

Documents: Anthony Burns

Name: _____

Time: _____

Date: _____

Directions: Analyze the document and answer the questions. There is one answer per question.

Background: Anthony Burns was born a slave in Virginia. Burns learned quickly and developed several skills—including the ability to read and write. His master, Charles Suttle, allowed Burns to hire himself out in exchange for a regular fee. This gave Burns mobility that few enslaved people enjoyed. Burns became a Baptist and took inspiration from Jesus Christ who instilled in him the desire to be free. In March 1854, Burns boarded a boat headed for Boston and freedom. Two months later, Suttle tracked down Burns and captured him with the intent of returning Burns to slavery under the Fugitive Slave Act. At the trial in Boston, abolitionists gathered around the courthouse in an attempt to gain Burns’ freedom. Newspapers across the country reported the events.

FUGITIVE SLAVE RIOT IN BOSTON!—U.S. MARSHAL SHOT DEAD!—THE MILITARY CALLED OUT!—GREAT EXCITEMENT!

Boston, May 27.—There was a most fearful riot in this city at a late hour last evening. The public mind is in a dreadful state of excitement and apprehension, and there is no telling when or how the matter will end.

The riot grew out of the abolition demonstration which has been made, and which is still making, in regard to the Fugitive Slave case.

A public meeting, as I have already apprised you, was held in the early part of the evening. It was attended by an immense concourse of people, whose passions were inflamed to the highest degree by the incendiary harangues of the speakers.

While this feeling was raging inside and outside of the meeting, a collision took place between the abolition fanatics and the authorities, aided by such citizens as felt disposed to preserve order at all hazards.

The Deputy U.S. Marshal was shot dead on the spot, and other citizens were seriously, if not dangerously, wounded.

The military were called out, and it was only by the most determined exertions that something like order was restored.

This morning, at 9 o’clock, the examination of the fugitive slave, Burns, was resumed before the United States Commissioner.

The Courthouse is surrounded by an immense mob numbering thousands, highly excited, and reckless enough to do the bidding of their leaders.

A strong military force is under arms ready to enforce obedience to the laws, if the most extreme measures have to be resorted to.

Richmond Enquirer, 30 May 1854

Central Ideas. A central idea is the overall topic of the entire piece.

1. What is the central idea that the author in the *Richmond Enquirer* is communicating to the reader of this document?
 - E. The fugitive slave on trial is named Anthony Burns.
 - H. Being a Deputy U.S. Marshall is a dangerous job.
 - O. The fugitive slave trial is causing abolitionists to riot in Boston.
 - Y. It is the job of the military to enforce the laws.

Words in Context. Define words based upon how they are used in the writing.

“This morning, at 9 o’clock, the examination of the fugitive slave, Burns, was resumed before the United States Commissioner.”

2. What does the word “fugitive” mean as it is used in the quote above?
- E. a person of great importance
 - H. someone who has been arrested or confined
 - O. a person fleeing from arrest or persecution
 - Y. to put on trial

Textual Evidence. Find evidence from the document.

3. Which quote below shows that the situation at the court house is getting dangerous?
- E. “A public meeting... was held in the early part of the evening....”
 - H. “The Deputy U.S. Marshal was shot dead on the spot....”
 - O. “The public mind is in a dreadful state of excitement and apprehension....”
 - Y. “the examination of the fugitive slave, Burns, was resumed before the United States....”
4. Why are abolitionists rioting in Boston?
- E. the police are harassing the citizens of Boston
 - H. the military is taking control of the city
 - O. abolitionists support the fugitive slave act
 - Y. Anthony Burns is being held at the Boston courthouse

Author’s Point of View. Authors sometimes favor one opinion or group over another. This is called bias. The words that an author uses can sometimes reveal the bias in their writing.

“While this feeling was raging inside and outside of the meeting, a collision took place between the abolition fanatics and the authorities, aided by such citizens as felt disposed to preserve order at all hazards.”

5. Analyze the quote above, which word(s) show(s) the author might have a bias.
- E. abolition fanatics
 - H. raging inside
 - O. preserve order
 - Y. authorities