribute to an understanding of the ways in which enslaved people, particularly women, in 19<sup>th</sup> century America created conditions for their survival and those close to them.

## Staging the Compelling Question

Students first engage with Ann Williams' story by examining an image depicting its most shocking moment--her leap from the third floor of a D.C. tavern in which she was being temporarily held captive (with her daughters) after being sold in Prince George County, Maryland to a “Georgia trader.” Students begin to think about the experiences and emotional state that may have led Ann to make such a drastic decision as a means of understanding the relationship between the unique circumstances of her life and the broader forces of institutionalized American slavery.

To structure this opening element of the inquiry we suggest projecting the [image of Anna](#) leaping from the tavern window for students; and as they enter the classroom, invite them to either write or discuss their initial observations: “What do you see in this image? What do you think is happening? What questions do you have?” Be sure to point out the script at the bottom of the image.

\* For more guidance/structure in the staging element of the inquiry see [Visual Thinking Strategies](#) for more insight.

Questions to guide further discussion and transition into the film:

- “What might lead someone to take such drastic action?”
- “How do you think this woman might have felt when she made this extreme decision?”

At the close of the discussion teachers may need to fill in the gaps in terms of student knowledge of the image, the event captured, and moreover, Ann’s story. Teachers at this point may reveal more about Ann Williams including the fact that she lived as an enslaved woman in Maryland and Washington, D.C. in the early nineteenth century. In reference to the image: Ann’s extreme (perhaps desperate) choice represented a pivotal moment in her life: she survived the fall and eventually won her freedom without running away or ever leaving slave territory. Teachers can further prime student interests in Ann’s story by prompting with questions such as: How would that [winning her freedom] be possible? Who or what might have helped Anna gain her freedom?”

At this point, the inquiry transitions into the film. Before viewing the film, students are introduced to the inquiry's compelling question: "What negotiations and/or strategies does Anna's story suggest enslaved women initiated to claim their autonomy and freedom?"

## Supporting Question 1

After viewing the film, students are challenged with the inquiry's first supporting question, "What were the pivotal moments in Anna's life, e.g. finding love, learning traditional Igbo/Benin style of weaving, etc. - what do they tell us about the ways in which enslaved people created conditions for their survival?" The question is intended to have students consider and subsequently document the pivotal moments in Ann Williams' life in order to connect her specific biography with the moral and emotional dilemmas American slavery posed for enslaved people.

In order to address the question and after viewing the film students complete a storyboard identifying six pivotal moments in Ann's life. Each event on the storyboard includes:

- a brief explanation describing the event's importance to Ann's life; i.e. what made this a pivotal moment for her?
- a brief (2-3 sentence) argument for the moment's historical significance; what does the event tell us more generally about the some of the negotiations some women initiated while enslaved? (Emphasize that students should draw on a range of moments in Ann's life as pivotal. For example, her mother's direction for self-care, the passing down of legacies from the African homeland to the American plantation, learning to weave, finding love, marrying, and having children were noteworthy events for Anna, just as later losing her daughters or suing for freedom would become.)

The storyboard task gives students an opportunity to process the key moments in Ann Williams' life, both uplifting and traumatic: acquiring knowledge of her ancestral Igbo culture, marriage, creating a family, leaping from the tavern window, and eventually, emancipation. While teachers should focus on this task as a means of ensuring students' comprehension of the narrative, creating the storyboard also enables students to begin connecting specific events and choices in Ann's life to broader, more common experiences of enslavement.

Featured Source: [Anna](#) film.

Featured Material: Storyboard (see bottom of document).

## Supporting Question 2

After completing the storyboard tasks, students consider the strategies, strengths, and relationships enslaved people used to maintain and express their own autonomy for the inquiry's second supporting question. Teachers and students should discuss definitions of freedom and autonomy before beginning the formative task. During discussion, be sure to have students consider how freedoms might be limited and the multiple ways people could assert autonomy (living on their own, moving freely in certain

spaces or across long distances, making their own income, bringing a case to court, finding love, marrying, escaping – on the other end of the spectrum physical restraint, being watched, etc.).

In order to address the second supporting question, students engage in a spectrum of autonomy activity that encourages them to assess pivotal moments identified in the storyboard activity further and ponder when did Ann display the most personal freedom/autonomy, and conversely, when was she most constrained by her circumstances? By making judgments about these questions, students confront the degree to which institutionalized slavery proscribed individual choices as well as the ingenuity and heroism of men and women negotiating those difficult situations. This formative task also allows students to think through the nature of personal freedom and specific strategies enslaved people employed to preserve and expand their own autonomy in the face of enslavement. Teachers should emphasize Ann's connections to her mother and Igbo ancestry through weaving; creating and maintaining a loving relationship with her husband, Edward; and the trust and responsibility placed in Edward that allowed him to make trips across Chesapeake Bay independently. Each of these areas offer opportunities to deepen students' understandings of the complicated ways slavery played out in practice, and the large degree of autonomy many enslaved people maintained in many parts of their lives.

Featured Source: [“Her Story: From Anna to Ann Williams”](#)

Featured Material: Spectrum of autonomy activity (see bottom of document).

### Supporting Question 3

The third and final supporting question of the inquiry asks students, “What motivated Ann Williams to sue for her freedom in court, and how do you think she was able to win?” - In response to the question and using the primary documents available on the "Anna" film website, students construct an argument explaining the jury's decision to grant Ann Williams and her children freedom in Washington, D.C. Included in the argument students make specific references to at least two primary documents as supporting evidence; Teachers may prompt students with the following: "Based on the evidence available to us here (speaking to sources), why would a jury in Washington, D.C. rule in favor of Ann Williams against a white, male business owner?"

In the task, students examine the Gardiner-Miller exchange in the Washington Gazette and excerpts from Allen Andrews' Domestic Slave Trade in the United States in order to form their opinions about the jury's decision. Students' arguments may vary. Once students complete the task and share their arguments, they should read the case summary and weigh the plausibility of their ideas next to the explanations historians have reached with the same evidence.

Featured Source: [Public exchange between William Gardiner and George Miller](#)

Featured Source: [Excerpts from “Slavery and the Domestic Slave-Trade in the United States” \(1836\)](#)

Featured Source: [Ann Williams case summary from “O Say Can You See”](#)

At this point in the inquiry students have examined the relationships between Ann William's biography and the experience of enslavement, the nature of personal autonomy for enslaved people, and the legal ambiguities of slavery and freedom in the early-nineteenth-century United States. Students now use their thinking about each of these issues to construct an argument, supported by specific evidence, to answer the culminating compelling question and/or Summative Performance Task: "What were the social, political, and legal resources Ann Williams used to navigate from enslavement to freedom?" Within the context of these resources, students should be encouraged to ascertain *how* or the extent to which they believe Ann drew upon her strengths, skills, lived experiences, and relationships in order to obtain emancipation for herself and her children. Prior to crafting their response, we suggest including a chart or graphic organizer to help students map out their thoughts and reflections.

At the close of the inquiry, students have the opportunity to Take Informed Action by considering ways of remembering Ann Williams and how her experiences have contributed to an understanding of the experiences of enslaved people more broadly. They can assess this issue by reflecting on how Ann's life was depicted in the film and critically weigh which aspects of her life they feel received either too much or potentially not enough attention. Students can then act by creating a public presentation that unpacks their remembrance of Ann Williams.