

America's Most Wanted

Runaway Slave Advertisements

Summative Questions

- Note the detail devoted to physical appearance and dress. What were the typical visual clues that indicate a person's status (slave, servant, or free)?
- What evidence do these advertisements present of the techniques and strategies used to make their way to free society? Who was likely to help a runaway slave (see 4, 12, & 13)?
- What kinds of racial and ethnic diversity are evident in the slaves and servants in these advertisements? How does info about a runaway's birthplace contribute to your understanding of his or her motive and method for running away?
- Are there any significant differences in the structure and content of runaway advertisements from one region to another? If so, what do these differences tell you about regional variations in slavery and servitude in America?
- Where in these advertisements do you see evidence of different methods used to apprehend runaway slaves vs. runaway servants? How was a runaway's race likely to affect the punishment he or she faced if caught?
- Using what you have learned from these advertisements, compare the institutions of servitude and slavery in colonial America. In what ways were these worlds similar? What were the most significant differences?