

**A Close Reading Model Lesson with Student Supports:**  
***Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave***

## Purpose

The student supports in this document were developed by the Rhode Island Department of Education. They accompany the Close Reading Model Lesson for *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* developed by Achieve the Core.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of the supports is to enable students with different learning needs to benefit from the opportunity for close analytic reading of this complex text. Reader and task considerations make this a more complex text for such students than it is for the typical range of their peers.<sup>1</sup> The supports provided here, however, do not take away the students' responsibility for reading the text. As Bunch, Kibler, and Pimentel state: "Leveraging students' existing background knowledge, and building new knowledge, can be accomplished in a number of ways before and during a lesson or unit of study—without preempting the text, translating its contents for students, telling students what they are going to learn in advance of reading a particular text, or 'simplifying' the text itself." Therefore, even with these supports, students are expected to grapple with the text and do the work of close reading with as much independence as possible.

## How to Use this Resource

The left-hand column(s) is the original close reading lesson. The right-hand column of the Close Reading Model Lesson is headed **Student Supports**; it includes or references all student supports provided in the document. A set of additional text-dependent questions for scaffolding students' reading is included within this column. Other supports, because they were too lengthy to fit in the column, appear at the end of the document in a section titled Extended Student Supports (ESS). Annotations in the right-hand column of the Close Reading Lesson link to the supports in the ESS by page number.

The Extended Student Supports include:

- I. Overall Recommendations:
  - Create a Context for the Lesson
  - Teach and Practice Routines for Reading Closely
- II. Vocabulary Resources
- III. Activities
  - Preparing the Learner (two days preceding the close reading lesson)
  - Interacting with the Text (supports for students during the lesson)

<sup>1</sup> The entire model lesson can be found at [www.achievethecore.org](http://www.achievethecore.org); it includes three Appendices with additional instructional opportunities for mixed ability groups.

<sup>1</sup> For more information on how reader and task considerations impact text complexity, refer to Appendix A of the CCSS.

## Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself* - Grade 8

Originally published in Boston: Anti-Slavery Office, 1845.

**Learning Objective:** The goal of this two to three day exemplar is to give students the opportunity to explore the point of view of a man who survived slavery. By reading and rereading the passage closely, combined with classroom discussion about it, students will explore the various beliefs and points of view Douglass experienced as he became increasingly aware of the unfairness of his life. Students will need to consider the emotional context of words and how diction (word choice) affects an author’s message. When combined with writing about the passage and teacher feedback, students will form a deeper understanding of how slavery affected those involved.

**Reading Task:** *Students will silently read the passage in question on a given day—first independently and then following along with the text as the teacher and/or skillful students read aloud. Depending on the difficulties of a given text and the teacher’s knowledge of the fluency abilities of students, the order of the student silent read and the teacher reading aloud with students following might be reversed. What is important is to allow all students to interact with challenging text on their own as frequently and independently as possible. Students will then reread specific passages in response to a set of concise, text-dependent questions that compel them to examine the meaning and structure of Douglass’s prose. Therefore, rereading is deliberately built into the instructional unit.*

**Vocabulary Task:** *Most of the meanings of words in the exemplar text can be discovered by students from careful reading of the context in which they appear. Teachers can use discussions to model and reinforce how to learn vocabulary from contextual clues, and students must be held accountable for engaging in this practice. Where it is judged this is not possible, underlined words are defined briefly for students to the right of the text in a separate column whenever the original text is reproduced. At times, this is all the support these defined words need. At other times, particularly with abstract words, teachers will need to spend more time explaining and discussing them. In addition, in subsequent close readings of passages of the text, high value academic (‘Tier Two’) words have been **bolded** to draw attention to them. Given how crucial vocabulary knowledge is for academic and career success, it is essential that these high value words be discussed and lingered over during the instructional sequence.*

**Sentence Syntax Task:** *On occasion students will encounter particularly difficult sentences to decode. Teachers should engage in a close examination of such sentences to help students discover how they are built and how they convey meaning. While many questions addressing important aspects of the text double as questions about syntax, students should receive regular supported practice in deciphering complex sentences. It is crucial that the help they receive in unpacking text complexity*

### Student Supports

Overall recommendations for creating a context for close reading can be found in ESS, p.1: Create a Context for the Lesson Allow for at least six days of instruction to include:

Preparing the Learners  
Interacting with the Text

Additional time may be needed for pre-teaching vocabulary.

See Vocabulary Resources, ESS, p 2.

*focuses both on the precise meaning of what the author is saying and why the author might have constructed the sentence in this particular fashion. That practice will in turn support students' ability to unpack meaning from syntactically complex sentences they encounter in future reading.*

**Discussion Task:** *Students will discuss the exemplar text in depth with their teacher and their classmates, performing activities that result in a close reading of Douglass's prose. The goal is to foster student confidence when encountering complex text and to reinforce the skills they have acquired regarding how to build and extend their understanding of a text. A general principle is to always reread the passage that provides evidence for the question under discussion. This gives students another encounter with the text, helping them develop fluency and reinforcing their use of text evidence.*

**Writing Task:** *Students will write an explanatory paragraph using their understanding of the word choice and emotions expressed in the selection to present their opinions about what Douglass is trying to explain to the audience. Teachers might afford students the opportunity to revise their paragraphs after participating in classroom discussion or receiving teacher feedback, allowing them to refashion both their understanding of the text and their expression of that understanding.*

**Outline of Lesson Plan:** This lesson can be delivered in two to three days of instruction and reflection on the part of students and their teacher.

**Standards Addressed:** The following Common Core State Standards are the focus of this exemplar: RL.8.1, RL.8.2, RL.8.3, RL.8.4; W.8.1, W.8.4; SL.8.1, SL.8.3.

## Student Supports

### Outline of Lesson Plan:

In order to provide this population of students with the necessary supports, this lesson requires at least 6 days of instruction. The Student Support Schedule (SSS) includes additional days for instruction. The content aligns with the general instruction, however the sequence of days will differ based on the additional time provided.

### Preparing the Learners:

SSS Days 1-2: Choose from the activities found in Extended Student Supports. Additional time may be needed depending upon the needs of the students.

### Interacting with the Text: (Close Reading)

SSS Day 3: 1<sup>st</sup> Paragraph

SSS Day 4: 2<sup>nd</sup> Paragraph

SSS Days 5-6: 3<sup>rd</sup> Paragraph

**The Text: Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass an American Slave, Written by Himself* (1845)**

Exemplar Text	Vocabulary Defined	Student Supports
<p>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 <b>converted</b> 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 on errands, I always took my book with me, and by going on one part of my <u>errand</u> 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 <u>bestow</u> upon the hungry little <b>urchins</b>, who, in return, would give me that more valuable bread of knowledge. I am strongly <b>tempted</b> to give the names of two or three of those little boys, as a <b>testimonial</b> of the <u>gratitude</u> and affection I bear them; but <u>prudence</u> forbids;—not that it would injure me, but it might embarrass them; for it is almost an <b>unpardonable</b> 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 <u>ship-yard</u>. I used to talk this 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 <b>liveliest sympathy</b>, and <b>console</b> me with the hope that something would occur by which I might be free.</p> <p>I was now about twelve years old, and the thought of being a slave for life began to <b>bear</b> heavily upon my heart. Just about this time, I got hold of a book entitled “The Columbian <u>Orator</u>.” Every opportunity I got, I used to read this book. Among much of other interesting matter, I found in it a <b>dialogue</b> between a master and his slave. The slave was 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 <b>behalf</b> of slavery was brought forward by the master, all of which was <u>disposed</u> 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 the desired though unexpected effect; for the conversation resulted in the voluntary <u>emancipation</u> of the slave on the part of the master.</p>	<p><i>chore (singular)</i></p> <p><i>give</i></p> <p><i>to show of thankfulness; state of being wise and careful</i></p> <p><i>place where ships are repaired or built</i></p> <p><i>speaker</i></p> <p><i>thrown out</i></p> <p><i>release</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SSS Days 1-2</b></p> <p><u>Preparing the Learner</u></p> <p>Before beginning instruction with the text, prepare the students using the following activities found in the Extended Student Supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity #1: Reading for Details on the Hardships of Slavery, p. 6.</li> <li>• Activity #2” Closely Reading a Picture &amp; Excerpt, p. 9.</li> <li>• Activity #3: Determining Vocabulary Meaning Using Context, p. 12.</li> </ul>

<p>In the same book, I met with one of Sheridan’s mighty speeches on and in behalf of <u>Catholic emancipation</u>. These were choice documents to me. I read them over and over again with <b>unabated</b> interest. They gave tongue to interesting thoughts of my own soul, which had frequently flashed through my mind, and died away for want of <u>utterance</u>. The moral which I gained from the dialogue was the power of truth over the conscience of even a slaveholder. What I got from Sheridan was a bold <u>denunciation</u> of slavery, and a powerful <b>vindication</b> of human rights. The reading of these documents <b>enabled</b> me to utter my thoughts, and to meet the arguments brought forward to <u>sustain</u> 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 <u>abhor</u> and <b>detest</b> 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 stolen us from our homes, and in a strange land reduced us to slavery. I <b>loathed</b> them as being the meanest as well as the most wicked of men. As I read and <b>contemplated</b> the subject, behold! that very <b>discontentment</b> which Master Hugh had predicted would follow my learning to read had already come, to <b>torment</b> and sting my soul to unutterable <b>anguish</b>. As I <u>writhed</u> 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 <u>wretched</u> condition, without the <b>remedy</b>. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to 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, <u>animate</u> or inanimate. The silver <u>trump</u> of freedom had <b>roused</b> my soul to <b>eternal</b> wakefulness. Freedom now appeared, to disappear no more forever. It was heard in every sound, and seen in every thing. It was ever present 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.</p>	<p><i>a movement to allow Catholics to have full rights; speaking out loud</i></p> <p><i>publicly condemn</i></p> <p><i>keep alive</i></p> <p><i>hate</i></p> <p><i>squirmed or struggled</i></p> <p><i>miserable</i></p> <p><i>alive; resource or advantage more important than any other (short for trumpet)</i></p>	
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## Day One: Instructional Exemplar for Douglass' *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass an American Slave*

### Summary of Activities

1. Teacher introduces the day's passage with minimal commentary and students read it independently. (5 minutes)
2. Teacher or a skillful reader then reads the passage out loud to the class as students follow along in the text. (5 minutes)
3. Teacher asks the class to discuss the first set of text-dependent questions and perform targeted tasks about the passage, with answers in the form of notes, annotations to the text, or more formal responses as appropriate. (40 minutes)
4. Teacher then assigns a paragraph that asks students to write an analysis of Douglass' text.

### Student Supports

#### SSS Days 3-4

### Summary of Activities

#### Interacting with the Text (Close Reading)

Overall recommendations for establishing routines can be found in ESS p. 1: Teach and Practice Routines for Reading Closely.

1. Teacher reads aloud the first paragraph (with no commentary) and students follow along with the text. (5 minutes)
2. Students independently read and mark up the text based on whatever system teacher uses in the classroom. (For example, underlining unknown words, questioning, and summarizing) (10 minutes)
3. Teacher places students in small groups for discussion of text-dependent questions. Groups may be formed according to their individual needs within the two categories below:
  - Minimal support: groups facilitate their own discussion of questions.
  - Maximum scaffolding: teacher sits with group and facilitates conversation with limited commentary
4. Teacher provides the students with a copy of the questions for Day 1.
5. Teacher asks the groups of students to discuss the text-dependent questions. (40 minutes)
  - The teacher will use a combination of original text-dependent questions (Q1, Q2, etc.) and scaffolded text-dependent questions (SQ1, SQ2, etc.) inserting the additional scaffolded questions when necessary to the specific groups of students. Teachers should be aware that many of the scaffolded questions would benefit all students in the classroom.
  - The teacher will begin by asking all groups one question at a time. Based on student needs and the complexity of the questions, the teacher may continue to facilitate the discussion by focusing on

one question at a time, or by chunking small groups of questions. For example, one group receiving maximum scaffolding works on one question at a time, while another group receiving minimal support works on three questions at a time.

6. Using what they have learned from answering the questions, students will work in groups to summarize the first paragraph in one sentence on a sentence strip. Groups take turns sharing their 'sentence summary' of the first paragraph and post the sentence strips. The entire class should synthesize the collected strips to create a new 'sentence summary' of the first paragraph that is concise and accurate. (15 minutes)

Text Under Discussion		Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students	Student Supports
<p>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 <b>converted</b> into teachers. With their kindly aid, obtained at different times and in different places, I finally succeeded in learning to read . . .</p> <p>[read the intervening text]</p> <p>. . . These words used to trouble them; they would express for me the <b>liveliest sympathy</b>, and <b>console</b> me with the hope that something would occur by which I might be free.</p>		<p><b>1. Introduce the passage and students read independently.</b> Other than giving the brief definitions offered to words students would likely not be able to define from context (underlined in the text), avoid giving any background context or instructional guidance at the outset of the lesson while students are reading the text silently. This close reading approach forces students to rely exclusively on the text instead of privileging background knowledge and levels the playing field for all students as they seek to comprehend Douglass’s prose. It is critical to cultivating independence and creating a culture of close reading that students initially grapple with rich texts like Douglass’ text without the aid of prefatory material, extensive notes, or even teacher explanations.</p> <p><b>2. Read the passage out loud to the class as students follow along in the text.</b> Asking students to listen to <i>Narrative of the Life</i> exposes them a second time to the rhythms and meaning of Douglass’ language before they begin their own close reading of the passage. Speaking clearly and carefully will allow students to follow Douglass’ narrative, and reading out loud with students following along improves fluency while offering all students access to this complex text. Accurate and skillful modeling of the reading provides students who may be dysfluent with accurate pronunciations and syntactic patterns of English.</p>	<p>1. See Summary of Activities - in Student Supports (above)</p> <p>2. See Summary of Activities - in Student Supports (above)</p>

Text Under Discussion		Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students	Student Supports
<p>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 <b>converted</b> 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 on errands, I always took my book with me, and by going on one part of my <u>errand</u> 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.</p>	<p><i>chore</i></p>	<p><b>3. Ask the class to answer a small set of text-dependent guided questions and perform targeted tasks about the passage, with answers in the form of notes, annotations to the text, or more formal responses as appropriate.</b> As students move through these questions and reread Douglass’ text, be sure to check for and reinforce their understanding of academic vocabulary in the corresponding text (which will be boldfaced the first time it appears in the text). At times, the questions themselves may focus on academic vocabulary.</p> <p><b>(Q1) Why is Douglass specific about making friends with “little white boys”?</b> Students may not have internalized the title and may not understand that this is a story of a former slave or that this is during the period where whites had a lot more power. Teachers should point them back to the title if they cannot answer this question, allowing students to clarify their own thinking through the text.</p> <p><b>(Q2) How did Douglass learn how to read when running errands?</b> Taking bread with him, he would quickly finish the first part of an errand and then exchange the bread for a reading lesson before completing the remainder of his chores.</p>	<p>3. To support groups of students as they answer a small set of text-dependent guided questions and perform targeted tasks, teachers should scaffold questions according to the grouping of students.</p> <p><b>Scaffolded Questions:</b></p> <p><b>(SQ1) Who is the narrator?</b> (Depending upon the pre-reading instruction this question may or may not be necessary.) Students should use the title and passage to answer.</p> <p><b>(SQ2) What is the plan that Douglass adopted?</b></p> <p><b>(SQ3) Why did Douglass choose to make friends with “white boys” specifically?</b> (meant to replace the original Q1)</p> <p><b>(SQ4) What does Douglass mean when he says that he converted the little white boys into teachers?</b></p> <p><b>(SQ5) What kind of boy was Douglass based on his actions in the first four sentences?</b></p> <p><b>[Ask question Q2.</b> If students are unable to answer Q2, ask any/all of the indented questions below.]</p> <p><b>(SQ6) What can you infer, or figure out, about Douglass’ home situation based on the beginning of this sentence: “I used to carry bread with me, enough of which was always in the house, and to which I was always welcome...”</b></p> <p><b>(SQ7) Why did Douglass carry bread with him?</b></p> <p><b>(SQ8) How did Douglass and the white boys help each other?</b></p> <p><b>(Q2) Ask this question again.</b></p>



**(Q5) Which of these meanings of “trouble” is Douglass using? Why did he choose this word? How would the meaning have changed if he had chosen the word “anger”?**

Students may vary in which definitions they believe apply, but they should see that Douglass is using multiple meanings of this word. He is emphasizing that slavery can cause more than one kind of trouble: emotional or physical pain, frustration, or even anxiety. The use of “trouble” instead of “angry” suggests that the boys did not feel all that strongly about slavery even if they were uncomfortable with Douglass being a slave.

Questions SQ16-18 are meant to replace Q5.

**(SQ 16) How does Douglass feel about his situation as a slave?**

**(SQ17) How do the little boys feel about Douglass’ situation as a slave? Which words from the text describe their feelings and actions?**

**(SQ18) Douglass said, “these words used to *trouble* them.” Which words in the text support your understanding of the word “trouble”?**

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 Columbian Orator.” 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 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 the desired though unexpected effect; for the conversation resulted in the voluntary emancipation of the slave on the part of the master.

**(Q6) Why does Douglass describe the Master’s response as both “desired” and “unexpected”? Why the contrast between these two words?**

He did not expect the slave to be freed, which is why the voluntary emancipation surprised him. Advanced students might infer that as much as Douglass desires for masters to acknowledge the arguments of a former slave in the book against slavery, he does not expect it.

Prior to reading the text for Day 4 and going through the text-dependent questions, the teacher should refer to ESS p. 18, Activity #5: Example/Non-Example with Word “Emancipation.”

**(SQ19) What does Douglass mean when he describes how the idea of being a slave for the rest of his life bears heavily upon his heart? Why is this idea bothering him more now?**

**(SQ20) What does the word “master” mean? Why would a slave try to run away from his master?** (Depending on the pre-reading instruction, this question may not be necessary.)

**(SQ21) Why would Douglass consider “The Columbian Orator” to be an important book?**

**(SQ22) Why might Douglass find the dialogue between a master and his slave particularly interesting?**

**(SQ23) After the slave was recaptured for the third time, he said things to his master that had “the desired though unexpected effect”. What did the slave desire, or want to happen? (meant to replace Q6)**

**(SQ24) Why is emancipation an unexpected thing for a slave?**

**(SQ25) How did the slave in the book become emancipated?**

**(SQ26) How did the dialogue between the master and his slave change Douglass’ ideas about emancipation?**

**Day Two: Instructional Exemplar for Douglass' *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass an American Slave***

**Summary of Activities**

1. Teacher introduces the day's passage with minimal commentary and students read it independently (5 minutes)
2. Teacher or a skillful reader then reads the passage out loud to the class as students follow along in the text (5 minutes)
3. Teacher asks the class to discuss the first set of text-dependent questions and perform targeted tasks about the passage, with answers in the form of notes, annotations to the text, or more formal responses as appropriate (40 minutes)
4. Teacher then assigns a culminating writing assignment that asks students to synthesize the entire reading

**Student Supports**

**SSS Days 5-6**

**Summary of Activities**

**Interacting with the Text** (Close Reading)

1. Teacher reads aloud the third paragraph (with no commentary) and students follow along with the text. (5 minutes)
2. Students independently read and mark up the text based on whatever system teacher uses in the classroom. (For example, underlining unknown words, questioning, and summarizing) (10 minutes).
3. Teacher places students in small groups for discussion of text-dependent questions. See SSS Days 3-4 instructions for grouping students (page 7).

Text Under Discussion	Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students	Student Supports
<p>In the same book, I met with one of Sheridan’s mighty speeches on and in behalf of <u>Catholic emancipation</u>. These were <b>choice</b> documents to me. I read them over and over again with <b>unabated</b> interest. They gave tongue to interesting thoughts of my own soul, which had frequently flashed through my mind, and died away for want of <u>utterance</u>....</p> <p>[read the intervening paragraphs]</p> <p>...The silver <u>trump</u> of freedom had <b>roused</b> 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 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.</p>	<p><b>1. Introduce the passage and students read independently.</b></p> <p>Other than giving the brief definitions offered to words students would likely not be able to define from context (underlined in the text), avoid giving any background context or instructional guidance at the outset of the lesson while students are reading the text silently. This close reading approach forces students to rely exclusively on the text instead of privileging background knowledge and levels the playing field for all students as they seek to comprehend Douglass’ prose. It is critical to cultivating independence and creating a culture of close reading that students initially grapple with rich texts like Douglass’s text without the aid of prefatory material, extensive notes, or even teacher explanations.</p> <p><b>2. Read the passage out loud to the class as students follow along in the text.</b></p> <p>Asking students to listen to <i>Narrative of the Life</i> exposes them a second time to the rhythms and meaning of Douglass’ language before they begin their own close reading of the passage. Speaking clearly and carefully will allow students to follow Douglass’ narrative, and reading out loud with students following along improves fluency while offering all students access to this complex text. Accurate and skillful modeling of the reading provides students who may be dysfluent with accurate pronunciations and syntactic patterns of English.</p>	<p>1. See Summary of Activities –in Student Supports above.</p> <p>2. See Summary of Activities- Student Supports above.</p>

<p>In the same book, I met with one of Sheridan’s mighty speeches on and in behalf of <u>Catholic emancipation</u>. These were <b>choice</b> documents to me. I read them over and over again with <b>unabated</b> interest. They gave tongue to interesting thoughts of my own soul, which had frequently flashed through my mind, and died away for want of <u>utterance</u>. The moral which I gained from the dialogue was the power of truth over the conscience of even a slaveholder. What I got from Sheridan was a bold <u>denunciation</u> of slavery, and a powerful <b>vindication</b> of human rights. The reading of these documents <b>enabled</b> me to utter my thoughts, and to meet the arguments brought forward to <u>sustain</u> 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 <u>abhor</u> and <b>detest</b> 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 stolen us from our homes, and in a strange land reduced us to slavery. I <b>loathed</b> them as being the meanest as well as the most wicked of men.</p>	<p><b>(Q7) When Douglass says, “They gave tongue to interesting thoughts”, how is he using the word “tongue”?</b></p> <p>Douglass is using it to mean talking or writing about—that they talked about interesting thoughts. The idea of talking also matches the idea of tongue.</p> <p><b>(Q8) What moral did Douglass learn from these books?</b></p> <p>Truth and good arguments can be more powerful than prejudice—even the strong prejudice of a slaveholder. He also learned the power and the potential of the printed word to change minds and attitudes—a lesson he turned around and used himself in writing his autobiography.</p> <p><b>(Q9) How does the word “enable” change the meaning of the line it appears in? How can documents “enable” him to “utter [his] thoughts” or write?</b></p> <p>Reading others’ thoughts gave him the power and the need to write his own (teachers should note how the common use of the word today is different from Douglass’ use of it).</p> <p><b>(Q10) In what ways is Douglas saying slaveholders are like robbers? Find and explore the structure of the sentence that gives voice to this idea most clearly.</b></p> <p>Both leave their own homes to go into someone else’s home and take something that does not belong to them; in this case robbing people of their rights and freedoms (teachers may even introduce the word “avarice” here since that is the common denominator).</p>	<p><b>(SQ27) Who is the person Douglass refers to as Sheridan?</b></p> <p><b>(SQ28) What does Douglass mean when he says that Sheridan’s speeches “gave tongue” to interesting thoughts of his own soul? (meant to replace Q7)</b> As an extension, the teacher could ask students to rewrite that phrase in their own words.</p> <p><b>(SQ29) What moral did Douglass learn from the slave dialogue (paragraph two)? What moral did Douglass learn from Sheridan’s speeches? (meant to replace Q8)</b> If students have difficulty with this question, ask the following question:</p> <p><b>(SQ29a) Douglass says that from the slave dialogue he learned the power of truth to change a slaveholder’s mind. What does he say he learned from Sheridan?</b></p> <p><b>(SQ30) What did reading these documents enable him to do? (meant to replace Q9)</b> Students will use context to understand the word “enable” as “let” or “allow”, but the teacher could develop their understanding of the word to get at the idea that it is a form of empowerment.</p> <p><b>(SQ31) Douglass wrote that the documents relieved him of one difficulty, but brought on another difficulty that is even more painful. What is the more painful difficulty that he talks about?</b></p> <p><b>(SQ32) Why does he describe his enslavers as robbers? What did they steal? (meant to replace Q10)</b></p>
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Text Passage under Discussion		Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students	Student Supports
<p>As I read and <b>contemplated</b> the subject, behold! that very <b>discontentment</b> which Master Hugh had predicted would follow my learning to read had already come, to <b>torment</b> and sting my soul to unutterable <b>anguish</b>. As I <u>writhed</u> 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 <u>wretched</u> condition, without the <b>remedy</b>. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to 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 ever- lasting 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, <u>animate</u> or inanimate. The silver <u>trump</u> of freedom had <b>roused</b> my soul to <b>eternal</b> wakefulness. Freedom now appeared, to disappear no more forever. It was heard in every sound, and seen in every thing. It was ever present 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.</p>	<p><i>squirmed or struggled</i></p> <p><i>miserable</i></p> <p><i>alive resource or advantage more important than any other (short for trumpet)</i></p>	<p><b>(Q11) What prediction did Douglass’ owner make about what would happen if he learned to read? Did it come true? Why or why not?</b></p> <p>Master Hugh said he would be discontented (unhappy), and Douglass admits that he is. The harder idea here is that he is suffering because he is seeing his own “wretched condition” without seeing any solution, and this is leaving him feeling lost and possibly even depressed.</p> <p><b>(Q12) What is the horrible pit? Why does Douglass envy someone’s stupidity?</b></p> <p>Students should look at the qualities of a pit and recognize that Douglass is talking about slavery as a pit. As a slave, he envies those individuals who are not as self-aware of their condition because they are not as aware of the horrors of slavery. By being duller, they do not observe and feel the injustice as strongly as a smart observant person does.</p>	<p><b>(SQ33) What prediction did Douglass’ owner, Master Hughes, make about what would happen if he learned to read? Did it come true? Why or why not?</b> <i>(meant to replace Q11)</i></p> <p><i>If students are unable to answer (SQ34), ask the bulleted questions below:</i></p> <p><b>(SQ33a) Why would Douglass’ owner, Master Hughes, predict he would be unhappy?</b></p> <p><b>(SQ33b) How has learning to read become such a curse to Douglass?</b></p> <p><b>(SQ34) What does Douglass mean when he says “It had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy”?</b></p> <p><i>If students are unable to answer (SQ35), ask the questions below:</i></p> <p><b>(SQ34a) What is the wretched condition he is speaking about?</b></p> <p><b>(SQ34b) What is the remedy, and why doesn’t he have one?</b></p> <p><b>(SQ35) Why would Douglass describe slavery as a horrible pit?</b> <i>(meant to replace Q12)</i></p> <p><b>(SQ36) Douglass was tormented because he was always thinking about his condition. Why does Douglass sometimes wish he was like other slaves?</b></p>

Text Passage under Discussion		Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students	Students Supports
		<p><b>(Q13) Why is freedom tormenting Douglass?</b>            Becoming aware of freedom has roused “my soul to eternal wakefulness”; Douglass sees it everywhere, but is himself still enslaved.</p> <p><b>Sidebar: Additional Activities</b></p> <p>Teachers who have time may want to consider having students brainstorm how different groups or individuals might have perceived this writing at the time of its publication in 1845, before the Civil War started. See Appendix A for a possible enrichment opportunity and Appendix B for two examples of reviews published when the narrative was first released.</p>	<p><b>Ask (Q13).</b> Answer should also get at how Douglass sees freedom and as a result he can’t stop thinking about how wretched it is to be a slave. This hope of freedom (something that should be good) is actually tormenting him.</p> <p><b>(SQ37) What does Douglass mean when he says about freedom, “It was heard in every sound, and seen in everything”?</b></p>

### Informative/Explanatory Assignment: Directions for Teachers and Students

This question requires students to look at diction and connotation, i.e. how do words "feel." Students may have a variety of answers, but as long as they are correctly labeling some words as contributing to particular emotions, they are correct. A few examples are included below to give the teacher an idea of the possible groupings. If students are struggling, teachers may wish to choose one of the following words to use as a model. Teachers may also wish to have students write strong words or phrases on pieces of construction paper and then group them into emotion "families" together as a class. However, teachers should avoid giving students too many of the words from Douglass or from labeling all possible emotions. Students should be allowed to interact with the text on their own.

- **happy:** kindly; better off; gratitude; affection; dear little fellows;
- **frustrated:** have not I as good a right; wretched; horrible pit; it pressed upon me
- **sad:** console; bear heavily upon my heart, died away; painful; discontentment
- **passionate:** unabated interest
- **angry:** abhor; detest; robbers; loathed; meanest, most wicked;
- **hurt:** torment; sting; writhed; agony; unutterable anguish; agony; tormented; torment me
- **jealous:** envied my fellow slaves; wished myself a beast; meanest reptile
- **hopeful:** silver trump of freedom; it smiled in every calm

This is a complex task, but students have ample experience with understanding and labeling emotions in real life. With the scaffolding of the previous questions, students should be able to identify one of two possible patterns:

- A. He feels negative when considering his own slavery; however, the thought of freedom brings calm and the image of the "silver trump".
- B. As a child, he has this hopeful feeling with gratitude and affection; however, as he got older, the feelings turned more negative with despair and depression being more prominent.

Students can then use their research and their identification of patterns to help them answer the following prompt:

**Student Prompt:** How do Douglass' feelings change over the course of this piece? What is Douglass trying to show about how slavery makes people feel? Write a paragraph in which you show how his feelings change and what you believe he is trying to show the reader.

**Alternate Assignment:** An alternate assignment for students with more experience might include asking them to write about where in the text they see evidence that Douglass is consciously crafting his narrative to present a particular point of view. Students should choose passages they feel present evidence of intentional crafting in word choice.

## Extended Student Supports

**Instructional Supports for Special Education Students and English Language Learners to Accompany the Exemplar of *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave*. Provided by the Rhode Island Department of Education.**

### Overall Recommendations

#### ***Create a Context for the Close Reading Lesson***

The close reading lesson (in this case, the lesson on the excerpt from *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*) should be taught in the context of a set of related texts, multimedia and learning experiences, such as a unit of study, and not in isolation. This approach enables students to build their own interest, motivation and background knowledge in an authentic way, through their own encounters with text, rather than through the teacher providing this for them. High need students often need to increase their body of knowledge and skills to use during the close reading lesson. ELL students in particular need to read and discuss several texts at a time on a theme, topic or related set of ideas in order to develop expertise through repeated exposure to and practice with a familiar body of concepts, language and vocabulary. The following ideas suggest how this broader context or unit of study might be provided.

- Students could read the full text of *Narrative of the Life*. Reading the full text not only enables students to build their own background knowledge of the history of slavery and emancipation, it also provides gradual and repeated exposure to the body of sophisticated concepts, complex syntactical structures, and rich vocabulary that are characteristic of Douglass' writing.
- Students could read the excerpt in conjunction with other texts and multimedia exploring a related set of concepts, themes, vocabulary or language structures. For example, they might read and discuss a few texts, including *Narrative of the Life*, that explore the significance or impact of education.
- Students who lack at least a basic awareness of the existence and nature of slavery in American history should read this excerpt after or along with a study of American slavery involving reading texts and multimedia. ELA teachers may identify texts to use or collaborate with social studies teachers. Passages from textbooks or trade books could be used along with photos or other graphics. *The New York Public Library Amazing African American History: A Book of Answers for Kids, 1998*, or *If you Lived When There was Slavery in America*, Scholastic, 2006, Kamma, Anne, et al. or similar books provide very accessible text.

#### ***Teach and Practice Routines for Reading Closely***

Routines (or protocols) are a fundamental support for close reading, especially for high needs students. Students need to learn and practice routines if they are going to approach complex text with any level of independence. Without these routines in place, they will be

dependent on the teacher to either talk them through the text or to teach them what to do at each step in the close reading. The *Narrative of the Life* Exemplar lays out an overall routine for teachers and students to follow, with first and second readings, text-dependent questioning, and writing tasks. However, students need more specific guidance. For example, students need to know what to do when reading a complex text on their own for the first time (mark up, write notes, look for central ideas, for e.g.). They need to know how to search for and analyze details to answer a text-dependent question that they can't immediately answer. The activities presented in the Extended Student Supports (ESS) assume that students will be applying such routines, and they support that approach. Teachers who have close reading routines established in their classrooms should continue to use those or adapt what is presented here.

### Vocabulary Resources

#### **Guidance for Selecting Tier 2 Vocabulary for Instruction**

This text contains a high volume of Tier 2, or general academic, words and phrases, as is typical of complex text. Tier 2 vocabulary words differ from the basic words of everyday conversation (Tier 1) in that they appear most often in written text and in mature spoken language, where they are used to express ideas in literate and sophisticated ways. Unlike Tier 3 words, which are the specialized words of a specific field of study, Tier 2 words appear everywhere in writing. Words such as “adopted,” “converted,” and “obtained,” all in this excerpt, are words of this type. Students need to know the meaning of these words in order to read with depth of comprehension. Yet these words are often unfamiliar to students, especially to those students who would typically encounter such words only when reading yet do not regularly grapple with reading complex text. Teachers must plan for teaching Tier 2 words to students as part of a close reading, including having ideas for giving additional support to some students. A process for selecting and planning instruction is presented below. Background information on the Tiers of vocabulary and the importance of Tier 2 words in students’ overall ability to read complex text can be found in the *Academic Vocabulary* module developed by the Rhode Island Department of Education at <http://www.ride.ri.gov/InstructionAssessment/Literacy/CommonCoreStateStandardsforELALiteracy.aspx>. This module includes “An Instructional Guide for General Academic Vocabulary,” which is useful for selecting Tier 2 words and for planning instruction. The Guide correlates to the process described below.

The steps for teachers to follow in selecting Tier 2 words and planning for instruction are:

- Identify the Tier 2 words in the text that will be unfamiliar to students  
Read the text with a focus on vocabulary words and their effect on meaning. Mark the Tier 2 words whose meaning in this text may be unknown to some or all students. This takes thought as some of these words will not be obviously unfamiliar to students. Tier 2 words often seem like words students would know when in fact students do not know the word, do not know the meaning as used in this text, or have only partial understanding of the meaning.

- Use a set of criteria to select 7-10 of these words for instruction

Apply the following criteria when selecting which Tier 2 words to explicitly teach:

- Word is central to understanding the text  
Consider words that are substantially related to the meaning of the text and will be most useful in helping students understand it.
- Word choice and nuance are significant  
Consider words that have a nuance or shade of meaning that is important in the text, or that illustrate the power of an author's word choice.
- Students are likely to see this word frequently  
A word may be selected because it is common in other academic texts. It is worth taking the time to teach this word because students are likely to encounter it frequently in other settings.
- Word is a more mature or precise label for concepts already known to students  
Many Tier 2 words are a more exact or subtle way of expressing a general concept that is already familiar to students. Consider words of this type because they add precision and specificity to students' vocabulary while building on what students already know.
- Word lends itself to teaching a web of words and concepts around it  
Consider words that can be worked with in a variety of ways so that students build rich representations of them and of their connection to other words and concepts.

For the greatest impact on instruction, some of the words selected should fit multiple criteria.

- Choose several of the selected words for pre-teaching

The typical practice for close reading is to have students discover the meaning of most words from careful reading of context, and when this is not possible to develop the meaning of words with students in the course of the close reading itself. This approach has benefits in that it requires students to grapple productively with text and supports students while learning words in context. It does not always work with ELL students and other students with needs, however, especially with texts as complex as this. Students' flow of comprehension is interrupted by having to deal with many unknown words at once (Beck, 2013). Moreover, students who are already struggling with the meaning of a text will have a hard time using context to decipher unfamiliar vocabulary. Pre-teaching some words may therefore be necessary to reduce the volume of words addressed in context. In addition, pre-teaching allows for

systematic, structured instruction, which is helpful to some populations of learners. Depending upon the complexity of meaning, it is estimated that students can be taught up to seven words thoroughly in their weekly vocabulary routine.

- Use a structured approach to pre-teach the words

The classroom routine for pre-teaching words should match students' learning needs and use a structured approach. The following instructional sequence for pre-teaching new words to English Language Learners is one example of a structured approach to instruction. It is adapted from Kinsella (2005), who states that ELL students in particular benefit from “direct, recognizable, and accountable instruction of high utility vocabulary.” The word *gratitude* is used to illustrate the sequence.

- **Provide a vocabulary note-taking sheet**
- **Show the word:** Provide students with a printed copy of the word, either on paper, cards or on the board.
- **Pronounce the word clearly/break it apart:** “The first vocabulary word is gratitude. Listen as I say it: grat i tude.” Break it into parts on the board so students see/hear each syllable. Repeat the word several times.
- **Students repeat the word:** Ask students to repeat the word several times, sometimes slowly, sometimes quickly.
- **Clarify part of speech:** “Gratitude is a feeling. The word is a noun.” “Here is an example of a sentence using the word: *I felt gratitude when my friend helped me to fix my bike.*”
- **Provide student-friendly synonym, definition and explanation:** “Gratitude is a feeling of being thankful. Gratitude is what you are feeling when you say thank you. You have gratitude when you appreciate/ value what someone has done for you (such as having gratitude toward your coach) or given you (such as having gratitude for the gifts your parents give you).”
- **Provide or have students develop an illustrative sentence or visual, non-linguistic representation:** “Can you think of a time when you felt gratitude?” (Take responses) “Draw or describe something you associate with gratitude.”
- **Rephrase the explanation leaving a blank for students to complete.** “When someone does you a favor, it’s important to show your \_\_\_\_\_.”(Students complete orally.) Students practice saying the word in context to develop an accurate auditory imprint.
- **Assess students’ comprehension of the word**

- Choose 1-2 Tier 2 words to develop in depth in the course of reading

Words that are central to the meaning and import of the text and have subtle or complex meanings that are best developed in context should be taught during the close reading lesson. Often exploration and discussion of these words come about through text-dependent questioning. Usually 1-2 words can be singled out for this attention.

- Have a plan for supporting students with Tier 2 words that will not be directly taught  
In some instances it is appropriate to provide students with definitions of words in the margin or footnotes of the text. With abstract words, the teacher may take additional time to explain or discuss the word with students. In other cases, text-dependent questions and related discussions and routine writing can be designed to ensure that students will have these supports for understanding the text even in situations where they do not know all words with certainty. This will help students to begin to develop a context for understanding these words.

### Preparing the Learner

*Preparing the Learner* activities serve one or more of three purposes that are very important to enhancing the learning of high-need students:

1. Teach background information and introduce concepts, vocabulary and language that students need in order to focus on meaning when reading the target text. The activities are designed so that they do not give away important information that students could derive through careful reading of the target text.
2. Provide practice with close reading routines so that students will be more independent when reading and discussing the target text. Understanding the routine allows students to focus their thinking to develop a deeper understanding of the text.
3. Practice a process for using context to determine word meanings so that students can apply this with independence during reading of the target text.

Teachers may select from the activities below or substitute others that serve the same purposes. They may also develop additional activities to use before reading each passage.

Note that the close reading routine followed in these activities is one possibility and is provided as an example; teachers may have a variation of this routine that they regularly use. They should also adapt their directions according to how adept students already are or are not with routines of close reading.

## **Activity #1: Reading for Details on the Hardships of Slavery**

### **SSS Day 1**

#### **Description and Purpose:**

This activity precedes the first close reading passage. Students read two or three texts related to the hardships of slavery and answer text-dependent questions in small discussion groups. One purpose of this activity is to build relevant background knowledge for students who need it without giving away information that they can derive through careful reading of the target text. Students have an opportunity to discuss concepts and use vocabulary that will enable them to focus on meaning when reading the target text. The second purpose is to have students practice two parts of the close reading routine: reading closely to find details that answer a text-dependent question and developing a summary statement through collaborative discussion.

Note that the texts for this activity are included below the Teacher Directions. They are labeled Text #1, Text #2, and Text #3. The teacher may decide to use Text #1 without the italicized passage in order to make the text more accessible.

#### Teacher Directions:

- Arrange students in groups of 2-4.

#### Part 1: Reading Text #1

- Briefly introduce Text #1 by explaining that it was written by a former slave.
- Students read the text for the first time. They may read independently or the teacher may read to them. Remind students to read/listen for the general flow of ideas and what the passage is about.
- Students read the text a second time, reading carefully for what the author is saying. They underline/highlight important details and summarize ideas in the margin. The teacher may model as needed.
- Present text-dependent questions one at a time and have students practice reading closely for details that answer the questions. For example, ask: “What difference did the author discover between himself and his master’s white children?” Students individually find relevant details in the passage (underlining/highlighting or filling in an organizer, e.g.). Students compare details with their partners/group.
- Teacher teaches/reviews paraphrasing and then has partners/groups paraphrase their details to form an answer to the question. For the question above, students may say: *He has to do what white children tell him. He’s not allowed to read. He can be sold and sent away where he does not want to go.*

- Teacher teaches/reviews writing a summary of a passage and then has partners/groups write a summary of Text #1. For example, students may write: *When he began to work, the author discovered that as a slave he couldn't do what other people were allowed to do.* Or: *At this point in his life, the author discovered that other people controlled the life of a slave.*

Note: In the course of the reading, the teacher could preview words in this text that will appear again in the close reading of *Narrative of the Life*. For example, *mistress* and *master* appear as terms for the owners of a slave, and *offence/offense* also appears.

**Text #1: Description from a slave narrative of the life of a slave child**

When I began to work, I discovered the difference between myself and my master's white children. They began to order me about, and were told to do so by my master and mistress. I found, too, that they had learned to read, while I was not permitted to have a book in my hand. To be in possession of anything written or printed, was regarded as an offence. And then there was the fear that I might be sold away from those who were dear to me, and conveyed to the far South. I had learned that being a slave I was subject to the worst (to us) of all calamities; and I knew of others in similar situations to myself, thus sold away. *My friends were not numerous; but in proportion as they were few they were dear; and the thought that I might be separated from them forever, was like that of having the heart wrenched from its socket; while the idea of being conveyed to the far South, seemed infinitely worse than the terrors of death.*

From The Narrative of Lunsford Lane (Boston, 1842) website: [www.proteacher.org](http://www.proteacher.org)

Part 2: Jigsawing Texts #2 and #3

- Jigsaw the reading of Text #2 and #3, with groups reading one or the other text. Students work with greater independence on reading closely for details.
- Tell students the overall purpose of both readings is to answer the question “*What were conditions of slave life?*” Douglass refers to his “condition” in the third reading passage. This is an important concept. Use this opportunity to pre-teach the word to students.
- Have students read their text and then based on which text they read, assign partners/groups to answer one of the following text-dependent questions: What were the working conditions for slaves? What were the living conditions for slaves? What were the conditions of family life for slaves? Students work independently to find details and then in partners/groups to paraphrase them in order to answer the question. Remind students to give a complete answer that makes use of all of the details. The teacher may provide sentence frames for some groups. Each group writes an answer.
- The teacher may have students share answers orally or post them under the heading, “What were the conditions of slave life?”

Note: If the vocabulary of Text #3 is too challenging, Text #2 may be used with all students for this practice. Alternatively, Text #3 could be used to differentiate the lesson for some students.

**Text #2: Life for slave children in 1861**

If you were a slave child 150 years ago, your life would be hard. How hard? Harder if you worked on a huge plantation in the Deep South rather than on a smaller one in Virginia or Maryland. Harder if you worked in the fields rather than in the house. And hardest if your owner used cruel punishments or broke up your family by selling off a parent or sibling.

Let's pretend you're a house servant in southeastern Virginia. You are busy with chores at least from dawn till dusk, but it's easier than field work. At night you sleep on a mat somewhere in the Big House instead of in a slave cabin with your mother and siblings. (Your father doesn't live with your family because he belongs to the owner of a nearby plantation.)

Life for a slave child

What do you do all day? Whatever you're told to do. Let's say your main job is caring for one of the white family's children who is a bit younger than you. You are that child's personal servant and companion. The two of you might also be friends, but no one would ever forget that you are the property of that other child's family.

Reeder, Carolyn. From "Life for Slave Children in 1861." Washington Post site

[http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2011-06-14/lifestyle/35235621\\_1\\_slaves-fort-monroe-field-work](http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2011-06-14/lifestyle/35235621_1_slaves-fort-monroe-field-work)

**Text #3: Conditions of Ante-Bellum Slavery**

The diets of enslaved people were inadequate or barely adequate to meet the demands of their heavy workload. They lived in crude quarters that left them vulnerable to bad weather and disease. Their clothing and bedding were minimal as well. Slaves who worked as domestics sometimes fared better, getting the castoff clothing of their masters or having easier access to food stores....

The drivers, overseers, and masters were responsible for plantation discipline. Slaves were punished for not working fast enough, for being late getting to the fields, for defying authority, for running away, and for a number of other reasons. The punishments took many forms, including whippings, torture, mutilation, imprisonment, and being sold away from the plantation.

From a description of Conditions of Ante-Bellum Slavery [www.PBS.org](http://www.PBS.org)

## **Activity #2: Closely Reading a Picture and an Excerpt**

### **SSS Day 2**

#### **Description and Purpose:**

This activity also precedes the first close reading passage. Students view a picture related to slavery and read a short passage from *The Narrative of the Life*. One purpose is for the students to develop background knowledge by discussing concepts and using vocabulary that will enable them to focus on meaning when reading the target text. The second purpose is to have students practice two parts of the close reading routine: reading closely to find details and analyzing details to infer information not explicitly provided in an excerpt.

#### Teacher Directions:

Part 1: Begin by developing students' understanding of *Narrative of the Life* as an autobiographical text of a former slave (unless this was done previously).

- Show the book. Project a copy of the title page.
- Have partners discuss: Judging by the title, what type/genre of book is this? What would we expect to read about? (If needed, highlight words Narrative, Life, and Written by Himself.) Connect answers to definition of autobiography as a life story told by the person.
- What else do we learn from the title? (Douglass is writing about his experiences as an American slave.)

Part 2: Closely Reading a Picture.

- In groups of 2-4, students study a picture of a slave auction. The picture is included at the end of this document as ATTACHMENT A.
- Teacher distributes the picture without telling about it. Teacher explains that details are the important pieces of information the author or artist wants us to notice. Provide students with the handout *Photo/Picture Analysis for Details* (included below). The handout is adapted from Understanding Language at Stanford University.<sup>1</sup>
- Students compare details that they found. Teacher reinforces the importance of reading for details.
- Teacher instructs on summarizing details for a caption. Students write captions for pictures and post them.

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<sup>1</sup> Understanding Language: Persuasion across Time and Space, Lesson 2. Stanford University School of Education. Ell.stanford.edu.

### Photo/Picture Analysis for Details

Number of people \_\_\_\_\_ Number of men \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Women \_\_\_\_\_ Number of children \_\_\_\_\_

Describe clothing \_\_\_\_\_

Describe facial expressions \_\_\_\_\_

Describe what people are doing in the picture (e.g., gestures, where standing or sitting) \_\_\_\_\_

Describe objects in the picture \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the setting (e.g., farm, street) \_\_\_\_\_

**CAPTION:** Based on the details in the picture, write a caption that provides a short description or explanation of the picture. It may include information on what, where or when something is happening.

Part 3: Teacher tells students they will be reading excerpts from Frederick Douglass' autobiography in the next few days. Teacher explains that an excerpt is a brief passage from a text usually focused on one scene, event, person or idea. Excerpts can be challenging to read if we haven't read what came before. They are going to practice with a very short excerpt of three sentences from the *Narrative of the Life*. They'll see that reading an excerpt closely and analyzing details helps us to understand the text even when we haven't read what came before.

- Students read (or have read to them) the brief excerpt from Chapter VI (below): "Very soon after I went to live with Mr. and Mrs. Auld, she very kindly commenced to teach me the A, B, C. After I had learned this, she assisted me in learning to spell words of three or four letters. Just at this point of my progress, Mr. Auld found out what was going on, and at once forbade Mrs. Auld to instruct me further, telling her, among other things, that it was unlawful, as well as unsafe, to teach a slave to read."
- Students read the second time, marking important ideas and details.
- The teacher poses text-dependent questions that can be answered with details in the text. The questions are provided on paper with students working in groups to answer. The organizer below shows the format, which the teacher may also chart on the board. After students in groups fill in column 2, the teacher models how to analyze the details in order to make inferences. As the teacher models, s/he fills in Column 3. Afterwards, the teacher reviews with students how much they were able to learn from the excerpt by paying attention to details.

1- Questions	2- Details that help answer this question	3- Inferences that can be drawn by analyzing details
When did this episode happen?	“Very soon after I went to live with Mr. and Mrs. Auld”	This happened in the past, when FD was younger. He had just moved and had lived with different people before.
What did Mrs. Auld do for Frederick?	“kindly commenced to teach me the A, B, C. “ “assisted me in learning to spell words of three or four letters “	FD didn’t know how to read before. He appreciated Mrs. Auld teaching him.
What did Mr. Auld do? What did Mr. Auld say?	“found out what was going on “ “forbade Mrs. Auld to instruct me further” “it was unlawful, as well as unsafe, to teach a slave to read.”	Frederick did not get too far in learning to read. Frederick was a slave at this time. There were laws against teaching a slave to read.

**Excerpt from Chapter VI**

Very soon after I went to live with Mr. and Mrs. Auld, she very kindly commenced to teach me the A, B, C. After I had learned this, she assisted me in learning to spell words of three or four letters. Just at this point of my progress, Mr. Auld found out what was going on, and at once forbade Mrs. Auld to instruct me further, telling her, among other things, that it was unlawful, as well as unsafe, to teach a slave to read.

*From Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, chapter VI*

### **Activity #3: Determining Vocabulary Meaning Using Context**

#### **SSS Day 2**

#### **Description and Purpose:**

Students read a brief excerpt from *The Narrative of the Life*. As the teacher facilitates, students follow steps to determine the meaning of a challenging word (*fury*) by carefully analyzing context. This excerpt appears in the text shortly after the excerpt that was read in Activity #2. Douglass describes how Mrs. Auld behaved after her husband told her that it is wrong to teach a slave to read.

The procedure modeled here is adapted from Isabel Beck, et. al. (2013) and shows students a process for deriving “word meaning information” from context. Beck and others developed this process based on their observation that most authentic texts do not provide students with obvious context clues, such as synonyms or embedded definitions, and therefore students need to learn to search context for a range of information. As part of the process, students need to learn to distinguish between contexts that provide enough information to determine a word’s meaning and those that do not provide sufficient information (pp. 125-132).

The purpose of this activity is to teach or review the process of determining word meaning from context so that students will be able to apply it independently when engaged in the close reading. Having students know a process of this type is extremely important because one expectation of close reading is that students will determine the meaning of most unknown words from careful searching of context.

#### **Excerpt from Chapter VII**

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.

From *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, chapter VII

Teacher Directions for the instructional sequence:

Note that the teacher would use this sequence flexibly depending on how the text is being read and what unknown word has been targeted. For further information and examples, see chapter 7 in Beck (2013).

1. Read the text

Students read the excerpt to get a general idea of what it says. The teacher will need to tell students that this excerpt follows one they just read (in Activity #2), in which Mrs. Auld’s husband orders her to stop teaching Frederick to read and says it is unsafe to teach a slave to read. From their reading, students should get the basic idea that Mrs. Auld has changed. She is now angry if she sees Frederick with a newspaper and snatches it away from him. If some students do not get the basics of what the text says, the teacher can support them with the questions asked in the next step.

2. Establish the meaning of the context for the word

Before asking specifically about the unknown word, the teacher asks questions that get students to fully consider the information provided by the context. This keeps students from focusing on the unknown word in an isolated way. The teacher may begin with general questions: “What is Douglass saying here?” “What else does he tell us?” As needed, the teacher uses follow-up questions to lead students to uncover information that will be relevant to figuring out the unknown word. The teacher might ask: “How does Douglass describe Mrs. Auld’s actions? Or, “What does Mrs. Auld do when she sees Frederick with a newspaper?” When students respond by saying that she rushes at Frederick and she snatches the paper, the teacher might ask: “When she rushes at Frederick to snatch the paper, what does this tell us about how Mrs. Auld feels?”

3. Elicit an initial identification and rationale for the unfamiliar word.

The teacher asks students to say what they think the targeted word (*fury*) might mean and to explain how the context supports that sense of the word. Students might know or guess that it means *anger*, but given the context, some might say *danger* or *worry*. By asking students to provide a rationale for their answers, the teacher helps students uncover evidence in the text that points to the correct meaning. If through this process students arrive at a meaning of the word that is accurate (intense feeling of anger that is almost out of control), or as close to accurate as possible given the available context, the teacher moves to the last step of summarizing. If not, the teacher goes to the next step.

#### 4. Consider further possibilities

If students' initial ideas do not lead to the right meaning or lead to an incomplete meaning, the teacher helps students examine more possibilities. For example, in this case students might have a sense that *fury* relates to anger or being upset, but the teacher may want to push students to see the intensity of the word. The teacher may say, "Mrs. Auld is described as having 'a face made all up of fury'. What do you think her face looked like to Frederick?" Or, "What does it tell us about the strength of her feelings if they showed in this way in her face?"

#### 5. Summarize

The teacher helps students summarize the information they have generated about the word *fury* so they can draw a conclusion about the word's meaning. In this case, students will probably have concluded that *fury* means deep or intense anger. The teacher confirms their conclusion. In cases where the context information is not enough to determine the meaning of the word with certainty, the teacher helps students to realize that the context leaves the meaning of the word uncertain or partially revealed. The teacher confirms the correct meaning for students.

#### Further considerations

In order for students to become adept at using the above process for determining word meaning from context, the teacher needs to review it often and have students practice it with words that appear in a range of contexts, from contexts that provide much information to those that provide little. In the case of this excerpt, for example, the teacher might choose to work with a word other than *fury*. The choice could be based on students' prior knowledge of the words or their readiness to handle more sophisticated aspects of the process. Alternative word choices include:

- *rush at*

If students are not certain of the meaning of this phrase, there is enough context information, along with their prior knowledge of a meaning of the word *rush (hurry)*, to enable them to make an accurate initial guess at the meaning. Students who skim past words they don't know and need to be reminded to use context information could benefit from working with a phrase like this.

- *snatch*

The meaning of this word would also be possible for students to determine from information in context.

- *apprehension*

Students would be able to propose a few possible meanings for this word. Because the text says that Mrs. Auld saw *danger* in Frederick having a newspaper, students might propose *worry* or *fear* as meanings for *apprehension*. They might also, however, plausibly guess that the meaning is *anger*. There is not enough context information to determine the meaning with certainty. Therefore, this would be a useful word to show students how context is sometimes not adequate for determining the meaning of a word. As time allowed, the teacher could go on to discuss options that students have in such circumstances.

Interacting with the Text

**Activity #4: Unpacking Sentence Syntax**

**SSS Day 3**

**Description and purpose:** This activity should serve as a supplement to students who are having difficulty answering SQ11-SQ14. Students will unpack/decode the syntactically complex sentence, “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.” There are many ways to unpack a sentence by focusing on different aspects of syntax, such as by addressing transition words or having students rewrite text in simple sentences (Douglas, nd). The following is one example of what the teacher could do to unpack syntax in a way that focuses students on the meaning of the text. The purpose of this activity is for students to learn about how complex sentences are syntactically structured. In addition, students gain practice in unpacking sentences.

Text	Teacher Directions
<p>I am strongly <b>tempted</b> to give the names of two or three of those little boys, as a <b>testimonial</b> of the <u>gratitude</u> and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remind students that long sentences with many clauses and phrases can be difficult to read. A reader may need to break apart the sentence and look for the simpler meaning.</li> <li>• Read the sentence to students. Have students read the sentence and summarize in the margins what Douglass is saying. Elicit from students their best idea at this point of an overall meaning for the sentence.</li> <li>• Begin to model how to “unpack” the sentence. Using chart paper or the board, begin to rephrase the sentence to show students the simpler structure. Have students look for important information: subject (who) and verb/predicate (what). Chart the following on the board. Students may underline on their papers:  <b>I am tempted</b></li> </ul>

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.

- Say: *“Douglass says he is tempted, meaning he desires or wants to do something. What does he want to do?”* After responses, add to the chart as follows:  
**I am tempted to give the names of the boys**
- Ask: *“Why does he want to tell their names? Add to the chart as follows. (Explain that a testimonial is a way of showing how one feels.)*  
**I am tempted to give the names of the boys  
as a testimonial of gratitude and affection**
- Paraphrase to make the response meaningful; for example: *“Douglass is tempted to tell the boys’ names to show his gratitude and affection [for teaching him to read].*
- Note that the next part of the sentence begins with “but.” Point out the semi-colon preceding and explain its function. Say: *“Douglass uses a new thought to explain why he won’t give the boys’ names. What explanation does he give? Add the following to the chart as students make suggestions for answers. While doing this, elicit from students or provide definitions for prudence (carefulness) and forbids (stops). Point out punctuation and its function when useful.*  
**I am tempted to give the names of the boys  
as a testimonial of gratitude and affection  
  
but prudence forbids  
it might embarrass them  
it is an offence to teach a slave to read**
- Work with students to develop a summary of the sentence. For example. *“Douglass is tempted to give the boys names but needs to be careful because he might get the boys (now men) in trouble/embarrass them. What they did was a crime.”*
- Tell students they can follow the central meaning of complex sentences by looking for the simple or core meaning in this way.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have students use sentence strips (as shown below) to reassemble the complete sentence. Reinforce that the words and phrases left out of the original chart contribute important meaning to the sentence. Discuss as examples “strongly” or “not that it would injure me.” If time permits, use the sentence strips to have students highlight important words and phrases that were left out of the teacher chart.</li> <li>• For students ready for more advanced study, this is an opportunity to work with other syntactical features, such as the use of “for” (“for it is almost an unpardonable offence”) to mean “because” or the use of “as a” to express the purpose or function of something (“as a testimonial”).</li> </ul>
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Cut-apart sentence for students:

<b>I am strongly tempted to give the names of two or three of those little boys,</b>
<b>as a testimonial of the gratitude and affection I bear them;</b>
<b>but prudence forbids;</b>
<b>not that it would injure me,</b>
<b>but it might embarrass them;</b>
<b>for it is almost an unpardonable offence to teach slaves to read in this Christian country.</b>

### **Activity #5: Example/Non-Example with word Emancipation**

#### **SSS Day 4**

**Description and Purpose:** This is a brief activity to build students' knowledge of the word "emancipation" before it is encountered in the reading for Day 4. The purpose of pre-teaching is to ensure that students develop a clear and solid understanding of the word by having it introduced in a structured way before it is encountered in context. Students should understand that *emancipation* is a condition opposite to the condition of *slavery*.

#### Teacher Directions:

- Introduce the word *emancipation* using the usual classroom vocabulary routine.
- Practice the words *slavery* and *emancipation* using an example/non-example activity based on the work of Beck (2013, p.185):
  - Present students with a series of conditions and have these written on the board/chart and displayed one by one. Ask student to choose which of the two words (*slavery* or *emancipation*) best describes the condition. Say: If I say something that sounds like a condition of *slavery*, say "slavery." If I say something that sounds like a condition of *emancipation*, say "emancipation."
  - If you are owned by someone who is able to sell you (slavery)
  - If you are free to live and go where you want (emancipation)
  - If you are forced to work without being paid (slavery)
  - If you have the same rights as other people (emancipation)
- Students should be asked to explain why they responded as they did to each condition.

ATTACHMENT A



Source: Edmund Ollier, Cassell's History of the United States (London, 1874-77), Vol.3, p. 199. Accessed from: <http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery/details.php?categorynum=6&categoryName=Slave%20Sales%20and%20Auctions:%20African%20Coast%20and%20the%20Americas&theRecord=16&recordCount=75>

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