

OUSD Teaching American History Grant
History Grows in Oakland

Frederick Douglass

Translating Frederick Douglass into Classroom Practice
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Donna Leary

Codirector, UC Berkeley History-Social Science Project
ucbhssp@socrates.berkeley.edu

Dylan Esson

UC Berkeley History Department, Graduate Student
dylan_esson@hotmail.com

Teddy Varno

UC Berkeley History Department, Graduate Student
varno@socrates.berkeley.edu

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Overview: Use Frederick Douglass to illuminate four periods of 19th century American History. We've developed an in-depth approach to the second set of documents.

Written Assessment: Why was Frederick Douglass very important? What might we learn about American history by studying his life?

Frederick Douglass Documents

1. Slavery and the Implications of "Telling It Like It Is"

"The Liberator" newspaper letter, first person account of Douglass's beating in Pendleton, Indiana, September, 1843.

Excerpt from *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* (autobiography), 1845, p.50, 51.

2. Douglass' Moral Argument against Slavery vs. Calhoun's Structural, Legalistic Argument for States' Rights

Excerpt from "The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro," a speech by Frederick Douglass, at Rochester, New York, July 5th, 1852.

Excerpt from "The Southern Address," a manifesto written by John C. Calhoun in 1849, signed by 48 members of Congress.

3. Douglass on Women's' Rights 1848, 1868, and 1888

The North Star, article, 28 July 1848

Letter, To Josephine Sophie White Griffing, September 27, 1868

Excerpt from *the Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, Written by Himself*, from the revised edition of 1892 (originally written in 1888).

4. Last words on Douglass

New York Times Obituary, February 27, 1895.

Frederick Douglass Timeline

We recommend printing this out from our grant website

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/doughtml/timeline.html>

History-Social Science Content Standards for 1, 2, and 4

8.6 Students analyze the divergent paths of the American people from 1800 to the mid-1800s and the challenges they faced, with emphasis on the Northeast.

4. Study the lives of black Americans who gained freedom in the North and founded schools and churches to advance their rights and communities.

8.7 Students analyze the divergent paths of the American people in the South from 1800 to the mid-1800s and the challenges they faced.

1. Describe the development of the agrarian economy in the South, identify the locations of the cotton-producing states, and discuss the significance of cotton and the cotton gin.
2. Trace the origins and development of slavery; its effects on black Americans and on the region's political, social, religious, economic, and cultural development; and identify the strategies that were tried to both overturn and preserve it (e.g., through the writings and historical documents on Nat Turner, Denmark Vesey).
4. Compare the lives of and opportunities for free blacks in the North with those of free blacks in the South.

8.9 Students analyze the early and steady attempts to abolish slavery and to realize the ideals of the Declaration of Independence.

1. Describe the leaders of the movement (e.g., John Quincy Adams and his proposed constitutional amendment, John Brown and the armed resistance, Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad, Benjamin Franklin, Theodore Weld, William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass).
4. Discuss the importance of the slavery issue as raised by the annexation of Texas and California's admission to the union as a free state under the Compromise of 1850.
3. Analyze the significance of the States' Rights Doctrine, the Missouri Compromise (1820), the Wilmot Proviso (1846), the Compromise of 1850, Henry Clay's role in the Missouri Compromise and the Compromise of 1850, the Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854), the *Dred Scott v. Sandford* decision (1857), and the Lincoln-Douglas debates (1858).
4. Describe the lives of free blacks and the laws that limited their freedom and economic opportunities.

11.1 Students analyze the significant events in the founding of the nation and its attempts to realize the philosophy of government described in the Declaration of Independence.

2. Analyze the ideological origins of the American Revolution, the Founding Fathers' philosophy of divinely bestowed unalienable natural rights, the debates on the drafting and ratification of the Constitution, and the addition of the Bill of Rights.
3. Understand the history of the Constitution after 1787 with emphasis on federal versus state authority and growing democratization.
4. Examine the effects of the Civil War and Reconstruction and of the industrial revolution, including demographic shifts and the emergence in the late nineteenth century of the United States as a world power.

1. Slavery and the Implications of “Telling It Like It Is”

“The Liberator” newspaper letter, first person account of Douglass’s beating in Pendleton, Indiana, September, 1843.

Excerpt from Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave (autobiography), 1845, p.50, 51.

Suggested curriculum uses: Examine and take notes on the excerpt from Douglass’ autobiography as an example of speeches he gave to publicize the physical, social, and psychological horrors of slavery. What were the repercussions he endured as a result of speaking out?

Content questions: Teachers develop for classroom use.

In-depth resources

2. Douglass' Moral Argument against Slavery vs. Calhoun's Structural, Legalistic Argument for States' Rights

Excerpt from "The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro," a speech by Frederick Douglass, at Rochester, New York, July 5th, 1852.

Excerpt from "The Southern Address," a manifesto written by John C. Calhoun in 1849, signed by 48 members of Congress.

Textbook connections:

Call to Freedom, pp. 472 -474, 477, 553, 590, 614, and 631. Included pp. 552-553.

The Americans, pp. 154, 159, 164 – 166, and 181. Included p. 164-165.

Background:

On the excerpts:

Both Douglass and Calhoun

- are speaking/writing for a like-minded audience
- want their audience to become more militant
- are using a reasoned, persuasive argument to get their point across

Douglass: a speech, written and thus more easily understood

Calhoun: written as a public declaration of policy

Suggested curriculum uses:

A. Douglass

1. Use text analysis to understand Douglass' argument for the existence of inconsistencies between what Americans say and do and the reality for American slaves.
2. Use the text excerpt and the student chart to examine the sets of inconsistencies. Go over the content questions students will be asked to answer in written form at the conclusion.
3. Begin by doing the first and second together, have students do the third by themselves and check for understanding. Have students continue to finish the chart alone or in partners. Discuss the pieces of the argument, explaining vocabulary words and historical references as needed, e.g. tyrants of Russia and Austria, anathemas. Have the students answer the content questions in complete sentences and discuss.
4. Additionally, discussing the role of the bolded connectors will help students recognize the elements of making an argument.

Content questions:

1. According to Douglass who supports slavery in America?
2. Does Douglass believe Christians are inconsistent? Why or why not?
3. How has Douglass structured his argument? Why would this be effective?

B. Calhoun

The complete text of Calhoun's Southern Address can be found at

<http://alpha.furman.edu/~benson/docs/calhoun.htm>

Calhoun's Southern Address arguments for paragraphs 23 and 24 are as follows:

Argument for Paragraph 23

1. The Federal Government cannot favor one state over another.
2. If the Government discriminated between the domestic institutions of states it would violate its purpose for being: to provide common protection and guard all.
3. We do not ask for special favors or treatment, we ask for the same rights as others: to be allowed to immigrate freely with our property into the U.S. territories.

Argument for Paragraph 24

1. The South sacrificed more to acquire Mexico and California in the Mexican War than the North did by furnishing three times the number of volunteers to fight the war.
 2. We have a Federal Government in which States as distinct sovereign communities, not individuals, are the constituents.
 3. The territories belong to the constituents (the States) equally as joint owners.
 4. The South cannot be deprived of their fair share in the territories.
1. Use the referrer activity and content questions to access Calhoun's States' Rights argument in paragraph 23. Discuss the argument as students decode the meaning by clearly understanding the players. Do a few together at first, have students do one on their own, and then assign the remainder to students individually or in partners. If students haven't done this before, partner work is a good way to start. After going over the referrals together, have students answer the content questions in complete sentences and discuss.

Content questions:

1. Does the Federal Government have the right to extend or restrict slavery or establish or abolish slavery?
 2. According to Calhoun and the Southern Address, how should the Federal Government treat the states?
 3. According to Calhoun and the Southern Address, why was the Federal Government established?
 4. Who should decide whether slavery should continue or be abolished?
 5. Applying the States' Rights argument, what right was the South fighting for regarding their slaves? (This is found at the very end of paragraph 23.)
2. Paragraph 24 gives Calhoun's argument, with statistics, for the contributions of the South during the Mexican American War. Teachers can develop comprehension activities for this.

3. Douglass on Women's' Rights 1848, 1868, and 1888

The North Star, article, 28 July 1848

Letter, To Josephine Sophie White Griffing, September 27, 1868

Excerpt from *the Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, Written by Himself*, from the revised edition of 1892 (originally written in 1888).

History-Social Science Content Standards for 3

8.6 Students analyze the divergent paths of the American people from 1800 to the mid-1800s and the challenges they faced, with emphasis on the Northeast.

5. Examine the women's suffrage movement (e.g., biographies, writings, and speeches of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Margaret Fuller, Lucretia Mott, Susan B. Anthony).

11.10 Students analyze the development of federal civil rights and voting rights.

10. Analyze the women's rights movement from the era of Elizabeth Stanton and Susan Anthony and the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the movement launched in the 1960s, including differing perspectives on the roles of women.

Suggested curriculum uses: Change over time. What was Douglass' position on women's rights at each of these junctures in time? What influence may these factors have had: audience, events of the time (e.g. the Civil War, Reconstruction, etc...), changes in Douglass?

Content questions: Teachers develop for classroom use.

4. Last words on Douglass

New York Times Obituary, February 27, 1895.

Background Notes: This obituary contains elements of the, by 1895, well developed arguments of scientific racism. Christians saw people as "one blood," while racism of the time often defined a person by the % of black blood present. Douglass' value was judged not only in racial terms, but also through his patrilineal lineage.

Challenges of the text: The double negative of the second point of the argument will give many students difficulty. A strategy should be devised to help students with this aspect of the obituary.

Suggested curriculum uses: Teachers develop for classroom use.

Content questions: Teachers develop for classroom use.