

Thad Rice
TAH
September, 09

Following Frederick: Primary Document Focus Unit

This unit will follow the life of Frederick Douglass to review the politics of 1840-1895, practice primary document analysis, and practice making conclusions using inductive and deductive reasoning.

It is stated in the introduction of Frederick Douglass' last book, *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, written in 1881, 36 years after his most famous writing, *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, that Douglass is the nation's most celebrated "colored" man, and should be added to make a trio of illustrious colored men along with Toussaint L'Ouverture and Alexander Dumas. Toussaint L' Ouverture led enslaved Africans to victory over Europeans, abolished slavery, and secured native control over Haiti in 1797 and Alexander Dumas, a renowned French writer of mixed race who died in 1870, co-wrote the *Three Musketeers* and many other historical novels. Frederick Douglass was both a leader in war and a great writer, speaker and political activist yet it is often only his escape from slavery and writing as an abolitionist that most American students can identify. This mini-unit intends to use the full lifespan of Douglass in order to understand both antebellum and post-war politics. The intent is to focus on Frederick Douglass after the war (while reviewing first and considering what students know about Douglass before the war) to try and see America's political changes through his eyes.

Frederick Douglass is listed in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks under US1.30 in order to "describe the formation of the abolitionist movement and roles of the abolitionists and the sectional response to their beliefs". In addition his Independence Day Speech of 1852 is listed as one of only 11 required primary documents for US History students. This mini-unit will serve as review for an A.P. US History 11 class, and as introduction to the period of American imperialism in the 1890's. It would take 4 short periods or two long or block periods. The subject will be the involvement in politics of Frederick Douglass as it changes over time and the method will be review, research, and primary document analysis and evaluative discussion and writing.

Frederick Douglass will serve as our touchstone as students practice a fifty year review through the historical habits of mind that focus on change over time and primary document analysis. The objectives will be for students to:

- Identify the contributions and devise and explain points of view of important antebellum political figures.

- Be able to construct the chronology of the key events in the life of Frederick Douglass and connect them to national political events and beliefs.
- Analyze primary documents by identifying and making historical comparisons, context, and judgments clearly.
- Understand and critique political judgments made during the Reconstruction and Gilded Age-1865-1895.
- Use inductive and deductive reasoning skills to make conclusions about the nature of slavery in the antebellum period and to identify various events and points of view of political parties of the post war era through the eyes of Frederick Douglass.

Homework last night (before Day 1):

(Pairs) Using your history text and the Internet, research the contributions and political beliefs regarding issues regarding slavery and the Constitution from 1840-1860 of the following antebellum American political figures:

Horace Mann
 Thomas Jefferson
 John Quincy Adams
 Daniel Webster
 Nat Turner
 Samuel Morse
 John C. Calhoun
 Elizabeth Cady Stanton
 Harriet Beecher Stowe
 Harriet Tubman
 Theodore Weld
 William Lloyd Garrison
 Sojourner Truth
 William Walker
 Franklin Pierce
 Lucretia Mott
 Jefferson Davis
 Susan B. Anthony
 Steven Douglas

Day One: (First Block -90 minute- class)

Students work in pairs from the homework assignment. Students read an excerpt from Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass and:

1. Induce what can be generalized about the institution of slavery by this excerpt.
2. Be ready to place it in a class chronology.
3. Talk to your partner about the person you researched. Pick two specific events or slavery related historical topics from 1840-1860 and speculate or prove, using their

homework research both what your assigned person would think about these topics and also speculate the beliefs of Douglass on those topics.

1. Narrative excerpts (Dover publishing edition, 1995)

Students do not have page numbers on their excerpts, so that the chronology of the narrative excerpt must be deduced .

- A. p. 8-9 on slave songs
- B. p. 10-11 on penalties of telling the truth as a slave-quarrelling over the best master
- C. p. 13-14 Overseer Gore kills slave Demby
- D. p. 16 on hunger and cold as child
- E. p. 20 and 22- on learning to read and the change of Mrs. Auld
- F. p. 24 on impact of reading-curse or blessing?
- G. p. 33 on religious sanction for slave-owner cruelty
- H. p. 37-38, on Covey, "breeders" and the bitterest dregs of slavery
- I. p. 42-44 on Fight with Mr. Covey
- J. p. 48-49, on teaching illegal Sabbath school
- K. p. 54, 55 on jail and back to Baltimore
- L. p. 58,59 on wage earner slave
- M. p. 63, 64 on trust no man after escaping slavery

2. Pairs work to first deduce the likely time of life in their excerpt given that the Narrative ends in 1845 when Douglass is 27 years old. They should then induce a generalized statement about slavery from their specific Douglass excerpt. They then summarize their excerpt and read their generalization. Briefly discuss what other historical evidence we would need to prove these generalizations true.

The class then gets up and tries to construct a Douglass chronology, lining up from earliest example to the most recent.

3. Hand out excerpts of Independence Day speech to Rochester 1852 by Frederick Douglass. Read part out loud and ask for Douglass' attitude regarding the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. If Douglass' change of mind regarding the Constitution has not yet surfaced in conversation, discuss ...

After brief pair discussion, pairs then explain to the class the contribution of their researched person and then speculate if they would have agreed with Douglass.

4. Teacher then gives a short mini-lecture explain Douglass' contributions during war time, John Brown and fleeing to Canada, his meetings with Lincoln and recruiting for the 54th Massachusetts infantry.

Homework- Introductory reading to imperialism-Bitter fruit of Hawaii reading, or text book introduction to the 1890's-1914 era in US foreign policy. Take notes.

Day Two:

1. **Students discuss the homework reading** regarding US foreign policy of the annexation of Hawaii, or a text overview of imperialism.
2. Students are given the Library of Congress handout of a **Frederick Douglass timeline 1860-1895**. Tell students we will be using this familiar historical figure to review and evaluate political viewpoints leading up to and into this new era of US imperialism, and to practice our primary document analysis skills and deductive reasoning.

**-WARNING- Detective magnifying glasses may be necessary to
decode the past!
(and the print is pretty small on some documents!)**

3. Review five question worksheet with students entitled “**Historical Document Analysis.**” **Put students in pairs to analyze their documents.** Years are omitted as information in title or source heading and therefore must be deduced by background American history knowledge and Douglass chronology handout.
4. **Each pair summarizes their analysis for the class**, teacher points out any missing historical context or analysis. See Primary Document Key. Students are told before listening to each other’s document analysis that they will have to synthesize these comments and write for homework, “**What does the life and words of Frederick Douglass tell us about social and political developments in the time period from 1870-1895, especially with regard to race relations and foreign affairs?**” Discuss synthesis of documents ideas with the class.
5. Pairs are given a class participation grade based on document analysis and discussion. **See attached evaluation rubric.**

Primary Document Key:

(Year is not on title of student documents)

Document A and B: 1874,

Analysis should consider opinion v fact, primary v secondary, financial interests.

Document C: June 8, 1872

Analysis should include identification of Victoria Woodhull, political point of view of party, other parties in the election that Grant won.

Document D: April, 1872

Analysis should include opinions of split in Republican party and Douglass's political role as a stalwart, his role as first black elector, foreshadowing Haiti appointment.

Document E: 1871,

Analysis should include Grant appoints Douglass to investigate annexing the Dominican Republic, Douglass is in favor v Sumner, precedent setting Navy voyage to island experience with lack of racism from whites, but from black servants.

Optimism of Douglass

Document F: 1877

Analysis should include context of 1877 Hayes corrupt election that ended Reconstruction, identify concern with appointees and Conkling.

Document G: 1881

Analysis should include the context for comments on visiting the White House, Garfield's death, and colored reps sent to colored nations.

Document H: date not mentioned

Analysis should include other associations with women fighting for suffrage, identification of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, his point of view on peace and woman's vote.

Document I: 1889

Analysis should include identification of Douglass as US minister to Haiti, race issues on Navy boat, description of Douglass' new white wife, paper's endorsement of white-Bassett.

Document J: 1890/91

Analysis should include recognizing clippings from different papers with different perspectives, Haiti either wants a white diplomat instead of Douglass or Douglass is being snubbed according to various points of view. Large omission of Haitian port as issue.

Document K: 1891

Analysis should include newspaper's pro Harrison point of view that Douglass failed to get the Haitian port Mole for the US, and was therefore recalled.

Document L: 1891

Analysis should include identification of sympathetic bias toward Douglass and quotes, must evaluate political difference between recalled and resigning.

Document M: 1893

Analysis should include cursive writing and explanation of Expo. Context, appreciation for President of Haiti Hyppolite and what that means after "resignation" and Cleveland's election.

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