

COLLECTION 3

The Move Toward Freedom



In this collection, you will focus on the quest for freedom that led to the American Civil War.



COLLECTION

PERFORMANCE TASK Preview

At the end of this collection, you will complete two performance tasks:

- In the first, you will create a visual presentation to highlight the work of those who fought to end slavery.
- In the second, you will write a literary analysis in which you consider the symbolism in a story in light of its historical context.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

Study the words and their definitions in the chart below. You will use these words as you discuss and write about the texts in this collection.

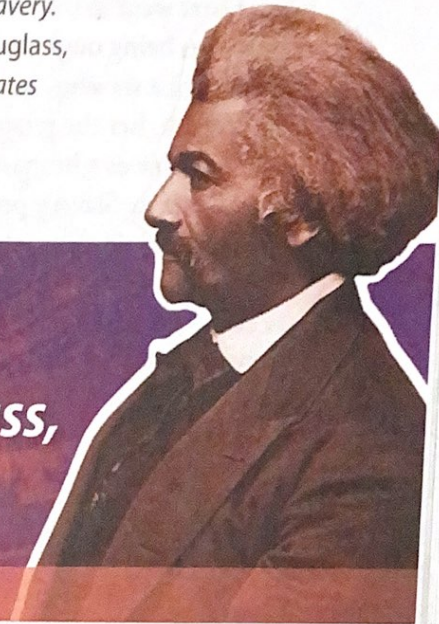
Word	Definition	Related Forms
access (ăk'sēs) <i>n.</i>	a way of approaching or making use of	accessible, accessed
civil (sīv'əl) <i>adj.</i>	of, or related to, citizens and their relations with each other and the state	civilization, civilian, civil rights
demonstrate (dēm'an-strāt') <i>v.</i>	to show clearly and deliberately	demonstration, demonstrable
document (dŏk'yə-mənt) <i>n.</i>	written or printed paper that provides evidence or information	documentary, documentation
symbolize (sīm'bə-līz') <i>v.</i>	to serve as a symbol of, or represent something else	symbol, symbolic, symbolism



Frederick Douglass (1818–1895) was born into enslavement in Maryland at a time when slavery was still legal in many states in the Union. As Douglass grew up, he tried to escape several times. Finally, in 1838, he succeeded. Douglass went on to become a famous speaker and writer, fighting to abolish, or end, slavery. His autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, became a best seller in the United States and Europe.

from
***Narrative of the
Life of Frederick Douglass,
an American Slave***

Autobiography by Frederick Douglass



SETTING A PURPOSE As you read, consider why Frederick Douglass chose these particular events to write about. Think about what his focus on these events reveals about his character and his struggle for freedom.

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, but had set her face against my being instructed by any one else. It is due, however, to my mistress to say of her, that she did not adopt this course of treatment immediately.
¹⁰ She at first lacked the depravity¹ indispensable to shutting me up in mental darkness. It was at least necessary for her to have

¹ **depravity** (dī-prāv'ī-tē): moral corruption.

some training in the exercise of irresponsible power, to make her equal to the task of treating me as though I were a brute.

My mistress was, as I have said, a kind and tender-hearted woman; and in the simplicity of her soul she **commenced**, when I first went to live with her, to treat me as she supposed one human being ought to treat another. In entering upon the duties of a slaveholder, she did not seem to perceive that I sustained to her the relation of a mere chattel,² and that for
20 her to treat me as a human being was not only wrong, but dangerously so. Slavery proved as injurious to her as it did to me. When I went there, she was a pious warm, and tender-hearted woman. There was no sorrow or suffering for which she had not a tear. She had bread for the hungry, clothes for the naked, and comfort for every mourner that came within her reach. Slavery soon proved its ability to divest her of these heavenly qualities. Under its influence, the tender heart became stone, and the lamblike disposition gave way to one of tigerlike fierceness. The first step in her downward course was
30 in her ceasing to instruct me. She now commenced to practise her husband's precepts.³ She finally became even more violent in her opposition than her husband himself. She was not satisfied with simply doing as well as he had commanded; she seemed anxious to do better. Nothing seemed to make her more angry than to see me with a newspaper. She seemed to think that here lay the danger. I have had her rush at me with a face made all up of fury, and snatch from me a newspaper, in a manner that fully revealed her **apprehension**. She was an apt woman; and a little experience soon demonstrated, to
40 her satisfaction, that education and slavery were incompatible with each other.

From this time I was most narrowly watched. If I was in a separate room any considerable length of time, I was sure to be suspected of having a book, and was at once called to give an account of myself. All this, however, was too late. The first step had been taken. Mistress, in teaching me the alphabet, had given me the *inch*, and no precaution could prevent me from taking the *ell*.

commence
(kə-měns') v. When things *commence*, they begin or start.

apprehension
(ăp-rĭ-hěns'hən) n. *Apprehension* is the fear or dread of the future.

² **chattel** (chăt'l): a property or slave.

³ **precepts** (prĕ'sĕpts): a rule or principal regarding action or conduct.

“Slavery proved as injurious
to her as it did to me.”

The plan which I adopted, and the one by which I was
50 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. With their kindly aid,
obtained at different times and in different places, I finally
succeeded in learning to read. When I was sent of errands,
I always took my book with me, and by going 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
60 white children in our neighborhood. This bread I used to
bestow upon the hungry little urchins, who, in return, would
give me that more valuable bread of knowledge. I am strongly
tempted to give the names of two or three of those little boys,
as a testimonial of the gratitude and affection I bear them; but
prudence forbids;—not that it would injure me, but it might
embarrass them; for it is almost an unpardonable offence to
teach slaves to read in this Christian country. It is enough to
say of the dear little fellows, that they lived on Philpot Street,
very near Durgin and Bailey’s ship-yard. I used to talk this
70 matter of slavery over with them. I would sometimes say to
them, I wished I could be as free as they would be when they
got to be men. “You will be free as soon as you are twenty-one,
but I am a slave for life! Have not I as good a right to be free
as you have?” These words used to trouble them; they would
express for me the liveliest sympathy, and console me with the
hope that something would occur by which I might be free.

I was now about twelve years old, and the thought of
being *a slave for life* began to bear heavily upon my heart.
Just about this time, I got hold of a book entitled “The
80 Columbian Orator.”⁴ Every opportunity I got, I used to read
this book. Among much of other interesting matter, I found
in it a dialogue between a master and his slave. The slave was

prudence
(prōd’ns) *n.*
Prudence is the wise
handling of practical
matters.

⁴ “**The Columbian Orator**”: a collection of political essays, poems, and dialogues that were used to teach reading and speaking at the beginning of the 19th century.

represented as having run away from his master three times. The dialogue represented the conversation which took place between them, when the slave was retaken the third time. In this dialogue, the whole argument in behalf of slavery was brought forward by the master, all of which was disposed of by the slave. The slave was made to say some very smart as well as impressive things in reply to his master—things which had
90 the desired though unexpected effect; for the conversation resulted in the voluntary emancipation of the slave on the part of the master.

In the same book, I met with one of Sheridan's mighty speeches on and in behalf of Catholic emancipation.⁵ These were choice documents to me. I read them over and over again with unabated interest. They gave tongue to interesting thoughts of my own soul, which had frequently flashed through my mind, and died away for want of utterance. The moral which I gained from the dialogue was the power of
100 truth over the conscience of even a slaveholder. What I got from Sheridan was a bold **denunciation** of slavery, and a powerful **vindication** of human rights. The reading of these documents enabled me to utter my thoughts, and to meet the arguments brought forward to sustain slavery; but while they relieved me of one difficulty, they brought on another even more painful than the one of which I was relieved. The more I read, the more I was led to abhor and detest my enslavers. I could regard them in no other light than a band of successful robbers, who had left their homes, and gone to Africa, and
110 stolen us from our homes, and in a strange land reduced us to slavery. I loathed them as being the meanest as well as the most wicked of men. As I read and contemplated the subject, behold! that very discontentment which Master Hugh had predicted would follow my learning to read had already come, to torment and sting my soul to unutterable anguish. As I writhed under it, I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy. It opened

unabated

(ŭn'ă-bă'tīd) *adj.*
If something is *unabated*, it keeps its full force without decreasing.

denunciation

(dĭ-nŭn'sē-ă'shən) *n.*
A *denunciation* is the public condemnation of something as wrong or evil.

vindication

(vĭn'dĭ-kă'shən) *n.*
Vindication is the evidence or proof that someone's claim is correct.

⁵ **one of Sheridan's mighty speeches on and behalf of Catholic emancipation:** Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751–1816) was an Irish playwright and politician who made speeches about the rights of people who practiced the Roman Catholic religion in Britain and Ireland.

my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to
120 get out. In moments of agony, I envied my fellow-slaves for
their stupidity. I have often wished myself a beast. I preferred
the condition of the meanest reptile to my own. Any thing,
no matter what, to get rid of thinking! It was this everlasting
thinking of my condition that tormented me. There was no
getting rid of it. It was pressed upon me by every object within
sight or hearing, animate or inanimate. The silver trump of
freedom had roused my soul to eternal wakefulness. Freedom
now appeared, to disappear no more forever. It was heard
in every sound, and seen in every thing. It was ever present
130 to torment me with a sense of my wretched condition. I saw
nothing without seeing it, I heard nothing without hearing it,
and felt nothing without feeling it. It looked from every star, it
smiled in every calm, breathed in every wind, and moved in
every storm.

COLLABORATIVE DISCUSSION Frederick Douglass describes his ability to read as a curse. With a partner, discuss why he comes to think this way after working so hard to learn to read. Cite specific evidence from the text to support your ideas.

Analyze Text: Autobiography

8.RI.1.3, 8.RI.2.6

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass is an **autobiography**, an account of the writer's own life. Almost all autobiographies

- are told from the first-person point of view using the pronouns *I* and *me*
- focus on the most significant events and people over a period of time in the author's life

Authors of autobiography often have a **purpose**, or reason for writing, beyond informing readers about what happened to one individual. For example, writers might also want to shed light on the time period in which they lived, or on an issue that has shaped their lives as well as the lives of others. Sometimes writers state their purpose directly, but often you must infer it by paying attention to what topics they come back to repeatedly and the thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs about these topics that they reveal.

What topic does Frederick Douglass focus on in this excerpt of his autobiography?

Analyze Structure

8.RI.2.5

In an autobiography, authors often choose to focus on events that are related by **cause and effect**, which means that one event brings about another event or creates a change in attitude. The first event is the cause, and what follows is the effect. Paragraphs may be structured to show these cause-and-effect relationships.

For example, review the second paragraph of this selection. Douglass begins by saying his mistress was "a kind and tender-hearted woman," and he gives examples to support his statement. Then he explains how slavery caused her to change. "Under its influence, the tender heart became stone, and the lamblike disposition gave way to one of tigerlike fierceness." He supports this description of slavery's effects by giving examples. "Nothing seemed to make her more angry than to see me with a newspaper. . . . I have had her rush at me with a face made all up of fury, and snatch from me a newspaper."

Cause: Slavery



Effect: A kind woman turns angry and cruel.

Review the autobiography and find another paragraph that explains a cause-and-effect relationship.

Analyzing the Text

Cite Text Evidence

Support your responses with evidence from the text.

8.RI.1.1, 8.RI.1.3,
8.RI.2.4, 8.RI.2.5,
8.RI.2.6,
8.W.1.2b,
8.W.3.9b,
8.SL.1.1a,
8.SL.2.4

- 1. Cause/Effect** Read lines 14–48. Did the mistress's initial kindness or her eventual cruelty have a greater effect on Frederick Douglass? Explain.
- 2. Interpret** When describing how he paid his child tutors, Douglass says, "This bread I used to bestow upon the hungry little urchins, who, in return, would give me that more valuable bread of knowledge." In what way is knowledge "bread"?
- 3. Cause/Effect** Douglass reads a dialogue between a master and his slave as well as a speech by Sheridan. In a chart like the one shown, list several effects that resulted from reading these documents.



- 4. Analyze** Why does Douglass say in line 121, "I have often wished myself a beast"?
- 5. Evaluate** Reread lines 105–112. What words reveal Douglass's perspective on, or view of, slaveholders?
- 6. Analyze** What is Douglass's purpose for writing? Identify three events in this selection that help him achieve his goal.

Speaking and Listening

In lines 116–117, Douglass says "I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing." With a partner or small group, discuss Douglass's statement and examine whether people today might share his attitude. Be sure to support your views with evidence from the text.

PERFORMANCE TASK

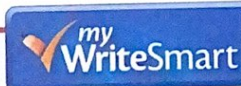
Writing Activity: Literary Analysis

How does the tone of Douglass's autobiography help him achieve his purpose? Write a short literary analysis.

- With a partner, discuss the author's purpose for writing. Identify the **tone** of the piece, or the writer's

attitude toward his subject.

- Next, find examples where Douglass's choice of words helps establish the tone.
- When you write, begin by stating your view. Then support that view with evidence from the text.



Critical Vocabulary

8.L.3.4a, 8.L.3.4b

commence

apprehension

prudence

unabated

denunciation

vindication

Practice and Apply Use what you know about the Vocabulary words to answer the following questions.

1. If a criminal receives **vindication**, will he feel relieved or upset?
2. Which demonstrates **prudence**, saving an allowance or spending it all?
3. To **commence** baking a cake, would you stir the batter or study the recipe?
4. Which is a type of **denunciation**, praise or criticism?
5. Would you feel **apprehension** about taking a test or about getting an A?
6. If your interest in Frederick Douglass is **unabated**, will you read many books about him or just one?

Vocabulary Strategy: Use Context Clues

Context clues are the words, phrases, and sentences surrounding a word that provide hints about a word's definition. These clues can be found either before or after the unfamiliar word. Look at this example:

She seemed to think that here lay the danger. I have had her rush at me with a face made all up of fury . . . in a manner that fully revealed her apprehension.

The first sentence says that the subject perceives some danger. This provides a clue to the meaning of the word *apprehension*, which you can infer is a feeling of fear or dread that often arises in the face of danger. The dictionary definition confirms this guess.

Practice and Apply Find the following words in Douglass's autobiography. Look at the surrounding words, phrases, and sentences for clues to each word's meaning. On a separate piece of paper, fill out a chart like the one shown.

Word	Context Clues	Guessed Definition	Dictionary Definition
divest (line 26)			
apt (line 39)			
bestow (line 61)			
console (line 75)			