

## Teaching Guide

### SEGMENT 4, WEBISODE 5

Please note: Each segment in this Webisode has its own Teaching Guide



#### Segment Overview

Frederick Douglass would not reveal the route by which he fled from bondage in 1838. To do so, he said, would close the door to his fellows still enslaved who might take the same route. Rather than close doors to those he left behind once he had gained his own freedom, Frederick Douglass became an eloquent spokesperson and tireless worker in the abolition movement. Before the Civil War, he overcame his reluctance to speak before white audiences to reveal the true horrors of slavery as only the voice of experience could. His home in Rochester, New York became a station on the Underground Railroad. During the Civil War he influenced the Union to allow African Americans to join in the struggle, and he pressured President Lincoln to make emancipation a major issue in the war. After the war, Douglass continued to advocate for the rights and welfare of his fellow African American citizens.

#### Teacher Directions

##### Activity 1

1. Write the following quotation on the chalkboard, chart paper or a transparency.

*I was broken in body, soul, and spirit. My natural elasticity was crushed, my intellect languished, the disposition to read departed; the cheerful spark that lingered about my eye died; the dark night of slavery closed upon me; and behold a man transformed into a brute!*

*Frederick Douglass*

2. Ask the students.
  - Who was Frederick Douglass?
  - What does Frederick Douglass describe in this quotation?
  - What does he say slavery does to a man?
3. Make sure students understand the following points in discussing the questions.

Frederick Douglass was born into slavery on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. He fled in his early twenties to New York. As a free man, he became a powerful speaker and tireless worker in the anti-slavery cause. In this quotation, Douglass describes how enslavement affects the spirit. It turns a human into a brute, which is a term for a beast or monster with no hope and no noble human qualities.



#### Let's Discuss

Let's Discuss, Cont.

## Activity Two

1. Help students realize that many people in the United States were highly opposed to slavery, and they came from many different walks of life. Slaves in the South had black and white allies in the North who understood "The Fatal Contradiction."
2. Make a transparency of the dramatic painting of John Brown (Student Sheet: *John Brown* ). Using the transparency, explain to the students that John Brown was an abolitionist who wanted to begin a slave uprising. Brown tried to take over an arsenal (a place where weapons are stored) in Harpers Ferry, Virginia, in 1859. Emphasize that few, if any, abolitionists looked like the avenging John Brown of this painting.
3. Review with students that abolitionists wanted to end slavery immediately. Explain that there were abolitionist societies or groups of people who met to discuss how to end slavery. Many other people opposed slavery on religious, moral, and constitutional grounds but did not join special groups or societies.
4. Distribute the Student Sheet: *What Does An Abolitionist Look Like?* Discuss the differences in appearances, dress, color/race, and gender. Help the students understand that those who opposed slavery were men and women, rich and poor, black and white.
5. Help the students understand that, even today, people who support different causes and issues such as abortion, the death penalty, women's rights, minority rights, and gun control, to name a few, do not have a particular "look." Stress that all are ordinary people with strong beliefs.

## Teacher Directions

1. Tell students that Frederick Douglas wrote an autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, in which he describes his life enslaved under seven different masters.
2. Distribute the Student Sheets: *From the Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, giving one complete set to each team. Read each excerpt from Douglass' autobiography aloud to the students so that they can enjoy the power of the writing. Assist students with difficult vocabulary and discuss important points of each passage.
3. Ask the students.
  - What treatment did Douglass receive from this master?
  - How did he respond?
  - What did he learn?
4. Working individually, collaborating in their teams, or working as a class, students write a line of poetry, a couplet, or a four-line stanza that reflects Douglass' experience and emotions in each excerpt.



History Sleuth

5. Students combine their verses into a longer poem about the life of Douglass while he was enslaved.
6. Students draw illustrations of Douglass's life to accompany their poetry.

### Teacher Directions

1. Read to the students the following quotation from Frederick Douglass' autobiography.

*I have observed this in my experience of slavery, that whenever my condition was improved, instead of increasing my contentment, it only increased my desire to be free, and set me to thinking of plans to gain my freedom. I have found that, to make a contented slave, it is necessary to make a thoughtless one.*

2. Students discuss why Douglass' statement is true.
  - What is a "thoughtless slave"?
  - How did slaveholders keep their enslaved people thoughtless?
  - What does a hungry, tired, beaten slave think about instead of freedom?
  - Why did better treatment make Douglass think about gaining his freedom?

### Teacher Directions

#### Activity One

1. Students use books, encyclopedias, the Internet, and other resources to research abolitionists. Possible names include William Lloyd Garrison, Henry Garnet, Samuel and Julia Ward Howe, Sojourner Truth, Lydia Maria Child, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Edward Beecher, Henry Ward Beecher, Horace Greeley, Harriet Tubman, Henry and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, John Brown, Wendell Phillips, and Gerrit Smith.
2. Students list the methods that these men and women used to move enslaved people and the entire nation toward freedom (lecturing and preaching in churches; writing articles, pamphlets and books; publishing newspapers; organizing abolition societies; organizing parades and rallies; helping slaves escape to freedom; violence; providing education, money, and land for free Africans.)
3. Students discuss the following questions in their teams.
  - Describe the results of these methods.
  - Which methods had immediate results?
  - Which methods had long lasting results?
  - If you were an abolitionist, which methods would you use and why?



What do you  
Think?



Moving Toward  
Freedom

## Activity Two

1. If necessary, introduce the following terms and help the students understand their meanings.

*abolitionist* — person who opposed slavery

*Underground Railroad* — secret system of routes that runaway slaves followed to find freedom in northern United States or Canada

*Literacy/illiteracy* — a literate person knows how to read and write; an illiterate person does not

*conductor* — someone who helped slaves make their way to freedom on the Underground Railroad

*orator* — a person who gives speeches

*safehouses* — homes on the routes of the Underground Railroad where runaway slaves could find food and spend the night

2. Distribute the Student Sheet: *...and now a few words from Frederick Douglass*
3. Divide class into five teams (A, B, C, D, E). These teams match the divisions on the Student Sheet: *...and now a few words from Frederick Douglass*.
4. Each team reads its segment on the Student Sheet and discusses the meaning and motivation behind Douglass' words.
5. Help students understand why slaveowners would benefit from keeping their slaves illiterate. In order for students to fully understand the importance of this concept, ask the following question: If *all* slaves could read and write, what might they have been able to do in seeking their freedom?
6. Students should include the following points in their discussion. If enslaved persons could read and write, they may have been able to
  - use written messages to arrange for secret meetings
  - communicate with their families and seek ways to see their friends and families
  - learn how black Americans were treated in other parts of the country
  - read a newspaper and the writings of the abolitionists
  - communicate about common problems and mistreatments
  - plan an escape route using a map that they could read and follow
7. Explain that Douglass himself said: "Fugitive slaves were rare then, and as a fugitive slave lecturer, I had the advantage of being the first one out."
8. Ask the students how the speeches of Frederick Douglass helped Americans understand "The Fatal Contradiction"—that all men were free and equal under the Constitution – except in certain states of the Union. Students should include the following points in their discussion.
  - From Douglass, Americans could hear a first person (primary source) account about the difficult lives led by slaves as well as the horrors of slavery.

Moving Toward Freedom,  
Continued.



### Connections

- His speeches attracted more people to the abolitionist cause.
- More people became conductors on the Underground Railroad, and more Americans provided safehouses for runaway slaves who were seeking freedom in the North.
- More Americans came to believe that the solution to freeing enslaved people in the United States was war.
- Douglass was an excellent motivational speaker.

9. Use the Student Sheet: *...And now a few words from Frederick Douglass* to help the students identify Douglass' use of motivational and emotional word choices.

### Teacher Directions

Use the following activities with your students.

**Geography** — Students locate a map of Maryland and find the places where Frederick Douglas lived and worked while enslaved.

**Literature** — Students read more passages from *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*.

**Language Arts** — Frederick Douglass wrote many anti-slavery speeches during his lifetime. Students write a speech about something that they would do to change the world. Share the speeches with the class.

**Language Arts** — Students write a brief story about a fugitive slave who comes to their door asking for help. Give him or her a name. Describe where you would hide this person from the slavechasers. How would you help this person get to Canada? What items would you give this person to help him or her travel across the country – what kinds of food? Clothing?

**Geography** — Students use a large map of the United States to study the terrain (rivers, mountains, etc.) that would present problems for runaway slaves who were not familiar with the territory.

**Art** — Students create brochures or posters advocating the freeing of slaves.

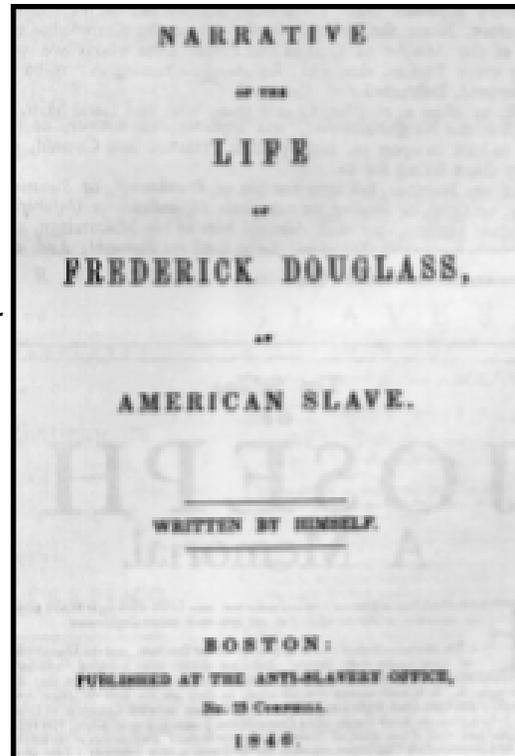
**Music** — Locate well-known spirituals for the students to hear. Play them for students. Teach some of the songs.

**Language Arts** — Students use the Student Sheet: *In Our Own Words* to make a list of questions that they would ask these three former slaves if they were alive today.

## From the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*

On Captain Anthony's farm, Talbot County, Maryland

*I never saw my mother to know her as such, more than four or five times in my life: and each of these times was very short in duration, and at night. She was hired by a Mr. Stewart, who lived about twelve miles from my home. She made her journeys to see me in the night, traveling the whole distance on foot, after the performance of her day's work....She would lie down with me and get me to sleep, but long before I waked she was gone. Very little communication took place between us. Death soon ended what little we could have while she lived, and with it her hardships and suffering. She died when I was about seven years old, on one of my master's farms near Lee's Mill. I was not allowed to be present during her illness, at her death, or burial. She was gone long before I knew anything about it.*



On Colonel Lloyd's plantation, Talbot County, Maryland

*As to my own treatment while I lived on Colonel Lloyd's plantation, it was very similar to that of other slave children. I was not old enough to work in the field, and there being little else than field work to do, I had a great deal of leisure time. The most I had to do was drive up the cows at evening, keep the fowls out of the garden, keep the front yard clean, and run errands for my old master's daughter, Mrs. Lucretia Auld. The most of my leisure time I spent in helping Master Daniel Lloyd in finding his birds after he had shot them...I was seldom whipped by my old master, and suffered little from anything else than hunger and cold.*

## From the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*

In Hugh Auld's house, Baltimore, Maryland



*I lived in Master Hugh's family about seven years. During this time I succeeded in learning to read and write. In accomplishing this I was compelled to resort to various stratagems. I had no regular teacher. My mistress, who had kindly commenced to instruct me, had, in compliance with the advice and direction of her husband, not only ceased to instruct me, but had set her face against my being instructed by any one else.... The plan which I adopted, and the one by which I was most successful, was that of making friends of all the little white boys whom I met in the street. As many of these as I could, I converted into teachers... When I was sent on errands, I always took my book with me, and by doing one part of my errand quickly, I found time to get a lesson before my return. I used also to carry bread with me, enough of which was always in the house, and to which I was always welcome; for I was much better off in this regard than many of the poor white children in our neighborhood. This bread I used to bestow on the hungry little urchins, who in return would give me the more valuable bread of knowledge.*

In Thomas Auld's house, St. Michael's Maryland

*My master and myself had quite a number of differences. He found me unsuitable to his purpose.... One of my greatest faults was that of letting his horse run away, and go down to his father-in-law's farm, which was about five miles from St. Michael's. I would then have to go after it. My reason for this kind of carelessness, or carefulness, was, that I could always get something to eat when I went there. Master William Hamilton, my master's father-in-law, always gave his slaves enough to eat. I never left there hungry, no matter how great the need of my speedy return. Master Thomas said at length that he would stand it no longer. I had lived with him nine months, during which time he had given me a number of severe whippings, all to no good purpose. He resolved to put me out as he said, to be broken; and for this purpose he let me for one year to a man named Edward Covey.*



## From the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*

On Edward Covey's farm near St. Michael's, Maryland

*Mr. Covey entered the stable with a long rope; and just as I was half out of the loft, he caught hold of my legs, and was about tying me. As soon as I found what he was up to, I gave a sudden spring, and as I did so, he holding my legs, I was brought sprawling on the stable floor. Mr. Covey seemed now to think he had me, and could do what he pleased; but at this moment – from whence came the spirit I don't know – I resolved to fight...I seized Covey hard by the throat...causing the blood to run where I touched him with the ends of my fingers. Mr. Covey soon called out to Hughes to help.... I watched my chance and gave him a heavy kick close under the ribs. This kick had the effect of not only weakening Hughes, but Covey also. When he saw Hughes bending over with pain, his courage quailed. He asked me if I meant to persist in my resistance, I told him I did, come what might. He had treated me like a brute for six months and I was determined to be used so no longer....We were at it for nearly two hours. Covey at length let me go,*



*puffing and blowing at a great rate....This battle with Mr. Covey was the turning-point in my career as a slave. It rekindled the few expiring embers of freedom, and revived within me a sense of my own manhood.*

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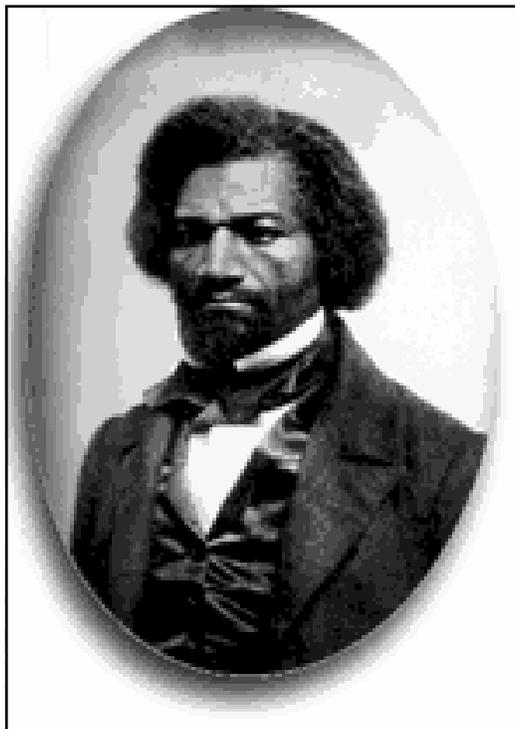
On Mr. William Freeland's farm near St. Michael's, Maryland

*Mr. Freeland was himself the owner of but two slaves. Their names were Henry Harris and John Harris...I succeeded in creating in them a strong desire to learn how to read. This desire soon sprang up in the others also. They very soon mustered up some old spelling-books, and nothing would do but that I must keep a Sabbath school. I agreed to do so, and accordingly devoted my Sundays to teaching these my loved fellow-slaves how to read...Some of the slaves of the neighboring farm found what was going on, and also availed themselves of this opportunity to learn to read....I had at one time over forty scholars....They were of all ages, though mostly men and women. I look back to those Sundays with an amount of pleasure not to be expressed. They were great days to my soul.*

## From the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*

Free in New York City

*The wretchedness of slavery, and the blessedness of freedom, were perpetually before me. It was life and death with me. But I remained firm, and according to my resolution, on the third day of September, 1838, I left my chains and succeeded in reaching New York without the slightest interruption of any kind....I have frequently been asked how I felt when I found myself in a free State. I have never been able to answer the question with any satisfaction to myself. It was a moment of the highest excitement I ever experienced. I suppose I felt as one may imagine the unarmed mariner to feel when he is rescued by a friendly man-of-war from the pursuit of a pirate. In writing to a dear friend, immediately after my arrival in New York, I said I felt like one who had escaped a den of hungry lions. This state of mind, however, very soon subsided; and I was again seized with a feeling of great insecurity and loneliness. I was yet liable to be taken back, and subjected to all the tortures of slavery.*



Library of Congress

# JOHN BROWN

## ~ ~ ABOLITIONIST ~ ~



National Park Service

*“Is it not possible that an individual may be right and a government wrong? Are laws to be enforced simply because they were made? Or declared to be good. . . if they are not good?”*

*—Thoreau*

What  
Does An  
Abolitionist  
Look  
Like?



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William Wilberforce



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Harriet Tubman



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Harriet Beecher Stowe



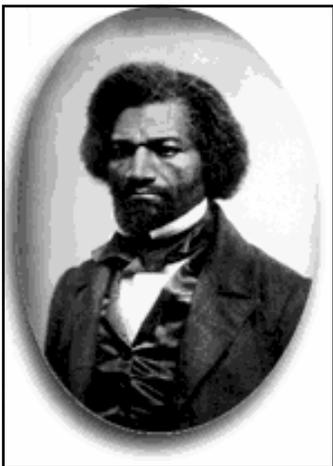
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Henry David Thoreau



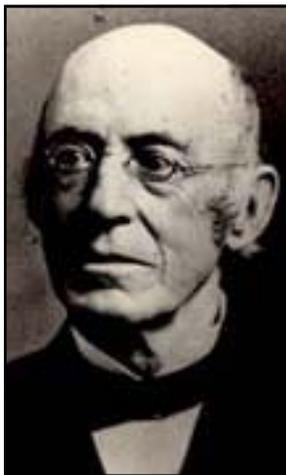
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Lucretia Mott



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Frederick Douglass



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William Lloyd Garrison

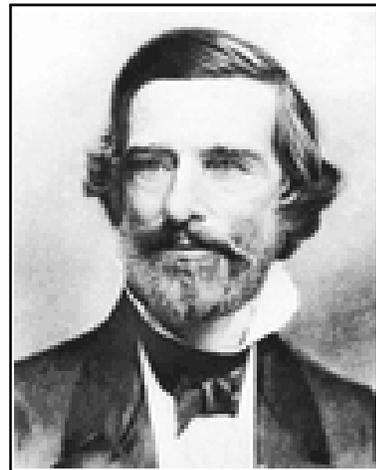


Photo courtesy of Perkins School for the Blind, Watertown, MA

Samuel Gridley Howe



...and now a few words  
from  
Frederick Douglass  
Excerpts from 4th of July Speech -1852

(A) My subject, fellow citizens, is American Slavery...from the slave's point of view. I do not hesitate to declare with all my soul that the character and conduct of this nation never looked blacker to me than on this Fourth of July....America is false to the past, false to the present, and solemnly binds herself to be false to the future...

(B) There are seventy crimes in the state of Virginia which, if committed by a black man...subject him to the punishment of death, while only two of the same crimes will submit a white man to the like punishment....It is admitted in the fact that the Southern statute books [forbid] under severe fines and penalties the teaching of the slave to read and write.

(C)...it is wrong to make men brutes, to rob them of their liberty, to work them without wages, to keep them ignorant of their relations to their fellow men, to beat them with sticks, to flay their flesh, to load their limbs with iron, to hunt them with dogs, to sell them at auction, to starve them into submission to their masters....

(D) At a time like this, scorching iron, not convincing argument, is needed....For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake....Crimes against God and man must be proclaimed and denounced....

(E) What to the American slave is your Fourth of July? I answer, a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him your celebration is a sham....your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery...for revolting barbarity and shameless hypocrisy, America reigns without a rival.

Vocabulary Terms for Students to Look Up:

*solemn, statute books, flay, proclaim, denounce, gross injustice, mockery, barbarity, hypocrisy.*

## *In Our Own Words: Letters from Former Slaves*

“Miss Betsy, my mistress...was a violent advocate of slavery ...but an otherwise Christian character... A tall, hard-looking man came up to me, very roughly seized my arm, examined my teeth, and said “I will take her.”...My mother came up...tear-drops on her cheeks and her whole frame was distorted with pain....then rocking back and forth...she gave a long, loud piteous wail. Oh God that cry of grief...rang in my ears....Aunt Kitty approached me...”You must place your trust in the Good God above...you are to have a new master...her wrinkled face was wet with tears.

—Martha Browne, 1857

“I was given to a negro slave trader ... {he} found he could not sell me very well (as I was so much whiter than the other slaves)...I was returned to Mr. Gooch....Mr. Condell, his overseer, gave me the task of pulling fodder... the rain came...knowing I would get a flogging because the fodder got wet...I ran to the woods half-naked. I was caught by a slave-holder...[he escapes again] I got to the Catarba River...I forced the ring off my chain...[again he was caught] Mr. Gooch proceeded to punish me...[he also recalls] Slaves can only go to church at the will of their master...or they will be flogged.”

—Moses Roper, 1857

“I was born a slave, but I never knew it till six years of happy childhood had passed... {My father’s} strongest wish was to purchase his children...we were termed mulattoes....I never dreamed I was a piece of merchandise...Mrs. Flint was a member of the church...if dinner was not served on time, she would wait till it was dished, and then spit in all the kettles...to prevent the cook and her children from eking out their meager fare...I saw a mother lead seven children to the auction block....they took all....She wrung her hands in anguish, and exclaimed ‘Gone! All gone! Why don’t God kill me!’...My master met me at every turn, reminding me that I belonged to him...I would have given the world to have laid my head on my grandmother’s bosom.”

—Harriet Jackson