

T&T Spring Semester
Special Project: Write an Enslaved Person Sketch

Our first special project for the spring semester is a sketch of an actual enslaved person in Texas, taken from material gathered by the Federal Writers' Project in the 1930s. The Federal Writers' Project was created by President Roosevelt during the Great Depression to help Americans get back to work. Writers gathered information on American culture and history by conducting oral interviews with living Americans who had experienced important events in our country's history.

One important project involved chronicling the experiences of previously enslaved people by interview and then transcribing the interviews. A list of many sample interview transcriptions may be found at the following address of the Library of Congress:

<https://www.loc.gov/collections/slave-narratives-from-the-federal-writers-project-1936-to-1938/about-this-collection/>

Be sure you have your parents permission before going online. Scroll down to the listings for Texas and, with your parent's help, choose an interview of a person who was enslaved in Texas. After reading the interview, create a sketch of the person. A character sketch is a way of describing or introducing another person. Based on your reading, answer the following question:

1. Describe the physical appearance of the person.
2. What is your subject's background? Home? Location? Family? Education?
3. Describe anything you observe about the person's personality or approach to life.
4. What kind of language does the subject use? What does that language or way of speaking lead you to think?
5. What past experiences have influenced the subject and how?

After answering the above questions, write a 1-2 page paper (double-spaced), introducing your subject to our class and sharing his/her significant experiences.