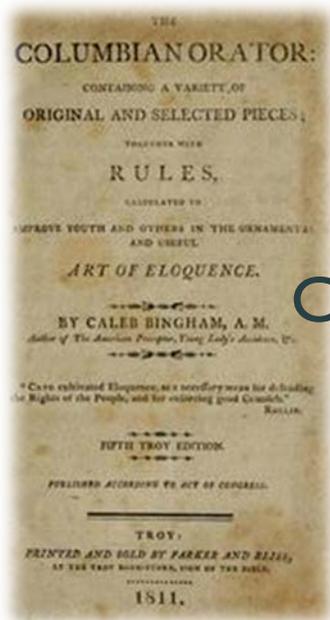




FREDERICK DOUGLASS,



HARRIET JACOBS,



AND THE
COLUMBIAN ORATOR

COMMON CORE LESSON PLAN UNIT
LOIS MACMILLAN

*SLAVE NARRATIVE IN AMERICAN LITERATURE
YALE UNIVERSITY WITH DAVID BLIGHT*

THE GILDER LEHRMAN
INSTITUTE *of* AMERICAN HISTORY

Slave Narratives: Frederick Douglass, Harriet Jacobs, and the Columbian Orator

A Common Core Unit

by Lois MacMillan

Era: National Expansion and Reform (1801-1861)

Theme: Slavery

Grade Level: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

Number of Class Periods: 3

Unit Standards

Common Core State Standards

- ✓ Key Ideas and Details: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH9-10 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
- ✓ Craft and Structure: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH9-10 Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

United States History Content Standards for Grades 5-12

- Era 4: Expansion and Reform (1801-1861)
 - Standard 4: The sources and character of cultural, religious, and social reform movements in the antebellum period.
 - Compare the positions of African American and white abolitionists on the issue of African American's place in society.
 - Historical Thinking Standard 3: Analyze cause and effect relationships, consider multiple perspectives, compare competing historical narratives

Unit Overview

This unit, *Slave Narratives: Frederick Douglass, Harriet Jacobs and the Columbian Orator*, is created for the Gilder Lehrman's teacher seminar, *Slave Narrative in American Literature*. This unit incorporates three lessons that enable students to understand, summarize and analyze original text of historical significance. Students will demonstrate this knowledge by writing summaries of excerpts from the first and seventh chapter of Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave*, from the eighteenth chapter, "Months of Peril," of Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* and from Caleb Bingham's *The Columbian Orator*, "Dialogue of Master and Slave." Through a step-by-step process, students will acquire skills to analyze any primary or secondary source material.

- Lesson One—"Frederick Douglass: First Encounter"
- Lesson Two—"Perspectives of Gender: Douglass and Jacobs"
- Lesson Three—"The Influence of a Textbook: The Columbian Orator"

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Lesson One

Overview-“First Encounter: Frederick Douglass”

Grade Level: 9-12

Number of class periods: 1

Common Core State Standards:

- ✓ Key Ideas and Details: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH9-10 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

Objectives

Essential Question: *How does a slave society start to dehumanized, objectified, and marginalized the enslaved?*

SWBAT

- Determine the central idea of the first paragraph of Douglass’s *Narrative*
- Determine the meaning of words or phrases within the first paragraph
- Disaggregate the text into three categories: Dehumanize, Objectify, and Marginalize

Introduction

“Therefore, I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in; the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.” -Job 7:11

Frederick Douglass wrote the most important slave narrative in American History. As the leading African American leader and intellectual of the nineteenth century, he lived twenty years as a slave and nearly nine years as a fugitive slave; from 1840’s to his death in 1895, he attained international fame as an abolitionist, reformer, editor, orator, and author of three autobiographies.ⁱ The first paragraph of the first chapter of his first narrative, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, eloquently sets the stage for the reader to understand of the destructive effects of slavery on the enslaved child.

Born Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey, Frederick Douglass stated in the second and third paragraph of *Narrative* that he “only saw his mother, Harriet Bailey, only “four or five times in my life; and each of these times was very short in duration and at night...She made journeys to see me in the night, traveling the whole distance on foot, after the performance of her day’s work. She was with me at night. She would lie down with me, and get me to sleep, but long before I waked she was gone. Death soon ended what little we could have while she lived...She died when I was about seven years old...I was not allowed to be present during her illness, at her death, or burial.”ⁱⁱ He also notes that his “father was a white man... whispered that my master was my father may or may not be true; it is of but little consequence to my purpose whilst the fact remains, in all its glaring odiousness, that slaveholders have ordained, and by law established, that the children of slave women shall in all cases follow the condition of their mothers; and this is done too obviously to administer to their own lusts, and make a gratification of their wicked desires profitable as well as pleasurable; for by this cunning arrangement, the slaveholder, in cases not a few, sustains to his slaves that double relation of master and father.”ⁱⁱⁱ

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Materials

- Preview #1-PDF
- Summary Organizer #1-PDF
- Assessment of Text #1-PDF

Procedure

1. **Preview #1-PDF:** The lesson begins with a preview assignment. A preview assignment is a short, engaging task that foreshadows upcoming content. This preview assignment draws a parallel from the student's birthday to a slave does not have a birthday.
2. After the five minutes in a whole group class discussion the teacher will access memories of students' birthday memories. As the students share their memories, the teacher should accentuate that the purpose of celebrating birthdays is to celebrate how special the students are to their family and friends.
3. The transition to Frederick Douglass's *Narrative* is for the teacher to pose the question or reveal that some of their peers may not have happy, special celebrations on their birthday. The teacher will further transition by revealing that the absence of a "happy, special celebration" of birth was also experienced by the enslaved child. (This may come out in step two if a student shares that they have not had a happy birthday celebration.) This transition is aimed at moving the student from oneself to the experiences of someone from the past.
4. **Summary Organizer #1:** The teacher should have the student review the paragraph for vocabulary words that the student may encounter and not understand in the reading by having the students underline the vocabulary words and putting the meaning above the word. In this first paragraph of Douglass's *Narrative* there are not any words that are too complex. Emphasize that just because they are vocabulary words, they are not necessary words that should be key words in step six.
5. The teacher then "share reads" the excerpt with the students. This is done by having the students follow along silently while the teacher begins by reading aloud. (The excerpt should be displayed in a large format using an overhead projector, Elmo projector, or similar device.) The teacher models prosody, inflection, and punctuation. The teacher then asks the class to join in with the reading after a few sentences while the teacher continues to read along with the students, still serving as the model for the class. This technique will support struggling readers as well as English Language Learners (ELL).
6. Using the large format, the teacher will explain that the first objective is to select "Key Words" from the selection. The teacher will explain that the endgame is that these key words will be used to summarize the excerpt.
Note: Key words are very important contributors to understanding the paragraph. With those words the selection would not make sense. These words are usually nouns or verbs. Warn not to pick words that are connector words such as are, is, or the. This selection is 300 words so the students with guidance from the teacher should pick between ten to twelve words.
7. The teacher will elicit from the students in direct instruction large group setting selected key words from the excerpt. The teacher will write down on the large format all suggestions from the students.
8. Using the key words elicited from the students, the teacher and students will narrow the choices to ten words that will be used in the summary. The students will first circle and then write the "class selected" key words on the lines next to the excerpt.
9. The next step is a whole-class discussion and negotiation process in constructing a summary sentence using the key words selected by the class. The final negotiated sentence (or sentences) is/are copied in the summary section of the organizer.
10. The students will then attempt to write down the summary in their own words. After a few minutes the teacher will have students share their "own word summary."
11. **Assessment of Text #1-PDF:** The teacher reviews the definitions of dehumanize, marginalize, and objectify. The student is then to draw out from the paragraph, examples of phrases that fit the three definitions.

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Lesson Two: “Perspectives of Gender: Douglass and Jacobs”

Grade Level: 9-12

Number of class periods: 1

Common Core State Standards:

- ✓ Craft and Structure: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH9-10 Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

Overview

Students will be asked to “read like a detective” and gain a clear understanding comparing an excerpt from chapter seven of Frederick Douglass’s *Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass* and chapter eighteen, “Months of Peril,” of Harriet Jacob’s *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Through reading and analyzing the original text, the student will know what is explicitly stated, draw logical inferences, and demonstrate these skills by writing a succinct summary and then restating that summary in the student’s own words. The second lesson will be facilitated by the teacher in a whole class setting, to small “gender specific” groups and back to whole group sharing.

Objectives

Essential Question: *How did an enslaved female compare the effects of the institute of slavery different from an enslaved male?*

SWBAT

- Determine the central ideas of a selected excerpt from Frederick Douglass or Harriet Jacobs
- Use textual evidence to explain the negative effects of slavery on whites and blacks

Introduction

In this lesson, the student will look at three descriptions of slavery, one from Thomas Jefferson, one from Frederick Douglass and one from Harriet Jacobs. Harriet Jacob’s *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* stands alongside Frederick Douglass’s *Narrative* in delivering not only an eloquently and powerful historical testimony about what it was like to be a slave, male and female but using the “power of language and the written word as a means to overcome the crushing legacy of enslavement.”^{iv} Douglass’s *Narrative* provides a remarkable window into the world of oppression, cunning and survival in which slaves lived, as well as the religious and ideological world of abolitionism from which the book emerged in the 1840’s.^v Similarly, Jacob’s *Incidents* provides a window into the ideological and political debates that shaped abolitionism but also tell a sustained eyewitness of the sexual exploitation of slave girls and women under slavery.^{vi} The focus of the lesson is on two chosen excerpts, one from Jacobs and one from Douglass and their description of the negative effects slavery has on whites and blacks.

In the preview part of the lesson, the students will try to ascertain why Jefferson described the institute of slavery as having “the wolf by the ears.” Jefferson’s letter to the popular poet Lydia Sigourney (1791-1865), “the sweet singer of Hartford,” encapsulates his ambivalent attitude toward slavery and suggests how his conviction that blacks and whites could not coexist equally paralyzed him from taking effective steps against slavery. In 1820 he

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had expressed this thought in more famous wording: "We have the wolf by the ears; and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go. Justice is in one scale, and self-preservation in the other."^{vii} The second phrase on justice and self-preservation is excluded on the students' worksheet because the aim of the preview assignment is for the students to reach their own conclusions and describe or illustrate what they meant in their own words or pictures.

Materials

- Preview #2 – PDF
- Summary Organizer #2 – PDF
- Assessment of Text #2 – PDF

Vocabulary

- Chattel – movable article of personal property; a slave
- Divest – to strip or deprive; to rid of
- Ell - a former measure of length, varying in different countries: in England equal to 45 inches
- Cunning – skill employed in a shrew or sly manner, as in deceiving: guile
- Tyrant – a sovereign or other ruler who uses power oppressively or unjustly
- Constable - officer of the peace

Procedure for Lesson Two

1. **Preview #2-PDF:** A preview assignment is a short, engaging task that foreshadows the upcoming content. This preview assignment presents Jefferson's concept of slavery and has the student predict what Jefferson may have meant. The lesson will begin with a quote from Jefferson. The teacher will read the quote and then instruct the students that this is a five minute quick write or draw. They may choose either.
2. After the five minutes, the teacher in a whole group class discussion will center on how they perceived what Jefferson meant on how slavery is like a "holding a wolf by the ear."
Note: As the students share their words or pictures, point out that Jefferson hoped the next generation would change things. "*I shall not live to see it but those who come after us will be wiser than we are, for light is spreading and man improving. To that advancement I look, and to the dispensations of an all-wise and all-powerful providence to devise the means of effecting what is right.*"
3. **Summary Organizer #2:** The teacher should first review the six vocabulary words. Having the students underline the vocabulary words and putting the meaning above the word may be helpful. (It is suggested to post the vocabulary with corresponding definitions.) Emphasize that just because they are vocabulary words, they are not necessary words that should be key words in step four.
4. The teacher then "share reads" each of the excerpts with the students. This is done by having the students follow along silently while the teacher begins by reading aloud. (Both excerpts should be displayed in a large format using an overhead projector, Elmo projector, or similar device.) The teacher models prosody, inflection, and punctuation.
5. After the teacher first reads the Jacobs excerpt, the girls join the teacher in reading the modeled excerpt. The teacher continues to read along with the students, still serving as the model for the class. Again, repeat the "share reads" method with the Douglass excerpt and have only the boys join the teacher in the reading of the Douglass's excerpt. This technique will support struggling readers as well as English Language Learners (ELL).
6. Using small groups of four or five that are gender specific, have the girls analyze Jacob's excerpt and the boys analyze Douglass's excerpt. The teacher will explain that the first objective is to select "Key Words" from the selection. The teacher will explain that the endgame is that these key words will be used to summarize the

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excerpt. Note: Key words are very important contributors to understanding the paragraph. With those words the selection would not make sense. These words are usually nouns or verbs. Warn not to pick words that are connector words such as are, is, or the. Each selection is 300 words so the students with guidance from the teacher should pick between ten to twelve words.

7. The next step in a small-class discussion is to begin the negotiation process of choosing key words and using those key words to construct a summary sentence. The students will agree on a constructed summary sentence using the key words selected by their groups. The final negotiated sentence (or sentences) is/are copied in the summary section of the organizer.
8. After the group work is done the class reunites for whole group discussion. Each group shares their selected key words and summary statements. The teacher will write down on the large format all suggestions from the groups. The class will then select the best summarizing sentence of each excerpt.
9. **Assessment of Text #2-PDF**: The teacher reads a quote from Jack Kerouac and emphasizes that Douglass and Jacobs exhibited amazing writing “talent” especially considering their slave conditions. The aim of the assessment is for the student to select a phrase from one of the two excerpts and use their “creativity” to analyze that phrase in Jacobs’s or Douglass’s writing. The teacher may also share a quote from Maya Angelou, “There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.”

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Lesson Three: An Education for Douglass-The Columbian Orator

Grade Level: 9-12

Number of class periods: 2

Common Core State Standards:

- ✓ CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RH 9-10.5 Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.

Lesson Overview

Students will be asked to “read like a detective” and gain a clear understanding of the impact of a textbook, *The Columbian Orator*, on Frederick Douglass. Through reading and analyzing the original text, the student will know what is explicitly stated, draw logical inferences, and demonstrate these skills by writing a succinct summary and then restating that summary in the student’s own words. The third lesson will be facilitated by the teacher in a whole class setting, to working in pairs for analysis and back to whole group sharing.

Objectives

Essential Question: *How did “Dialogue Between Master and Slave” inspire Frederick Douglass?*

SWBAT

- Determine the central ideas behind “*Dialogue Between Master and Slave*”
- Select two arguments against the institute of slavery

Introduction

“Frederick Douglass validated his manhood by giving Edward Covey, his surrogate slave master, a good whipping. What inspired his fists was not only manly rage, but liberating knowledge---knowledge gained in part from his reading of The Columbian Orator. I read it now and the words still inspire and inflame.” ---Ossie Davis

This unit is inspired by three sentences in chapter seven of Frederick Douglass’s *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*:

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

What book could inspire and guide “the greatest African-American leader and orator of the nineteenth century?”^{ix} Douglass answers these questions in chapter seven of his autobiography. “Probably nothing had a more immediate or lasting effect on the young Douglass’s intellectual and spiritual growth than his fortuitous discovery of *The Columbian Orator*.”^x What book in the twenty first century would have such an affect on our students? Furthermore, for teachers and the world of ‘common core standards,’ Douglass must have innately practiced using the *Columbian Orator* the very analytical skills we want our children to practice in today’s classrooms. Douglass’s autobiography teaches students today the

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power of the written word. David Blight in his introduction to the two hundredth anniversary year of the publication of *The Columbian Orator* said it best when he wrote:

“Destiny is an old-fashioned word; but words were the destiny, and would be the hope, the nourishment, and eventually the legacy of this young slave.”

Materials

- Preview #3-PDF
- Summary Organizer #3- PDF
- Assessment of Text #3 –PDF

Vocabulary

- Implacable – not to be appeased, mollified, or pacified; inexorable; *an implacable enemy*.
- Perpetual – continuing or enduring forever; everlasting; lasting an indefinitely long time.

Procedure

1. **Preview #3-PDF:** The lesson will begin with preview “quick write” assignment on three of the students’ favorite books. A preview assignment is a short, engaging task that foreshadows the upcoming content. This preview assignment draws on the importance of books in the students’ lives.
2. After the five minutes in a whole group class discussion the teacher will elicit from the students their favorite books. The teacher then transitions from favorite books to inquiring if there are any favorite textbooks “you would bring to the tropical island.” Most likely, there are no students that would exchange a textbook for their favorite books. The teacher can then tell the story of Frederick Douglass saving fifty cents to buy “The Columbian Orator.” He wrote in his *Narrative*:
“I was now about twelve years old, and the thought of being a slave for life began to bear heavily upon my heart. Just about this time, I got hold of a book entitled “The Columbian Orator.” Every opportunity I got, I used to read this book.”
The teacher should also describe in this transition that Douglass educated himself using “The Columbian Orator” This transition is aimed at moving the student from oneself to the experiences of someone from the past.
3. **Summary Organizer #3:** First, the teacher should review the three vocabulary words. Having the students underline the vocabulary words and putting the meaning above the word may be helpful. (It is also suggested to post the vocabulary with corresponding definitions.) Emphasize that just because they are vocabulary words, they are not necessary words that should be key words in step four.
4. The teacher then “shared reads” the dialogue with the students. This is done by having the students follow along silently while the teacher begins by reading aloud. (The dialogue should be displayed in a large format using an overhead projector, Elmo projector, or similar device.) The teacher models prosody, inflection, and punctuation of the master and the slave.
5. After the teacher reads the dialogue, the teacher selects two students that read dialogue with one student reading the master’s part and one student reading the slave’s part. This technique will support struggling readers as well as English Language Learners (ELL).
6. The teacher then put the students into pairs and has them analyze the last paragraph of the dialogue. Each pair will repeat the same process from lessons one and two, of choosing key words and using those key words to construct a summary sentence. The students will agree on a constructed summary sentence using the key words. The final negotiated sentence (or sentences) is/are copied in the summary section of the organizer.

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After the pair completes the summary sentence, the pair reread the dialogue, chooses with justification two phrases that Frederick Douglass may have embraced as a young boy reading *The Columbian Orator*.

7. **Assessment of Text #3-PDF:** The teacher will read a quote from Kevin Bales, “For some slaves, the first step out of bondage is to learn to see their lives with new eyes. Their reality is a social world where they have their place and some assurance of a subsistence diet. Born into slavery, they cannot redefine their lives outside the frame of enslavement.” After a brief group discussion of the quote, each student will use textual evidence from “Dialogue Between a Master and Slave” and identify his or her two favorite turning points in the dialogue and explain why their selected turning point shifts the argument against the institution of slavery.

ⁱ Blight, David, editor. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave Written by Himself with Related Documents*. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003. page 1.

ⁱⁱ Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. New York: Dover Thrift Editions, 1995. page 2

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid. page 1.

^{iv} Fleischner, Jennifer, editor. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010.

^v Blight, David, editor. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave Written by Himself with Related Documents*. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003. page vii.

^{vi} Fleischner, Jennifer, editor. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. page vii.

^{vii} Gilder Lehrman collection

^{viii} Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. New York: Dover Thrift Editions, 1995. page 23.

^{ix} Blight, David, editor. *The Columbian Orator*. New York and London: New York University Press, 1998. page xiv.

^x Ibid. page xv.

Textual Analysis

Using textual evidence from Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, find phrases that exemplify the definitions of dehumanize, marginalize or objectify.

Dehumanize To make someone feel less human	Marginalize <i>-Social Death-</i> Person is different or separate from the community	Objectify the Master's right to his property is more important than the person's natural right; the person is an economic creature

Original Text of *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* Chapter 1, First Paragraph

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 age 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 child would tell their ages. I could not tell why I ought to be deprived of the same privilege.

Key Words:

Summary:

In your own word:

Textual Analysis

“Genius gives birth, talent delivers. What Rembrandt or Van Gogh saw in the night can never be seen again. Born writers of the future are amazed already at what they’re seeing now, what we’ll all see in time for the first time, and then see imitated many times by made writers.” Jack Kerouac

Using textual evidence from Frederick Douglass’s *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* or Harriet Jacob’s *Incident of a Slave Girl*, express or illustrate how the institution of slavery affected whites and blacks.

Phrase from Excerpt:

Illustration, Description, or Poem:

Original Text of *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* Written by Herself by Harriet Jacobs

Morning came and filled my little cell with light. I thanked the heavenly father for this safe retreat. Opposite my window was a pile of feather beds. On the top of these I could lie perfectly concealed, and command a view of the street through which Dr. Flint passed to his office. Anxious as I was, I felt a gleam of satisfaction when I saw him. Thus far I had outwitted him and triumphed over it. Who can blame slaves for being cunning? They are constantly compelled to resort to it. It is the only weapon of the weak and oppressed against the strength of their tyrants....

Some days after this adventure I had a much worse fright...I thought Dr. Flint would soon get discouraged, and would be willing to sell my children, when he lost all hopes of making them the means of my discovery. I knew who was ready to buy them. Suddenly I heard a voice that chilled my blood. The sound was too familiar to me, it had been too dreadful, for me not to recognize at once my old master. He was in the house, and I at once concluded he had come to seize me. I

looked round in terror. There was no way of escape. The voice receded. I supposed the constable was with him, and they were searching the house. In my alarm I did not forget the trouble I was bringing on my generous benefactress. It seemed as if I were born to bring sorrow on all who befriended me, and that was the bitterest drop in the bitter cup of my life.

Key Words:

Summary:

Using textual evidence how does Douglass describe how slavery affects the enslaved?

Original Text of *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

My mistress was, as I have said, a kind and tender-hearted woman; and in the simplicity of her soul she commenced, when I first went to live with her, to treat me as she supposed on 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 a 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.

Key Words:

Summary:

Using textual evidence how does Douglass describe how slavery affects whites?

Original Text of “Dialogue Between a Master and Slave

Master. Now, villain! What have you to say for this second attempt to run away? Is there any punishment that you do not deserve?

Slave. I well know that nothing I can say will avail. I submit to my fate.

Master. But are you not a base fellow, a hardened and ungrateful rascal?

Slave. I am a slave. That is answer enough.

Master. I am not content with that answer. I thought I discerned in you some tokens of a mind superior to your condition. I treated you accordingly. You have been comfortably fed and lodged, not overworked, and attended with the most humane care when you were sick. And is this the return?

Slave. Since you condescended to talk with me, as man to man, I will reply. What have you done, what can you do for me, that will compensate for the liberty which you have taken away?

Master. I did not take it away. You were a slave when I fairly purchased you.

Slave. Did I give my consent to the purchase?

Master. You had no consent to give. You had already lost the right of disposing yourself.

Slave. I had lost the power, but how the right? I was treacherously kidnapped in my own country, when following an honest occupation. I was put in chains, sold to one of your countrymen, carried by force on board his ship, brought hither, and exposed to slave like a beast in the market, where you bought me. What step in all this progress of violence and injustice can give a right? Was it in the villain who stole me, in the slave-merchant who tempted him to do so, or in you who encouraged the slave merchant to bring his cargo of human cattle to cultivate your lands?

Master. It is the order of Providence that one man should become subservient to another. It ever has been so, and ever will be. I found the custom, and did not make it.

Slave. You cannot but be sensible, that the robber who puts a pistol to your breast may make just the same plea. Providence gives him a power over your life and property; it gave my enemies a power over my liberty. But it has also given me legs to escape with; and what should prevent me from using them? Nay, what should restrain me from retaliating the wrongs I have suffered, if a favourable occasion should offer?

Master. Gratitude! I repeat gratitude! Have I not endeavoured ever since I possessed you to alleviate your misfortunes by kind treatment; and does that confer no obligation? Consider how much worse your condition might have been under another master.

Slave. You have done nothing for me more than for your working cattle. Are they not well fed and tended? do you work them harder than your slaves? is not the rule of treating both designed only for your advantage? You treat both your men and beasts slaves better than some of your neighbours, because you are more prudent and wealthy than they.

Master. You might add more humane, too.

Slave. Humane! Does it deserve that appellation to keep your fellow men in forced subjection, deprived of all exercise of their free will, liable to all the injuries that your own caprice, or the brutality of your overseers, may heap on them, and devoted, soul and body, only to your pleasure and emolument? Can gratitude take place between creatures in such a state and the tyrant who holds them in it? Look at the limbs: are they not those of a man? Think that I have the spirit of a man too.

Master. But it was my intention not only to make your life tolerably comfortable at present, but to provide for you in your old age.

Slave. Alas! is a life like mine, torn from a country, friends, and all I held dear, and compelled to toil under the burning sun for a master, worth thinking about for old age? No: the sooner it ends, the sooner I shall obtain that relief for which my soul pants.

Master. Is it impossible, then to hold you by any ties but those of constraint and severity?

Slave. It is impossible to make one, who has felt the value of freedom acquiesce in being a slave.

Master. Suppose I were to restore you to your liberty, would you reckon that a favour?

Slave. The greatest; for although it would only be undoing a wrong, I know too well how few among mankind are capable of sacrificing interest to justice, not to prize the exertion when it is made.

Master. I do it then; be free.

Slave. Now I am indeed your servant, though not your slave. And as the first return I can make for your kindness, I will tell you freely the condition in which you live. You are surrounded with implacable foes, who long for a safe opportunity to revenge upon you and the other planters all the miseries they have endured. The more generous their natures, the more indignant they feel against the cruel injustice which has dragged them hither, and doomed them to perpetual servitude. You can rely on no kindness on your part, to soften the obduracy of their resentment. You have reduced them to the state of brute beasts; and if they have not the stupidity of beasts of burden, they must have the ferocity of beasts of prey. Superior force alone can give you security. As soon as that fails, you are at the mercy of the merciless. Such is the social bond between master and slave!

Using textual evidence from *Dialogue Between Master and Slave* your partner and you choose and justify two phrases that Frederick Douglass may have embraced as a young boy reading *The Columbian Orator*.

Phrase:

Justification:

Phrase:

Justification:
