

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

**Grade Level or Special Area:** 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

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**Length of Unit:** Eight lessons, each approximately 60 minutes in length, plus the Culminating Activity

## **I. ABSTRACT**

This unit is about *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. It would be best taught in conjunction with the Civil War as part of the Core Knowledge 5<sup>th</sup> Grade sequence. It will use excerpts from Douglass' autobiography as well as additional resources to cover the key events of his life. Said excerpts are included as part of the unit.

## **II. OVERVIEW**

### **A. Concept Objectives**

1. Students will understand how stories illustrate the real life and/or beliefs of a people.
2. Students will understand how to listen responsively to stories and other texts read aloud, including selections from classic and contemporary works.
3. Students read and understand a variety of materials. (Colorado Model Content Standards Reading and Writing #1)
4. Students understand how to write and speak using conventional grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. (Colorado Model Content Standards Reading and Writing #3)
5. Students understand how to apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing. (Colorado Model Content Standards Reading and Writing #4)
6. Student will recognize literature as a record of human experience. (Colorado Model Content Standards Reading and Writing #6)

### **B. Content from the *Core Knowledge Sequence* (page 110)**

1. Language Arts: Grade 5
  - a. Fiction and Drama
    - i. Stories
      - a) *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Frederick Douglass)

### **C. Skill Objectives**

1. Students will make connections between their reading and what they already know, and to identify what they need to know about a topic before reading about it. (Colorado Content Standards Reading and Writing Standard #1 Benchmark.)
2. Students will increase learning and reading vocabulary, thereby improving reading comprehension.
3. Students will respond in writing to various literature presented.
4. Students will be able to match vocabulary terms and definitions.
5. Students will plan to complete a project that demonstrates their learning in a creative way.
6. Students will respond to the text in writing.
7. Students will work to complete a project that demonstrates their learning in a creative way.
8. Students will read and recall important events of the story.

### III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

- A. For Teachers
  - 1. Read *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* in its entirety.
- B. For Students
  - 1. Grade 1 – History and Geography: American History and Geography: Slavery
  - 2. Grade 2 – History and Geography: American History and Geography: American Government; The Civil War; Civil Rights
  - 3. Grade 3 – History and Geography: American History and Geography: Slavery in the Colonies

### IV. RESOURCES

- A. *Frederick Douglass and the War Against Slavery* (Lesson One)
- B. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (reference for the teacher, all lessons)
- C. *Frederick Douglass, Leader Against Slavery*. Patricia and Fredrick McKissack (Lesson Seven)

### V. LESSONS

#### Lesson One: Introduction to Unit (60 minutes)

- A. *Daily Objectives*
  - 1. Concept Objective(s)
    - a. Students will understand how stories illustrate the real life and/or beliefs of a people.
    - b. Student will recognize literature as a record of human experience.
    - c. Students read and understand a variety of materials.
  - 2. Lesson Content
    - a. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Frederick Douglass)
  - 3. Skill Objective(s)
    - a. Students will make connections between their reading and what they already know, and to identify what they need to know about a topic before reading about it.
    - b. Students will increase learning and reading vocabulary, thereby improving reading comprehension.
- B. *Materials*
  - 1. Map of the United States visible to all students
  - 2. Large sheet of paper for a KWL chart that is visible to all students
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
  - 1. *Abolitionists* were people who wanted to abolish, or end, all forms of slavery.
  - 2. A *slave* is a person who is owned and controlled by other.
  - 3. A man who owned slaves was called *Master*.
  - 4. A woman who owned slaves was called *Mistress*.
  - 5. Someone hired to watch over and control slaves was called an *overseer*.
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
  - 1. Before beginning this unit, be sure to read *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* in its entirety. As the students will only be read excerpts of the *Narrative*, it is important that you are familiar with the entire book in order to answer questions that may arise. The excerpts you will need are located in Appendix E, Excerpts. You will also need to copy one Appendix A, Student Notebook for each student.

2. Today's lesson is designed to introduce the students to Frederick Douglass and to help them make connections between their reading and what they already know, and to identify what they need to know about a topic before reading about it.
  - a. Create a KWL chart as a class about slavery and Frederick Douglass in particular. Start off the lesson by filling in the K (What We Think We Know) section and the W (What We Want to Learn) section of the chart.
  - b. Depending on where you are a class in studying the Civil War will affect how you choose to develop this lesson. If you have completed your study, then you will simply need to have a quick review of what life was like at this time for black Americans, specifically slaves. Let them know that this actually *Narrative* was written before the Civil War itself.
  - c. Introduce the students to the Lesson 1 Vocabulary terms. You may just go over them aloud today with the students. (The words and definitions are located in the Appendix A, Student Notebooks on page 2 for future student reference.)
  - d. If you have not begun to discuss the Civil War or slavery at all, then you will to go into more depth with your class. You will need to let them know that at that time in America (early 1800's) white people in certain state (the South) were allowed to own black people. These black people, called slaves, were considered to be property, not people. A master or mistress, the owner of a slave, could do anything he or she wanted to the slaves that he or she owned. The slaves were treated worse than animals. Most slave owners would have made sure their animals were well-fed and would not beat them savagely, but they did not think twice about mistreating their slaves. Families were torn apart as well as many slaves grew up not knowing who their parents were. It was a sad time in American history. Discuss the slave routes from Africa to America. Explain that men and women were kidnapped by various people in Africa and sold to people who would put them on large ships in horrible conditions and sail them to America where they would be sold again as slaves.
3. Show the class on the map where the Northern (free) states and the Southern (slave) states were. Then focus on Maryland. This is where Frederick Douglass was born. Point out how close he was to the Free states. Talk to the students about how the difference of a state line made someone human who would be considered as an animal on the other side of the line. Discuss how the slaves were not really somehow less than human and that they were not slaves because something was wrong with them, or because they were bad, but simply for the color of their skin. Let students know that because of the Fugitive Slave Act, that even though a former slave might reach the north, slave catchers and bounty hunters could still try to capture them and return them to their owners in the South for money. They would never truly be safe, unless they were actually in Canada.
4. Let the students know that slavery has existed throughout time in all sorts of places, but that slavery in America was different because all the slaves were black and had really no chance to be set free or earn their freedom as other slaves may have had. You may also choose to discuss the fact that slavery does still exist in the world today. It is not here in America, but in the nation of Sudan in Africa. There both the slaves and masters are black. Those that are taken as slaves are taken for religious reasons (Muslims enslaving Christians). This may

be an area students would want to further research as a part of their final projects for this unit.

5. Share with the students that during this unit you will be reading excerpts of *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* as well as other books on Frederick Douglass. The *Narrative* is Frederick Douglass' autobiography, which means that he wrote it himself. It was published in 1845. Explain that this was an amazing accomplishment since it was extremely rare for a slave to be allowed to learn to read and write at this time. Let students know that during this unit they will be working on a special project of their own choosing that will demonstrate their learning. You may choose to discuss some project ideas at this time, or wait until a later lesson. See Appendix C, Final Project Ideas for suggestions.
6. Finally, read from *Frederick Douglass and the War Against Slavery*. Read pages 5 and 6, an introduction to Frederick Douglass. Page 8 has information on the African Slave Trade and pages 12-13 are about the Fugitive Slave Law. There are also some pictures in this book that you may wish to show the students.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. Teacher observations during the discussions as well as the KWL chart are assessments for this lesson.

**Lesson Two: Frederick's Early Childhood (Chapters 1-2) (60 minutes)**

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Student will recognize literature as a record of human experience.
  - b. Students will understand how to listen responsively to stories and other texts read aloud, including selections from classic and contemporary works.
  - c. Students understand how to write and speak using conventional grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.
  - d. Students read and understand a variety of materials.
2. Lesson Content
  - a. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Frederick Douglass)
3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Students will increase learning and reading vocabulary, thereby improving reading comprehension.
  - b. Students will respond to the text in writing.

B. *Materials*

1. KWL chart from Lesson One
2. One copy of *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* for the teacher
3. One copy of Appendix A, Student Notebook for each student

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. To be *ignorant* is to not know something.
2. To be *impertinent* is to be too forward or bold, to speak in a way considered rude.
3. One's *complexion* is the natural surface or color of one's skin.
4. To *hinder* something is to be, or get in the way of it; to interfere or block something.
5. If something is *inevitable*, it means that it will happen automatically.
6. A *privation* is a loss, or something missed; an extreme poverty.
7. A *woe* is a deep distress, or a calamity.

8. *Betides* means to happen to. In this book “*woe betides*” means that something awful would happen to anyone who was not in the fields when the overseer came by to check.

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. For today’s lesson you will be reading Chapter 1, paragraphs one through four and Chapter 2, paragraphs 3-6. See Appendix E, Excerpts.
2. As a side note, be aware that Frederick’s father was most likely his master, Captain Aaron Anthony. You may want to think about how you wish to approach this with the students. Some of them may honestly think that that means that his master and his mother were married, or at least loved one another. Obviously, this is not the case. It does come up in the text, but ultimately it is up to you to decide how much of this aspect of slavery you wish to share with fifth graders.
3. See if there are any things that students wish to add to the KWL chart from yesterday.
4. Remind students that you will be doing most of the reading for this unit, but that it is important that they pay attention as you read. Let them know that there will be some vocabulary work in the lessons, but that are also free to raise their hands if there are words that they do not understand while you are reading. Go over the vocabulary terms for today’s lesson with the students. They are located in Appendix A, Student Notebook page 2.
5. Read Chapter 1, paragraphs one through four. This excerpt is about his very early years and his family as he knew it. Ask students how they think they would feel if they had been raised as Frederick was. Give the students time to share their thoughts and feelings. Then read Chapter 2, paragraphs 3-6. This excerpt starts off discussing what the slaves were given and expected to live off of for each month and year. It ends with discussing the overseer, Mr. Severe’s, cruel treatment of the slaves and his ultimate death.
6. Talk to the students about what the slaves were given to eat: “The men and women slaves received, as their monthly allowance of food, eight pounds of pork, or its equivalent in fish, and one bushel of corn meal.” That’s all they got and it was the same every month of every year. If you can show them how much food that really is, do so. Ask the students to imagine what it would be like to eat the same, small amounts of food each day. Let them picture that most American family dinner’s serve about a pound of meat, or more just for one meal. A bushel of corn meal would be used to make corn meal mush, which is sort of like a Cream of Wheat cereal. Remind students that the slaves were usually doing hard, physical labor from sunrise to sunset and that all the hard work would make them even hungrier. There were no fresh fruits or vegetables, no cookies or cakes, no Mc Donald’s or Dairy Queens. It is quite a change from today.
7. Let the students share their feelings on Mr. Severe and how he treated the slaves. Frederick said, “His career was short.” Sadly, it was not cut short because he was fired, but because he died. No one in power seemed to care about how cruel he was.
8. Give students some time to write in their Notebooks in the Response to Reading 1 section. There is a writing prompt for them to use. Let them know how much you expect them to write. This may be completed as homework and turned in the next day if needed.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. The Response to Reading 1 is the assessment for this lesson. Collect and review students’ responses as time allows.

### **Lesson Three: Frederick's Early Childhood (Chapters 3-5) (60 minutes)**

#### **A. Daily Objectives**

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Student will recognize literature as a record of human experience.
  - b. Students read and understand a variety of materials.
  - c. Students understand how to write and speak using conventional grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.
2. Lesson Content
  - a. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Frederick Douglass)
3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Students will increase learning and reading vocabulary, thereby improving their reading comprehension.

#### **B. Materials**

1. Each student will need his, or her Student Notebook
2. KWL chart from Lesson One

#### **C. Key Vocabulary**

1. "*Manifesting his fiendish barbarity*" means that he was extremely wicked or cruel; to be savagely brutal in actions or conduct.
2. To be *profane* is to be vulgar or coarse; to speak hatefully of things that are sacred.
3. *Ascertaining* is discovering with certainty; to know something for sure.
4. *Sundered* is broken apart, or destroyed.
5. If something is *unrelenting*, then it does not end, or stop.
6. *Imbibe* means to take is or absorb.
7. *Scurf* is dried, dead skin.

#### **D. Procedures/Activities**

1. See if there are any things that students wish to add to the KWL chart from yesterday.
2. Go through the Lesson Three Vocabulary with the students before the reading. Let them know that after the reading they will be completing an activity where they will use each vocabulary word in their own sentence.
3. Read Section 1 for the Excerpt for Lesson Three, Chapter 3 paragraphs 5-7  
Frederick says that his Master's riches compare to the riches of Job. Job was an incredibly wealthy man in the Old Testament of the Bible. Mention to students that Captain Lloyd's wealth came from the hard work of the slaves. He then used that money to buy more slaves. Frederick did not understand why the masters usually did no work, but had everything they wanted while the slaves did most all the work and had nothing. When the slave who complained about Captain Lloyd was sold to a Georgia trader he not only was separated from all those he may have cared about, but the slaveholders in the Deep South, like Georgia and Alabama, were known to be even meaner and work their slaves harder than the slaveholders in the states like Maryland. Also, the climate of Georgia is hotter and more humid than more northerly states like Maryland making all the work outside in the fields even harder.
4. Read Section 2 for the Excerpt for Lesson Three, Chapter 5 paragraphs 2-5. (There is no excerpt for Chapter 4.) Here Frederick shares what his life is like when he is about six years old. His life is not as difficult as the field hands, but he still suffers greatly with things like hunger and the cold. He is also very aware of the sufferings of those around him and his own lack of freedom.

5. After the reading be sure to answer any questions that the students may have and take time to fill out the KWL chart.
  6. Finally, have the students use their Notebooks and write their own sentences using the Lesson Three Vocabulary words. Their sentences do not need to define the words as is done in the Notebooks, but they should use the words in a way that makes sense. Let them know that they are expected to use proper grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling, and will be graded accordingly. Have them complete this activity for homework, if needed and turn it in the next day.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Today's vocabulary activity is the assessment for this lesson.

**Lesson Four: Frederick's New Master and Mistress (Chapters 6-7) (60 minutes)**

- A. *Daily Objectives*
1. Concept Objective(s)
    - a. Student will read and recognize literature as a record of human experience.
    - b. Students understand how to write and speak using conventional grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.
  2. Lesson Content
    - a. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Frederick Douglass)
  3. Skill Objective(s)
    - a. Students will increase learning and reading vocabulary, thereby improving reading comprehension.
    - b. Students will be able to match vocabulary terms and definitions.
    - c. Students will plan to complete a project that demonstrates their learning in a creative way.
- B. *Materials*
1. Each student will need his, or her Student Notebook
  2. KWL chart from Lesson One
  3. One copy of Appendix D, Vocabulary Worksheet for Lesson Four for each student
  4. One copy of Appendix C, Final Project Ideas for each student
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. If something is *blighting* that means that it leads ruin.
  2. *Servility* is abject or cringing submissiveness; bowing and scraping.
  3. *Manifested* means shown or demonstrated plainly; revealed.
  4. *Impudent* is offensive boldness; to be considered insolent or impertinent.
  5. *Stratagems* are maneuvers, or clever, often underhanded schemes created to deceive or surprise an enemy.
  6. *Depravity* is a moral corruption, a condition of absolute horridness.
  7. *Chattel* is a piece of property like a cow, or a car. Slaves were considered chattel.
  8. *Pious* means professing a religious devotion; it may be false and deceitful.
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Before you collect the vocabulary sentence activity, you may wish to allow students to each share one sentence that they wrote.
  2. Go over the Lesson Four Vocabulary in the Student Notebooks in preparation for today's reading.

3. Read the Excerpt for Lesson Four, from Chapters 6 and 7. Discuss with the students how Frederick felt that slavery was harmful to all those involved, not just slaves. His experience was such that he believed that slavery hurt the slave-owners as well as the slaves by changing their personalities and making them think that that which is evil is good. Answer any student questions and fill out the KWL chart as needed.
  4. Pass out the copies of Appendix C, Final Project Ideas and discuss them with the students. The projects will be presented during the Culminating Activity. Give the students any additional information or details as needed including the due date for the presentations. Most of the projects will be completed at home, but some class time (Lessons Six and Seven) should be given.
  5. Review today's vocabulary terms in the Student Notebooks. This can be done as a group, partners, or one on one. At the desired time have students close their Notebooks and pass out Appendix D, Vocabulary Activity for Lesson Four. Collect this after the students have completed it.
  6. Answers for Appendix D, Vocabulary Activity for Lesson Four: 1. A 2. H 3. C 4. G 5. F 6. D 7. B 8. E
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Appendix D, Vocabulary Worksheet for Lesson 4 is this lesson's assessment.

**Lesson Five: Frederick's Teenage Years (Chapter 9-10) (60 minutes)**

- A. *Daily Objectives*
1. Concept Objective(s)
    - a. Student will recognize literature as a record of human experience.
    - b. Students read and understand a variety of materials.
  2. Lesson Content
    - a. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Frederick Douglass)
  3. Skill Objective(s)
    - a. Students will increase learning and reading vocabulary, thereby improving reading comprehension.
    - b. Students will read and recall important events of the story.
    - c. Students will respond to the text in writing.
    - d. Students will work to complete a project that demonstrates their learning in a creative way.
- B. *Materials*
1. Each student will need his, or her Student Notebook
  2. KWL chart from Lesson One
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. If something is *pernicious*, then it causes extreme harm, destructiveness, or injury.
  2. A field is *tilled*, or plowed to prepare it for crops.
  3. *Disentangled* means to unravel or free up something that is tangled.
  4. A *trifle* is something of little importance or value.
  5. *Saving-fodder* time is the harvesting time for hay and straw.
  6. The *dregs* are least desirable part of something.
  7. A *brute* is an animal or a beast.
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Introduce today's vocabulary words and definitions.
  2. Read Section 1 the excerpt for today's lesson from Chapters 9 and 10. It is a longer reading and deals with the time that Frederick was a teenager. He was sent to Mr. Covey who was known as a slavebreaker, meaning that he tried to

break the will and the spirit of slaves. He would try to beat them into submission so that they would obey. Section 2 of the excerpt shows the despair that Frederick is feeling after his experiences with Mr. Covey. Talk to the class and let students share about how they feel after reading that section. It is a powerful testimony to the hideousness of slavery.

3. After the reading fill in the KWL chart with the students and answer any questions.
4. Have the students complete the Response to Reading 2 in their Notebooks. There is a prompt to start the students writing. Let them know what your expectations are as to length. They will need to include specific events from the readings so far in the story. They should mention at least three specific events and the affects that they had in their writings.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. The Response to Reading 2 is the assessment for this lesson.

**Lesson Six: Frederick's Escape to Freedom (Chapter 11) (60 minutes)**

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Student will recognize literature as a record of human experience.
  - b. Students will understand how to listen responsively to stories and other texts read aloud, including selections from classic and contemporary works.
2. Lesson Content
  - a. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Frederick Douglass)
3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Students will respond to the text in writing.
  - b. Students will work to complete a project that demonstrates their learning in a creative way.

B. *Materials*

1. Each student will need his, or her Student Notebook
2. KWL chart from Lesson One

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. *Vigilance* is the careful watching of something or someone.
2. A *bondman* is a man who serves another without pay, or a slave.
3. If something is *galling* that means that it causes extreme irritation, or even anger.
4. *Imputations* are things that can be attributed, or assigned to a person.
5. To *exculpate* is to declare innocence, or to be found not guilty.
6. *Retaliation* is getting back at someone else; revenge.
7. *Habiliments* are the equipment needed for a job.

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. Begin today's lesson by filling in the KWL chart with students' input.
2. Next, have students go over the vocabulary section for Lesson Six in their Student Notebooks with you, emphasizing proper pronunciation as today's words are probably completely unfamiliar to the students.
3. Read Section 1 from today's excerpt. Let students know that Frederick had already planned to escape once, but someone leaked the plan and the escaped did not happen. (This was in a section not included in the excerpts.) It is a few years after Mr. Covey when Frederick decides to try and escape on his own. This excerpt starts off with Frederick telling us that he escaped and then he goes back and tells us about some of the events leading up to the escape. This set up is a bit confusing. Talk about why Frederick thought it was important not to go into to

much detail about how he executed his escape. He was smart to think of the other slaves who could benefit from it being kept a secret and possibly escape the same way.

4. Read Section 2. It is part of the events leading up to the escape that he mentions in Section 1. Discuss calking, or caulking, with the students. Basically, at that time all the boats were made of wood. Gaps would naturally occur where the pieces of wood were put together. One job was calking, or caulking, the seams. This meant that the gaps were to be filled in, or caulked, so that the water could not get inside. This was tough work and became Frederick's job. The fact that he was able to hire out his own time was a truly amazing thing for a slave in those days. It was otherwise virtually unheard of.
  5. Before you begin Section 3, let the students know that Frederick did use the money well as his Master said to do. However, what he chose would not make his Master happy, as he used that money, combined with his salary from the third week to escape! Read Section 3. This section explains what Frederick did from the time he escaped to when he began speaking out as an abolitionist. He had to work incredibly hard, but tells us that it is fine with him because he is free. He is not afraid of working hard. He loves the idea that he is the one to benefit from the hard work because he is now his own master! This is the end of the reading.
  6. Go over the Map of Frederick's Escape with the students in their Notebooks. He had someone else's papers that was free and, disguising himself as a sailor, he rode a train from Baltimore, Maryland to Wilmington, Delaware. Next he took a boat, or ferry, to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. After that he took another train to New York. From there he was smuggled along the Underground Railroad to New Bedford.
  7. Fill in the KWL with the students.
  8. Have them complete the Response to Reading 3 in their Notebooks. When they have completed that they may work on their Final Projects.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. The Response to Reading 3 is the assessment for this lesson.

**Lesson Seven: Additional Information on Frederick's Life (Other Resources) (60 minutes)**

- A. *Daily Objectives*
1. Concept Objective(s)
    - a. Students understand how to write and speak using conventional grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.
    - b. Students read and understand a variety of materials.
    - c. Students understand how to apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.
  2. Lesson Content
    - a. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Frederick Douglass)
  3. Skill Objective(s)
    - a. Students will work to complete a project that demonstrates their learning in a creative way.
- B. *Materials*
1. Students should bring any necessary materials to work on their Final Projects
  2. Additional information on Frederick's life after escaping slavery, as needed
  3. *Frederick Douglass, Leader Against Slavery*, if available
  4. KWL chart from Lesson One

- C. *Key Vocabulary*  
None
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
  - 1. Today’s lesson is to share what Frederick Douglass did after he was free. He worked any type of job he could get, as shown in Lesson Seven. His *Narrative* ends with him joining the abolitionists’ cause and speaking out against slavery. Using the Timeline of Frederick Douglass’ Life in the Student Notebooks and other resources you have share with the students about his speaking and traveling. He even started his own abolitionist newspaper called “The North Star”. He wrote his *Narrative* as well as several other books. He also advised Abraham Lincoln once he was President about freeing the slave and the conditions of black soldiers in the Union army. Once the slaves were set free he did not stop speaking out against injustice. He spoke out against the horrible conditions the freed slaves lived in after the Civil War. Also, when the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment was passed this guaranteed the right of black men to vote, but women, both black and white, were still unable to vote. He thought this was wrong as well. He also had jobs with the United States government and was even sent to represent America to other nations.
  - 2. If you can get it, the book *Frederick Douglass, Leader Against Slavery* has an excellent portion, Chapters 4 and 5, which summarize Frederick’s life after slavery. It would be quick reading and has wonderful illustrations and photographs.
  - 3. Complete the final entries on the KWL chart.
  - 4. After this discussion, give the students time to work on their Final Projects. Take time to talk with students individually to make sure they are on track with the Final Projects.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
  - 1. The students’ final projects will be the assessment for this lesson.

**Lesson Eight: Prepare for Culminating Activity (60 minutes, or more as decided by the teacher)**

- A. *Daily Objectives*
  - 1. Concept Objective(s)
    - a. Students understand how to write and speak using conventional grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.
    - b. Students understand how to apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.
  - 2. Lesson Content
    - a. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Frederick Douglass)
  - 3. Skill Objective(s)
    - a. Students will work to complete a project that demonstrates their learning in a creative way.
- B. *Materials*
  - 1. Students should bring any necessary materials to work on their Final Projects
- C. *Key Vocabulary*  
None
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
  - 1. This class time is dedicated to working on Final Projects. Be available to assist students as needed. Encourage students to practice presenting their projects in front of others.

- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
  - 1. The students' final projects will be the assessment for this lesson.

## **VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITY**

- A. The Culminating Activity for this unit will be the presentations of Final Projects from the students. There is not a final test for the unit. Set aside enough time to allow each student to present and explain his or her project. Have them share what they created and answer questions you and other students may have. Celebrate the projects by displaying them, when applicable, somewhere in the school that others may enjoy and learn from them. If appropriate, invite parents to come in for the presentations.

## **VII. HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS**

- A. Appendix A: Student Notebook (eight pages)
- B. Appendix B: Master Vocabulary List for Teachers
- C. Appendix C: Final Project Ideas
- D. Appendix D: Vocabulary Activity for Lesson Four
- E. Appendix E: Excerpts

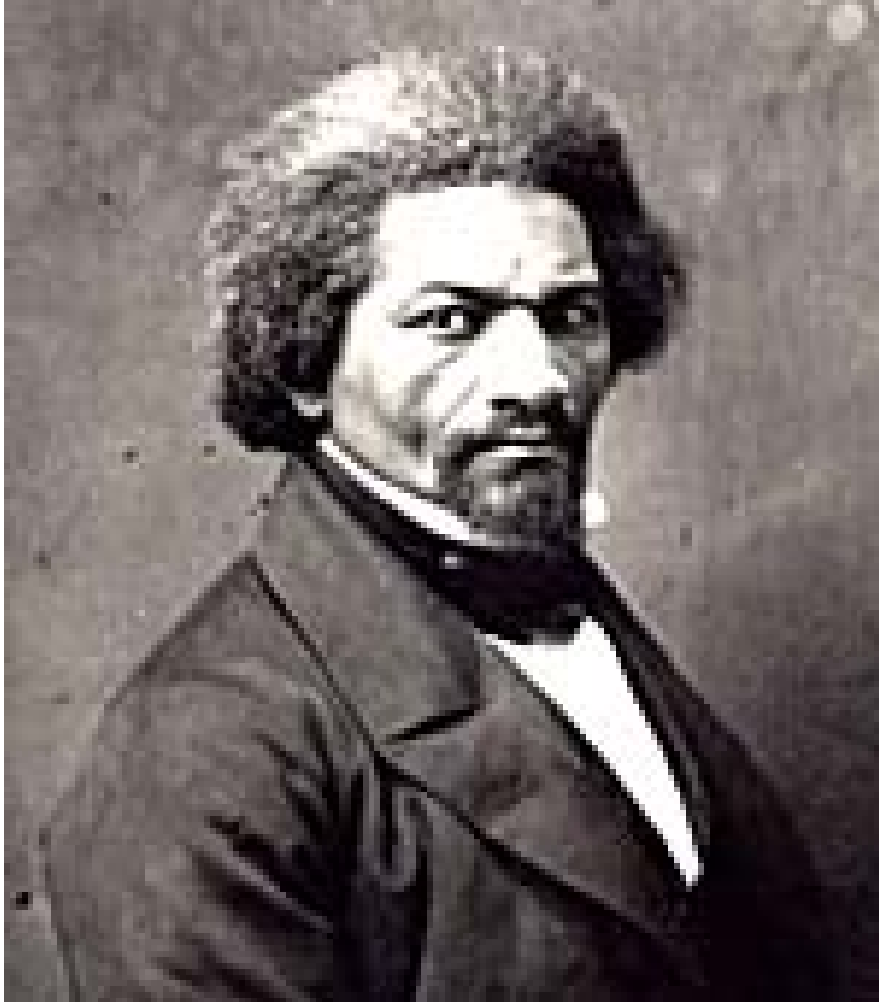
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Appendix A, page 1  
**Student Notebook**

# FREDERICK DOUGLASS

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



THIS STUDENT NOTEBOOK  
BELONGS TO:

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Appendix A, page 2  
**Student Notebook**

**Lesson One Vocabulary**

1. *Abolitionists* were people who wanted to abolish, or end, all forms of slavery.
2. A *slave* is a person who is owned and controlled by other.
3. A man who owned slaves was called *Master*.
4. A woman who owned slaves was called *Mistress*.
5. Someone hired to watch over and control slaves was called an *overseer*.

**Lesson Two Vocabulary**

1. To be *ignorant* is to not know something.
2. To be *impertinent* is to be too forward or bold, to speak in a way considered rude.
3. One's *complexion* is the natural surface or color of one's skin.
4. To *hinder* something is to be, or get in the way of it; to interfere or block something.
5. If something is *inevitable*, it means that it will happen automatically.
6. A *privation* is a loss, or something missed; an extreme poverty.
7. A *woe* is a deep distress, or a calamity.
8. *Betides* means to happen to. In this book "*woe betides*" means that something awful would happen to anyone who was not in the fields when the overseer came by to check.

**Lesson Three Vocabulary**

1. "*Manifesting his fiendish barbarity*" means that he was extremely wicked or cruel; to be savagely brutal in actions or conduct.
2. To be *profane* is to be vulgar or coarse; to speak hatefully of things that are sacred.
3. *Ascertaining* is discovering with certainty; to know something for sure.
4. *Sundered* is broken apart, or destroyed.
5. If something is *unrelenting*, then it does not end, or stop.
6. *Imbibe* means to take in or absorb.
7. *Scurf* is dried, dead skin.

Appendix A, page 3  
**Student Notebook**

**Lesson Four Vocabulary**

1. If something is *blighting* that means that it leads ruin.
2. *Servility* is abject or cringing submissiveness; bowing and scraping.
3. *Manifested* means shown or demonstrated plainly; revealed.
4. *Impudent* is offensive boldness; to be considered insolent or impertinent.
5. *Stratagems* are maneuvers, or clever, often underhanded schemes created to deceive or surprise an enemy.
6. *Depravity* is a moral corruption, a condition of absolute horridness.
7. *Chattel* is a piece of property like a cow, or a car. Slaves were considered chattel.
8. *Pious* means professing a religious devotion; it may be false and deceitful.

**Lesson Five Vocabulary**

1. If something is *pernicious*, then it causes extreme harm, destructiveness, or injury.
2. A field is *tilled*, or plowed to prepare it for crops.
3. *Disentangled* means to unravel or free up something that is tangled.
4. A *trifle* is something of little importance or value.
5. *Saving-fodder* time is the harvesting time for hay and straw.
6. The *dregs* are least desirable part of something.
7. A *brute* is an animal or a beast.

**Lesson Six Vocabulary**

1. *Vigilance* is the careful watching of something or someone.
2. A *bondman* is a man who serves another without pay, or a slave.
3. If something is *galling* that means that it causes extreme irritation, or even anger.
4. *Imputations* are things that can be attributed, or assigned to a person.
5. To *exculpate* is to declare innocence, or to be found not guilty.
6. *Retaliation* is getting back at someone else; revenge.
7. *Habiliments* are the equipment needed for a job.

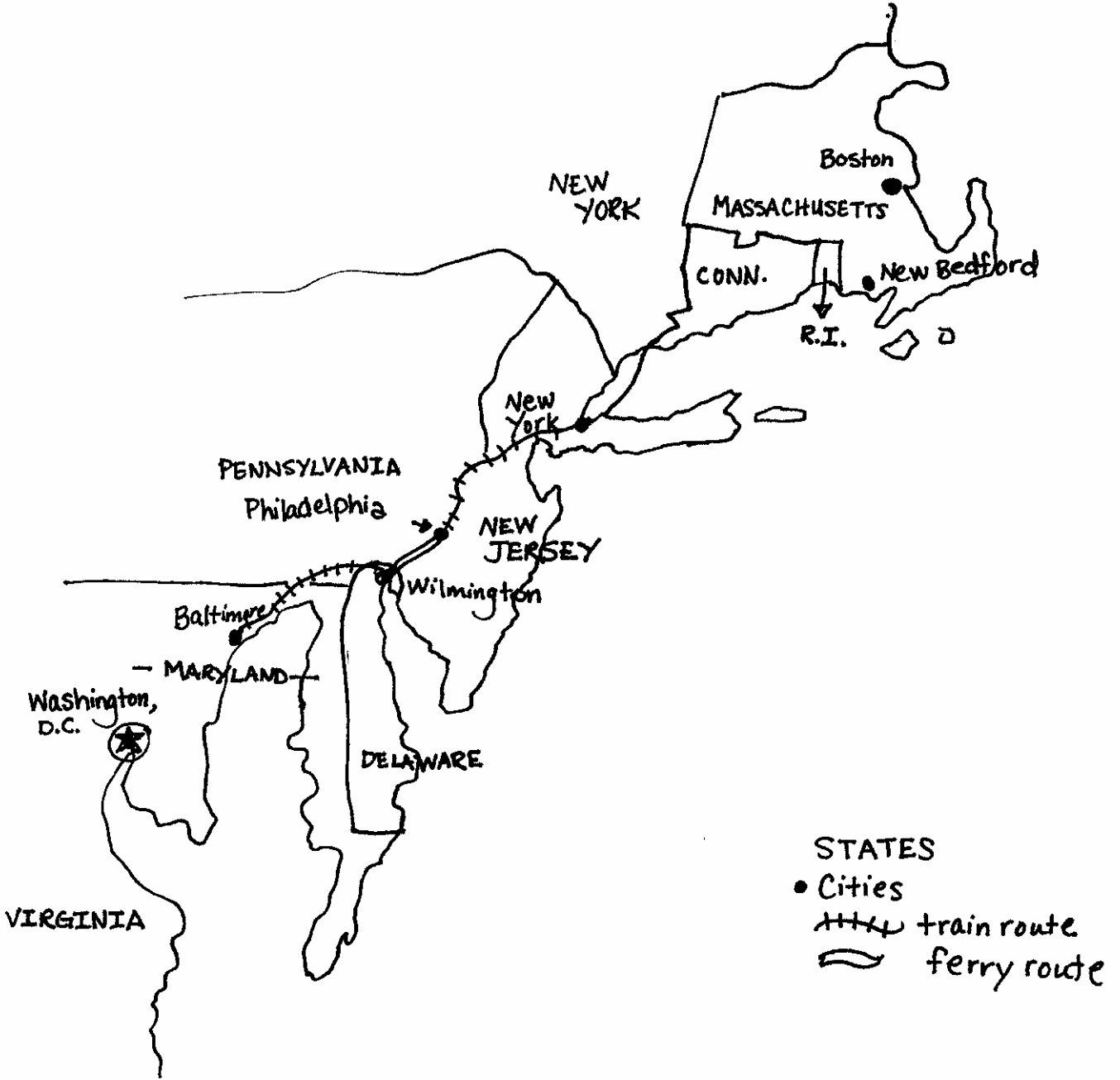




# Student Notebook

## Map of Frederick Douglass' Escape

From *The Frederick Douglass You Never Knew*





Appendix A, page 8  
**Student Notebook**  
**Timeline of Frederick Douglass' Life**

*From He Fought for Freedom, Frederick Douglass*

- February 1818      Born Frederick Bailey near Easton, Maryland
- 1824      Works for Captain Aaron Anthony
- 1826      Travels to Baltimore, Maryland to work for the Hugh Auld after Captain Anthony dies
- 1833      Returns to the Anthony farm to work for Thomas Auld
- 1834      Sent to work for Edward Covey, the slavebreaker
- 1835      Works for William Freeland
- 1836      Plans escape, fails, and is sent back to Hugh Auld
- 1837      Meets Anna Murray, his future wife
- 1838      Escapes to New York, married Anna, and changes name to Frederick Douglass
- 1841      Speaks out against slavery for the first time and is invited on a lecture tour
- 1845      Publishes *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* and begins tour of England
- 1847      Returns to the United States, lectures, and begins printing the *North Star*
- 1848      Attends first women's right convention
- 1850      Becomes involved with the Underground Railroad
- 1851      Breaks with William Garrison
- 1859      Returns to England to lecture
- 1860      Returns to the United States
- 1863      Meet with President Lincoln to discuss black soldiers in the Civil War
- 1870      The 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment is passed and black men are allowed to vote
- 1882      Anna Douglass dies
- 1884      Douglass marries Helen Pitts
- 1889      Becomes the American consul-general to Haiti
- 1891      Resigns and returns home
- 1895      Dies in Washington, D.C.

## Appendix B

# Master Vocabulary List for Teachers

### Lesson One

*Abolitionists* were people who wanted to abolish, or end, all forms of slavery.  
A *slave* is a person who is owned and controlled by other.  
A man who owned slaves was called *Master*.  
A woman who owned slaves was called *Mistress*.  
Someone hired to watch over and control slaves was called an *overseer*.

### Lesson Two

To be *ignorant* is to not know something.  
To be *impertinent* is to be too forward or bold, to speak in a way considered rude.  
One's *complexion* is the natural surface or color of one's skin.  
To *hinder* something is to be, or get in the way of it; to interfere or block something.  
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A *privation* is a loss, or something missed; an extreme poverty.  
A *woe* is a deep distress, or a calamity.  
*Betides* means to happen to. In this book "*woe betides*" means that something awful would happen to anyone who was not in the fields when the overseer came by to check.

### Lesson Three

"*Manifesting his fiendish barbarity*" means that he was extremely wicked or cruel; to be savagely brutal in actions or conduct.  
To be *profane* is to be vulgar or coarse; to speak hatefully of things that are sacred.  
*Ascertaining* is discovering with certainty; to know something for sure.  
*Sundered* is broken apart, or destroyed.  
If something is *unrelenting*, then it does not end, or stop.  
*Imbibe* means to take in or absorb.  
*Scurf* is dried, dead skin

### Lesson Four

If something is *blighting* that means that it leads ruin.  
*Servility* is abject or cringing submissiveness; bowing and scraping.  
*Manifested* means shown or demonstrated plainly; revealed.  
*Impudent* is offensive boldness; to be considered insolent or impertinent.  
*Stratagems* are maneuvers, or clever, often underhanded schemes created to deceive or surprise an enemy.  
*Depravity* is a moral corruption, a condition of absolute horridness.  
*Chattel* is a piece of property like a cow, or a car. Slaves were considered chattel.  
*Pious* means professing a religious devotion; it may be false and deceitful.

### Lesson Five

If something is *pernicious*, then it causes extreme harm, destructiveness, or injury.  
A field is *tilled*, or plowed to prepare it for crops.  
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*Saving-fodder* time is the harvesting time for hay and straw.  
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### Lesson Six

*Vigilance* is the careful watching of something or someone.  
A *bondman* is a man who serves another without pay, or a slave.  
If something is *galling* that means that it causes extreme irritation, or even anger.  
*Imputations* are things that can be attributed, or assigned to a person.  
To *exculpate* is to declare innocence, or to be found not guilty.  
*Retaliation* is getting back at someone else; revenge.  
*Habiliments* are the equipment needed for a job.

## Appendix C

# FINAL PROJECT IDEAS

- \* Create a Timeline of Frederick Douglass' Life including at least 10 events and 10 color illustrations.
  
- \* Pretend you are an abolitionist and write a speech advocating the end of slavery. You will present the speech out loud to the class.
  - \* Write the front page of an abolitionist newspaper like "The North Star" or "The Liberator." Include at least four articles and two illustrations. Try to make it look as much like a real newspaper as possible.
  
- \* Create a three-dimensional map that shows a route an escaped slave could take to freedom. Label items as needed and include geographical features such as rivers, mountains, etc. that would have affected an escaping slave.
  
- \* Create a journal pretending that you are a slave making your escape to freedom. Record your thoughts, feelings, and fears in the journal. Write at least 5 entries.
  
- \* Pretend you are an abolitionist and create a poster or brochure detailing why slavery should be stopped.
  
- \* Write and present a report about slavery in the world today. Research the situation in the Sudan and find out what others are doing to try to stop it.
  
- \* Come up with your own project idea. Discuss your idea with your teacher FIRST and develop together any necessary guideline and expectations for the project BEFORE you begin anything.

Appendix D

**Vocabulary Activity for Lesson Four**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*Put the letter of the correct word next to its definition.*

- a. chattel      b. impudent      c. depravity      d. stratagems  
e. manifested      f. servility      g. blighting      h. pious

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Slaves were considered to be this.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ This means professing a religious devotion.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ This is a moral corruption, a condition of absolute horridness.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Something that leads ruin, or destruction.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ This is abject or cringing submissiveness; bowing and scraping.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ These are maneuvers, or clever, often underhanded schemes created to deceive or surprise an enemy.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ This is offensive boldness; to be considered insolent or impertinent. Talking back to the teacher in a rude way is an example of this.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ This means shown or demonstrated plainly.

## Appendix E, page 1

### Excerpts

Excerpts from the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*  
from <http://www.history.rochester.edu/class/douglass/DUGLAS11.TXT>

### LESSON TWO

#### *Chapter 1*

I was born in Tuckahoe, near Hillsborough, and about twelve miles from Easton, in Talbot county, Maryland. I have no accurate knowledge of my age, never having seen any authentic record containing it. By far the larger part of the slaves know as little of their ages as horses know of theirs, and it is the wish of most masters within my knowledge to keep their slaves thus **ignorant**. I do not remember to have ever met a slave who could tell of his birthday. They seldom come nearer to it than planting-time, harvest-time, cherry-time, spring-time, or fall-time. A want of information concerning my own was a source of unhappiness to me even during childhood. The white children could tell their ages. I could not tell why I ought to be deprived of the same privilege. I was not allowed to make any inquiries of my master concerning it. He deemed all such inquiries on the part of a slave improper and **impertinent**, and evidence of a restless spirit. The nearest estimate I can give makes me now between twenty-seven and twenty-eight years of age. I come to this, from hearing my master say, some time during 1835, I was about seventeen years old. My mother was named Harriet Bailey. She was the daughter of Isaac and Betsey Bailey, both colored, and quite dark. My mother was of a darker **complexion** than either my grandmother or grandfather.

My father was a white man. He was admitted to be such by all I ever heard speak of my parentage. The opinion was also whispered that my master was my father; but of the correctness of this opinion, I know nothing; the means of knowing was withheld from me. My mother and I were separated when I was but an infant--before I knew her as my mother. It is a common custom, in the part of Maryland from which I ran away, to part children from their mothers at a very early age. Frequently, before the child has reached its twelfth month, its mother is taken from it, and hired out on some farm a considerable distance off, and the child is placed under the care of an old woman, too old for field labor. For what this separation is done, I do not know, unless it be to **hinder** the development of the child's affection toward its mother, and to blunt and destroy the natural affection of the mother for the child. This is the **inevitable** result.

I never saw my mother, to know her as such, more than four or five times in my life; and each of these times was very short in duration, and at night. She was hired by a Mr. Stewart, who lived about twelve miles from my home. She made her journeys to see me in the night, traveling the whole distance on foot, after the performance of her day's work. She was a field hand, and a whipping is the penalty of not being in the field at sunrise, unless a slave has special permission from his or her master to the contrary--a permission which they seldom get, and one that gives to him that gives it the proud name of being a kind master. I do not recollect of ever seeing my mother by the light of day. She was with me in the night. She would lie down with me, and get me to sleep, but long before I waked she was gone. Very little communication ever took place between us. Death soon ended what little we could have while she lived, and with it her hardships and suffering. She died when I was about seven years old, on one of my master's farms, near Lee's Mill. I was not allowed to be present during her illness, at her death, or burial. She was gone long before I knew any thing about it. Never having enjoyed, to any considerable extent, her soothing presence, her tender and watchful care, I received the tidings of her death with much the same emotions I should have probably felt at the death of a stranger.

#### *Chapter 2*

Here, too, the slaves of all the other farms received their monthly allowance of food, and their yearly clothing. The men and women slaves received, as their monthly allowance of food, eight pounds of pork, or its equivalent in fish, and one bushel of corn meal. Their yearly clothing consisted of two

Appendix E, page 2  
**Excerpts**

coarse linen shirts, one pair of linen trousers, like the shirts, one jacket, one pair of trousers for winter, made of coarse negro cloth, one pair of stockings, and one pair of shoes; the whole of which could not have cost more than seven dollars. The allowance of the slave children was given to their mothers, or the old women having the care of them. The children unable to work in the field had neither shoes, stockings, jackets, nor trousers, given to them; their clothing consisted of two coarse linen shirts per year. When these failed them, they went naked until the next allowance-day. Children from seven to ten years old, of both sexes, almost naked, might be seen at all seasons of the year.

There were no beds given the slaves, unless one coarse blanket be considered such, and none but the men and women had these. This, however, is not considered a very great **privation**. They find less difficulty from the want of beds, than from the want of time to sleep; for when their day's work in the field is done, the most of them having their washing, mending, and cooking to do, and having few or none of the ordinary facilities for doing either of these, very many of their sleeping hours are consumed in preparing for the field the coming day; and when this is done, old and young, male and female, married and single, drop down side by side, on one common bed,--the cold, damp floor,--each covering himself or herself with their miserable blankets; and here they sleep till they are summoned to the field by the driver's horn. At the sound of this, all must rise, and be off to the field. There must be no halting; every one must be at his or her post; and **woe betides** them who hear not this morning summons to the field; for if they are not awakened by the sense of hearing, they are by the sense of feeling: no age nor sex finds any favor.

Mr. Severe, the overseer, used to stand by the door of the quarter, armed with a large hickory stick and heavy cowskin, ready to whip any one who was so unfortunate as not to hear, or, from any other cause, was prevented from being ready to start for the field at the sound of the horn. Mr. Severe was rightly named: he was a cruel man. I have seen him whip a woman, causing the blood to run half an hour at the time; and this, too, in the midst of her crying children, pleading for their mother's release. He seemed to take pleasure in **manifesting his fiendish barbarity**. Added to his cruelty, he was a **profane** swearer. It was enough to chill the blood and stiffen the hair of an ordinary man to hear him talk. Scarce a sentence escaped him but that was commenced or concluded by some horrid oath. The field was the place to witness his cruelty and profanity. His presence made it both the field of blood and of blasphemy. From the rising till the going down of the sun, he was cursing, raving, cutting, and slashing among the slaves of the field, in the most frightful manner. His career was short. He died very soon after I went to Colonel Lloyd's; and he died as he lived, uttering, with his dying groans, bitter curses and horrid oaths. His death was regarded by the slaves as the result of a merciful providence.

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**LESSON THREE**

Section 1  
**Chapter 3**

To describe the wealth of Colonel Lloyd would be almost equal to describing the riches of Job. He kept from ten to fifteen house-servants. He was said to own a thousand slaves, and I think this estimate quite within the truth. Colonel Lloyd owned so many that he did not know them when he saw them; nor did all the slaves of the out-farms know him. It is reported of him, that, while riding along the road one day, he met a colored man, and addressed him in the usual manner of speaking to colored people on the public highways of the south: "Well, boy, whom do you belong to?" "To Colonel Lloyd," replied the slave. "Well, does the colonel treat you well?" "No, sir," was the ready reply. "What, does he work you too hard?" "Yes, sir." "Well, don't he give you enough to eat?" "Yes, sir, he gives me enough, such as it is."

## Appendix E, page 3

# Excerpts

The colonel, after **ascertaining** where the slave belonged, rode on; the man also went on about his business, not dreaming that he had been conversing with his master. He thought, said, and heard nothing more of the matter, until two or three weeks afterwards. The poor man was then informed by his overseer that, for having found fault with his master, he was now to be sold to a Georgia trader. He was immediately chained and handcuffed; and thus, without a moment's warning, he was snatched away, and forever **sundered**, from his family and friends, by a hand more **unrelenting** than death. This is the penalty of telling the truth, of telling the simple truth, in answer to a series of plain questions.

It is partly in consequence of such facts, that slaves, when inquired of as to their condition and the character of their masters, almost universally say they are contented, and that their masters are kind. The slaveholders have been known to send in spies among their slaves, to ascertain their views and feelings in regard to their condition. The frequency of this has had the effect to establish among the slaves the **maxim**, that a still tongue makes a wise head. They suppress the truth rather than take the consequences of telling it, and in so doing prove themselves a part of the human family. If they have anything to say of their masters, it is generally in their masters' favor, especially when speaking to an untried man. I have been frequently asked, when a slave, if I had a kind master, and do not remember ever to have given a negative answer; nor did I, in pursuing this course, consider myself as uttering what was absolutely false; for I always measured the kindness of my master by the standard of kindness set up among slaveholders around us. Moreover, slaves are like other people, and **imbibe** prejudices quite common to others. They think their own better than that of others. Many, under the influence of this prejudice, think their own masters are better than the masters of other slaves; and this, too, in some cases, when the very reverse is true. Indeed, it is not uncommon for slaves even to fall out and quarrel among themselves about the relative goodness of their masters, each contending for the superior goodness of his own over that of the others. At the very same time, they mutually **execrate** their masters when viewed separately. It was so on our plantation. When Colonel Lloyd's slaves met the slaves of Jacob Jepson, they seldom parted without a quarrel about their masters; Colonel Lloyd's slaves contending that he was the richest, and Mr. Jepson's slaves that he was the smartest, and most of a man. Colonel Lloyd's slaves would boast his ability to buy and sell Jacob Jepson. Mr. Jepson's slaves would boast his ability to whip Colonel Lloyd. These quarrels would almost always end in a fight between the parties, and those that whipped were supposed to have gained the point at issue. They seemed to think that the greatness of their masters was transferable to themselves. It was considered as being bad enough to be a slave; but to be a poor man's slave was deemed a disgrace indeed!

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### Section 2

#### *Chapter 5*

As to my own treatment while I lived on Colonel Lloyd's plantation, it was very similar to that of the other slave children. I was not old enough to work in the field, and there being little else than field work to do, I had a great deal of leisure time. The most I had to do was to drive up the cows at evening, keep the fowls out of the garden, keep the front yard clean, and run of errands for my old master's daughter, Mrs. Lucretia Auld. The most of my leisure time I spent in helping Master Daniel Lloyd in finding his birds, after he had shot them. My connection with Master Daniel was of some advantage to me. He became quite attached to me, and was a sort of protector of me. He would not allow the older boys to **impose** upon me, and would divide his cakes with me.

I was seldom whipped by my old master, and suffered little from any thing else than hunger and cold. I suffered much from hunger, but much more from cold. In hottest summer and coldest winter, I was kept almost naked--no shoes, no stockings, no jacket, no trousers, nothing on but a coarse tow linen shirt, reaching only to my knees. I had no bed. I must have **perished** with cold, but that, the coldest nights, I used to steal a bag which was used for carrying corn to the mill. I would crawl into this bag, and

Appendix E, page 4  
**Excerpts**

there sleep on the cold, damp, clay floor, with my head in and feet out. My feet have been so cracked with the frost, that the pen with which I am writing might be laid in the gashes.

We were not regularly allowed. Our food was coarse corn meal boiled. This was called mush. It was put into a large wooden tray or trough, and set down upon the ground. The children were then called, like so many pigs, and like so many pigs they would come and devour the mush; some with oystershells, others with pieces of shingle, some with naked hands, and none with spoons. He that ate fastest got most; he that was strongest secured the best place; and few left the trough satisfied.

I was probably between seven and eight years old when I left Colonel Lloyd's plantation. I left it with joy. I shall never forget the ecstasy with which I received the intelligence that my old master (Anthony) had determined to let me go to Baltimore, to live with Mr. Hugh Auld, brother to my old master's son-in-law, Captain Thomas Auld. I received this information about three days before my departure. They were three of the happiest days I ever enjoyed. I spent the most part of all these three days in the creek, washing off the plantation **scurf**, and preparing myself for my departure.

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**LESSON FOUR**

***Chapter 6***

My new mistress proved to be all she appeared when I first met her at the door,--a woman of the kindest heart and finest feelings. She had never had a slave under her control previously to myself, and prior to her marriage she had been dependent upon her own industry for a living. She was by trade a weaver; and by constant application to her business, she had been in a good degree preserved from the **blighting** and dehumanizing effects of slavery. I was utterly astonished at her goodness. I scarcely knew how to behave towards her. She was entirely unlike any other white woman I had ever seen. I could not approach her as I was accustomed to approach other white ladies. My early instruction was all out of place. The crouching **servility**, usually so acceptable a quality in a slave, did not answer when **manifested** toward her. Her favor was not gained by it; she seemed to be disturbed by it. She did not deem it **impudent** or unmannerly for a slave to look her in the face. The meanest slave was put fully at ease in her presence, and none left without feeling better for having seen her. Her face was made of heavenly smiles, and her voice of tranquil music.

But, alas! this kind heart had but a short time to remain such. The fatal poison of irresponsible power was already in her hands, and soon commenced its infernal work. That cheerful eye, under the influence of slavery, soon became red with rage; that voice, made all of sweet accord, changed to one of harsh and horrid discord; and that angelic face gave place to that of a demon.

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. To use his own words, further, he said, "If you give a nigger an inch, he will take an ell. A nigger should know nothing but to obey his master--to do as he is told to do. Learning would ~spoil~ the best nigger in the world. Now," said he, "if you teach that nigger (speaking of myself) how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever unfit him to be a slave. He would at once become unmanageable, and of no value to his master. As to himself, it could do him no good, but a great deal of harm. It would make him discontented and unhappy." These words sank deep into my heart, stirred up sentiments within that lay slumbering, and called into existence an entirely new train of thought. It was a new and special revelation, explaining dark and mysterious things, with which my youthful understanding had struggled, but struggled in vain. I now understood what had been to me a most perplexing difficulty--to wit, the white man's power to enslave the black man. It was a grand achievement, and I prized it

Appendix E, page 5  
**Excerpts**

highly. From that moment, I understood the pathway from slavery to freedom. It was just what I wanted, and I got it at a time when I the least expected it. Whilst I was saddened by the thought of losing the aid of my kind mistress, I was gladdened by the invaluable instruction which, by the merest accident, I had gained from my master. Though conscious of the difficulty of learning without a teacher, I set out with high hope, and a fixed purpose, at whatever cost of trouble, to learn how to read. The very decided manner with which he spoke, and strove to impress his wife with the evil consequences of giving me instruction, served to convince me that he was deeply sensible of the truths he was uttering. It gave me the best assurance that I might rely with the utmost confidence on the results which, he said, would flow from teaching me to read. What he most dreaded, that I most desired. What he most loved, that I most hated. That which to him was a great evil, to be carefully shunned, was to me a great good, to be diligently sought; and the argument which he so warmly urged, against my learning to read, only served to inspire me with a desire and determination to learn. In learning to read, I owe almost as much to the bitter opposition of my master, as to the kindly aid of my mistress. I acknowledge the benefit of both.

**Chapter 7**

I lived in Master Hugh's family about seven years. During this time, I succeeded in learning to read and write. In accomplishing this, I was compelled to resort to various **stratagems**. I had no regular teacher. My mistress, who had kindly commenced to instruct me, had, in compliance with the advice and direction of her husband, not only ceased to instruct, but had set her face against my being instructed by anyone else. It is due, however, to my mistress to say of her, that she did not adopt this course of treatment immediately. She at first lacked the **depravity** indispensable to shutting me up in mental darkness. It was at least necessary for her to have some training in the exercise of irresponsible power, to make her equal to the task of treating me as though I were a brute.

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

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LESSON FIVE

Section 1  
*Chapter 9*

My master and myself had quite a number of differences. He found me unsuitable to his purpose. My city life, he said, had had a very **pernicious** effect upon me. It had almost ruined me for every good purpose, and fitted me for every thing which was bad. One of my greatest faults was that of letting his horse run away, and go down to his father-in-law's farm, which was about five miles from St. Michael's. I would then have to go after it. My reason for this kind of carelessness, or carefulness, was, that I could always get something to eat when I went there. Master William Hamilton, my master's father-in-law, always gave his slaves enough to eat. I never left there hungry, no matter how great the need of my speedy return. Master Thomas at length said he would stand it no longer. I had lived with him nine months, during which time he had given me a number of severe whippings, all to no good purpose. He resolved to put me out, as he said, to be broken; and, for this purpose, he let me for one year to a man named Edward Covey. Mr. Covey was a poor man, a farm-renter. He rented the place upon which he lived, as also the hands with which he **tilled** it. Mr. Covey had acquired a very high reputation for breaking young slaves, and this reputation was of immense value to him. It enabled him to get his farm tilled with much less expense to himself than he could have had it done without such a reputation. Some slaveholders thought it not much loss to allow Mr. Covey to have their slaves one year, for the sake of the training to which they were subjected, without any other compensation. He could hire young help with great ease, in consequence of this reputation. Added to the natural good qualities of Mr. Covey, he was a professor of religion--a pious soul--a member and a class-leader in the Methodist church. All of this added weight to his reputation as a "nigger-breaker." I was aware of all the facts, having been made acquainted with them by a young man who had lived there. I nevertheless made the change gladly; for I was sure of getting enough to eat, which is not the smallest consideration to a hungry man.

*Chapter 10*

I had left Master Thomas's house, and went to live with Mr. Covey, on the 1st of January, 1833. I was now, for the first time in my life, a field hand. In my new employment, I found myself even more awkward than a country boy appeared to be in a large city. I had been at my new home but one week before Mr. Covey gave me a very severe whipping, cutting my back, causing the blood to run, and raising ridges on my flesh as large as my little finger. The details of this affair are as follows: Mr. Covey sent me, very early in the morning of one of our coldest days in the month of January, to the woods, to get a load of wood. He gave me a team of unbroken oxen. He told me which was the in-hand ox, and which the off-hand one. He then tied the end of a large rope around the horns of the in-hand ox, and gave me the other end of it, and told me, if the oxen started to run, that I must hold on upon the rope. I had never driven oxen before, and of course I was very awkward. I, however, succeeded in getting to the edge of the woods with little difficulty; but I had got a very few rods into the woods, when the oxen took fright, and started full tilt, carrying the cart against trees, and over stumps, in the most frightful manner. I expected every moment that my brains would be dashed out against the trees. After running thus for a considerable distance, they finally upset the cart, dashing it with great force against a tree, and threw themselves into a dense thicket. How I escaped death, I do not know. There I was, entirely alone, in a thick wood, in a place new to me. My cart was upset and shattered, my oxen were entangled among the young trees, and there was none to help me. After a long spell of effort, I succeeded in getting my cart righted, my oxen **disentangled**, and again yoked to the cart. I now proceeded with my team to the place where I had, the day before, been chopping wood, and loaded my cart pretty heavily, thinking in this way

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### Excerpts

to tame my oxen. I then proceeded on my way home. I had now consumed one half of the day. I got out of the woods safely, and now felt out of danger. I stopped my oxen to open the woods gate; and just as I did so, before I could get hold of my ox-rope, the oxen again started, rushed through the gate, catching it between the wheel and the body of the cart, tearing it to pieces, and coming within a few inches of crushing me against the gate-post. Thus twice, in one short day, I escaped death by the merest chance. On my return, I told Mr. Covey what had happened, and how it happened. He ordered me to return to the woods again immediately. I did so, and he followed on after me. Just as I got into the woods, he came up and told me to stop my cart, and that he would teach me how to **trifle** away my time, and break gates. He then went to a large gum-tree, and with his axe cut three large switches, and, after trimming them up neatly with his pocketknife, he ordered me to take off my clothes. I made him no answer, but stood with my clothes on. He repeated his order. I still made him no answer, nor did I move to strip myself. Upon this he rushed at me with the fierceness of a tiger, tore off my clothes, and lashed me till he had worn out his switches, cutting me so savagely as to leave the marks visible for a long time after. This whipping was the first of a number just like it, and for similar offences.

I lived with Mr. Covey one year. During the first six months, of that year, scarce a week passed without his whipping me. I was seldom free from a sore back. My awkwardness was almost always his excuse for whipping me. We were worked fully up to the point of endurance. Long before day we were up, our horses fed, and by the first approach of day we were off to the field with our hoes and ploughing teams. Mr. Covey gave us enough to eat, but scarce time to eat it. We were often less than five minutes taking our meals. We were often in the field from the first approach of day till its last lingering ray had left us; and at **saving-fodder** time, midnight often caught us in the field binding blades.

Covey would be out with us. The way he used to stand it, was this. He would spend the most of his afternoons in bed. He would then come out fresh in the evening, ready to urge us on with his words, example, and frequently with the whip. Mr. Covey was one of the few slaveholders who could and did work with his hands. He was a hard-working man. He knew by himself just what a man or a boy could do. There was no deceiving him. His work went on in his absence almost as well as in his presence; and he had the faculty of making us feel that he was ever present with us. This he did by surprising us. He seldom approached the spot where we were at work openly, if he could do it secretly. He always aimed at taking us by surprise. Such was his cunning, that we used to call him, among ourselves, "the snake." When we were at work in the cornfield, he would sometimes crawl on his hands and knees to avoid detection, and all at once he would rise nearly in our midst, and scream out, "Ha, ha! Come, come! Dash on, dash on!" This being his mode of attack, it was never safe to stop a single minute. His comings were like a thief in the night. He appeared to us as being ever at hand. He was under every tree, behind every stump, in every bush, and at every window, on the plantation. He would sometimes mount his horse, as if bound to St. Michael's, a distance of seven miles, and in half an hour afterwards you would see him coiled up in the corner of the wood-fence, watching every motion of the slaves. He would, for this purpose, leave his horse tied up in the woods. Again, he would sometimes walk up to us, and give us orders as though he was upon the point of starting on a long journey, turn his back upon us, and make as though he was going to the house to get ready; and, before he would get half way thither, he would turn short and crawl into a fence-corner, or behind some tree, and there watch us till the going down of the sun.

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#### Section 2

If at any one time of my life more than another, I was made to drink the bitterest **dregs** of slavery, that time was during the first six months of my stay with Mr. Covey. We were worked in all weathers. It was

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never too hot or too cold; it could never rain, blow, hail, or snow, too hard for us to work in the field. Work, work, work, was scarcely more the order of the day than of the night. The longest days were too short for him, and the shortest nights too long for him. I was somewhat unmanageable when I first went there, but a few months of this discipline tamed me. Mr. Covey succeeded in breaking me. I was broken in body, soul, and spirit. My natural elasticity was crushed, my intellect languished, the disposition to read departed, the cheerful spark that lingered about my eye died; the dark night of slavery closed in upon me; and behold a man transformed into a **brute!**

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LESSON SIX

*Chapter 11*  
Section 1

I now come to that part of my life during which I planned, and finally succeeded in making, my escape from slavery. But before narrating any of the peculiar circumstances, I deem it proper to make known my intention not to state all the facts connected with the transaction. My reasons for pursuing this course may be understood from the following: First, were I to give a minute statement of all the facts, it is not only possible, but quite probable, that others would thereby be involved in the most embarrassing difficulties. Secondly, such a statement would most undoubtedly induce greater **vigilance** on the part of slaveholders than has existed heretofore among them; which would, of course, be the means of guarding a door whereby some dear brother **bondman** might escape his **galling** chains. I deeply regret the necessity that impels me to suppress any thing of importance connected with my experience in slavery. It would afford me great pleasure indeed, as well as materially add to the interest of my narrative, were I at liberty to gratify a curiosity, which I know exists in the minds of many, by an accurate statement of all the facts pertaining to my most fortunate escape. But I must deprive myself of this pleasure, and the curious of the gratification which such a statement would afford. I would allow myself to suffer under the greatest **imputations** which evil-minded men might suggest, rather than **exculpate** myself, and thereby run the hazard of closing the slightest avenue by which a brother slave might clear himself of the chains and fetters of slavery.

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Section 2

In the early part of the year 1838, I became quite restless. I could see no reason why I should, at the end of each week, pour the reward of my toil into the purse of my master. When I carried to him my weekly wages, he would, after counting the money, look me in the face with a robber-like fierceness, and ask, "Is this all?" He was satisfied with nothing less than the last cent. He would, however, when I made him six dollars, sometimes give me six cents, to encourage me. It had the opposite effect. I regarded it as a sort of admission of my right to the whole. The fact that he gave me any part of my wages was proof, to my mind, that he believed me entitled to the whole of them. I always felt worse for having received any thing; for I feared that the giving me a few cents would ease his conscience, and make him feel himself to be a pretty honorable sort of robber. My discontent grew upon me. I was ever on the look-out for means of escape; and, finding no direct means, I determined to try to hire my time, with a view of getting money with which to make my escape. In the spring of 1838, when Master Thomas came to Baltimore to purchase his spring goods, I got an opportunity, and applied to him to allow me to hire my time. He unhesitatingly refused my request, and told me this was another stratagem by which to escape. He told me I could go nowhere but that he could get me; and that, in the event of my running away, he should

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spare no pains in his efforts to catch me. He exhorted me to content myself, and be obedient. He told me, if I would be happy, I must lay out no plans for the future. He said, if I behaved myself properly, he would take care of me. Indeed, he advised me to complete thoughtlessness of the future, and taught me to depend solely upon him for happiness. He seemed to see fully the pressing necessity of setting aside my intellectual nature, in order to contentment in slavery. But in spite of him, and even in spite of myself, I continued to think, and to think about the injustice of my enslavement, and the means of escape.

About two months after this, I applied to Master Hugh for the privilege of hiring my time. He was not acquainted with the fact that I had applied to Master Thomas, and had been refused. He too, at first, seemed disposed to refuse; but, after some reflection, he granted me the privilege, and proposed the following terms: I was to be allowed all my time, make all contracts with those for whom I worked, and find my own employment; and, in return for this liberty, I was to pay him three dollars at the end of each week; find myself in calking tools, and in board and clothing. My board was two dollars and a half per week. This, with the wear and tear of clothing and calking tools, made my regular expenses about six dollars per week. This amount I was compelled to make up, or relinquish the privilege of hiring my time. Rain or shine, work or no work, at the end of each week the money must be forthcoming, or I must give up my privilege. This arrangement, it will be perceived, was decidedly in my master's favor. It relieved him of all need of looking after me. His money was sure. He received all the benefits of slaveholding without its evils; while I endured all the evils of a slave, and suffered all the care and anxiety of a freeman. I found it a hard bargain. But, hard as it was, I thought it better than the old mode of getting along. It was a step towards freedom to be allowed to bear the responsibilities of a freeman, and I was determined to hold on upon it. I bent myself to the work of making money. I was ready to work at night as well as day, and by the most untiring perseverance and industry, I made enough to meet my expenses, and lay up a little money every week. I went on thus from May till August. Master Hugh then refused to allow me to hire my time longer. The ground for his refusal was a failure on my part, one Saturday night, to pay him for my week's time. This failure was occasioned by my attending a camp meeting about ten miles from Baltimore. During the week, I had entered into an engagement with a number of young friends to start from Baltimore to the camp ground early Saturday evening; and being detained by my employer, I was unable to get down to Master Hugh's without disappointing the company. I knew that Master Hugh was in no special need of the money that night. I therefore decided to go to camp meeting, and upon my return pay him the three dollars. I staid at the camp meeting one day longer than I intended when I left. But as soon as I returned, I called upon him to pay him what he considered his due. I found him very angry; he could scarce restrain his wrath. He said he had a great mind to give me a severe whipping. He wished to know how I dared go out of the city without asking his permission. I told him I hired my time and while I paid him the price which he asked for it, I did not know that I was bound to ask him when and where I should go. This reply troubled him; and, after reflecting a few moments, he turned to me, and said I should hire my time no longer; that the next thing he should know of, I would be running away. Upon the same plea, he told me to bring my tools and clothing home forthwith. I did so; but instead of seeking work, as I had been accustomed to do previously to hiring my time, I spent the whole week without the performance of a single stroke of work. I did this in **retaliation**. Saturday night, he called upon me as usual for my week's wages. I told him I had no wages; I had done no work that week. Here we were upon the point of coming to blows. He raved, and swore his determination to get hold of me. I did not allow myself a single word; but was resolved, if he laid the weight of his hand upon me, it should be blow for blow. He did not strike me, but told me that he would find me in constant employment in future. I thought the matter over during the next day, Sunday, and finally resolved upon the third day of September, as the day upon which I would make a second attempt to secure my freedom. I now had three weeks during which to prepare for my journey. Early on Monday morning, before Master Hugh had time to make any engagement for me, I went out and got employment of Mr. Butler, at his ship-yard near the drawbridge, upon what is called the City Block, thus making it unnecessary for him to seek

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employment for me. At the end of the week, I brought him between eight and nine dollars. He seemed very well pleased, and asked why I did not do the same the week before. He little knew what my plans were. My object in working steadily was to remove any suspicion he might entertain of my intent to run away; and in this I succeeded admirably. I suppose he thought I was never better satisfied with my condition than at the very time during which I was planning my escape. The second week passed, and again I carried him my full wages; and so well pleased was he, that he gave me twenty-five cents, (quite a large sum for a slaveholder to give a slave,) and bade me to make a good use of it. I told him I would.

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Section 3

I found employment, the third day after my arrival, in stowing a sloop with a load of oil. It was new, dirty, and hard work for me; but I went at it with a glad heart and a willing hand. I was now my own master. It was a happy moment, the rapture of which can be understood only by those who have been slaves. It was the first work, the reward of which was to be entirely my own. There was no Master Hugh standing ready, the moment I earned the money, to rob me of it. I worked that day with a pleasure I had never before experienced. I was at work for myself and newly-married wife. It was to me the starting-point of a new existence. When I got through with that job, I went in pursuit of a job of calking; but such was the strength of prejudice against color, among the white calkers, that they refused to work with me, and of course I could get no employment. Finding my trade of no immediate benefit, I threw off my calking **habiliments**, and prepared myself to do any kind of work I could get to do. Mr. Johnson kindly let me have his wood-horse and saw, and I very soon found myself a plenty of work. There was no work too hard--none too dirty. I was ready to saw wood, shovel coal, carry wood, sweep the chimney, or roll oil casks,--all of which I did for nearly three years in New Bedford, before I became known to the anti-slavery world.