

|  | 📚 [**ELA Unit**](https://sites.google.com/philasd.org/ela-4-12/home) **Planning Pathways**  ***Grade: 8; Anchor Text:* The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass**  This tool, created in partnership with [**Student Achievement Partners**](https://achievethecore.org/), provides teachers flexible pathways  to **deeply understand and analyze the text** in order to support students in **rigorous and meaningful text analysis**. |
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| **Before using this tool:**   * ~~I have read the anchor novel for this unit.~~ * ~~I have reviewed the📍Unit Overview~~[[1]](#footnote-0) ~~for this unit.~~   **How I might use this tool:**   * Select priority pathways with my team and engage in shared reading and reflection together as Part 1 of the PL cycle pre-unit launch. * Revisit these conversations/notes as part of my daily lesson planning, making more explicit connections between this unit preparation and the daily lesson guides. |
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**Choose your pathway(s):**

*Select the pathways below (click on the hyperlinked title) that best suit your needs. You will be taken to questions, prompts, and resources to consider. Text-specific prompts for* The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass *are highlighted in blue throughout the tool.*

| [**UNIT CONTENT & ANCHOR TEXT COMPLEXITY**](#kix.z3qtc8y5rwsa)  ***What do I need to know about this unit’s content and anchor text?*** |
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| [**IDENTITY & RELEVANCE**](#kix.7e9idrnv6smu)  ***What do I bring to this text, what do my students bring, and how can I use this to prepare for instruction?*** |
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| [**CRITICALITY & CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS**](#kix.pyv7tfshd8eb)  ***How will I support my students to use their literary skills to understand, interrogate, and address oppression, power, and justice?*** |
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**UNIT CONTENT & ANCHOR TEXT COMPLEXITY:**

*What do I need to know about this unit’s content and anchor text?*

| **📍Contextual Knowledge (Historical, Social, Cultural Context)** | |
| --- | --- |
| *Guiding Questions for Teachers* | *Additional PLC Discussion Activities and Thought Stems for Unit Processing* |
| *What do I* ***need to know more about*** *before engaging more deeply with this text?*  *What do I* ***need to work through*** *in order to understand and teach this text?*  *Which***📍*Contextual Knowledge is most crucial*** *for understanding the* **📍***Big Ideas? Consider also supplementing for student interests or connections to the events of today.* | | **When I think of the content/topic of this text, what first comes to mind is** | that narratives of enslaved people give a straightforward account of their lives as enslaved people and primarily function as an autobiographical resource to supplement the history of the Civil War era. | | --- | --- | | **This means I have biases and/or potential knowledge gaps about** | the complexities of this genre and the different layers of racism that can be explored through a close analysis of the text. | | **My next step is** | to explore these layers by reading some commentary on how slave narratives came to be, and how Douglass’s narrative in particular provides a multifaceted perspective on what it meant to be an enslaved man. |   Select**📍**Contextual Knowledge topics from the Unit Overview and links to resources that will support your teaching of this topic:   | **Topic**  **(📍Content Knowledge from Unit Overview)** | **Knowledge-Building Resources**  **(For Teachers)** | | --- | --- | | American institution of slavery |  | | The role of religion in justifying slavery |  | | Southern agricultural economy and its dependence on human labor |  |  | **Based on building my own understanding about this unit, I need to keep in mind that my students may need:** | | | --- | --- | | An overview of how slavery came to be in the United States | | |
| **Anchor Text** | |
| *Which elements of this text are* ***most complex****: structure demands, language demands, meaning/purpose and/or knowledge demands?* ***See the rubric on the next page to evaluate this text.***  *How might the* ***identity/ perspective of this author*** *influence the way in which they wrote this text?*  *Which* ***parts (chapters, passages, excerpts) of the text*** *are:*   * *Particularly challenging?* * *Less challenging?* * *Most aligned to the****📍****Big Ideas/Essential Questions?* | Use the qualitative complexity rubrics on the [next pages](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1a_fDPcR6_XCsf18NIKaVNhsgGnA1U7Z8rp08exgTkXs/edit#bookmark=id.cobl7klq76zg) (literary or informational) to evaluate this text.   | **This text is complex because of:** | | | | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | * **Structure** | * **Language** | * **Meaning/Purpose** | * **Knowledge** |  | **I will support students by** | reminding them regularly that it’s completely normal to struggle with this text, and that even I myself as a teacher must reread passages several times in order to grasp the key understandings.  Instead of making it a mission to closely read and unpack every passage of every chapter, I want to intentionally focus on the passages identified by the Lesson Guidance documents because they capture and connect with the big ideas. I’d rather my students read smaller chunks of text to build a deep understanding in both reading the text and engaging in discourse/writing than having a surface-level understanding of the entire text. For the passages that we don’t cover closely, I will provide scaffolds and summaries that will aid students as they read for the gist. | | --- | --- |   ***RESOURCES:***   * [***Supports to Access Complex Text Across Disciplines (Grades 6-12)***](https://achievethecore.org/page/3324/quarter-turns-supports-to-access-complex-text-across-disciplines) * [***Supporting All Learners with Complex Texts (K-12)***](https://achievethecore.org/page/3251/supporting-all-learners-with-complex-text)  | **When I researched the author, I learned that** | Frederick Douglass is a controversial figure because some consider him an assimilationist. | | --- | --- | | **I will consider this when I teach this text by** | dedicating a classroom discussion on the concept of assimilation using *Stamped*, but also not letting this topic prevent us from reading the text to understand Douglass’s main points and how they relate to the big ideas of the unit. |  | **I am flagging these chapters/passages/excerpts** | 1 and 7 | | --- | --- | | **because they set the stage for** | Douglass’s understanding of what it means to be a slave—Chapter 1 starts with Douglass explaining that most enslaved people do not know their exact ages or birthdays, that his father was a White man, and that he rarely saw his Black mother—and how he began to break free from this concept of being “a slave for life” by learning how to read. (Chapter 7 - “I read them over and over again with unabated interest. They gave tongue to interesting thoughts of my own soul, which had frequently flashed through my mind…”) | |

***Literary Text Qualitative Analysis[[2]](#footnote-1)***

*Use the rubric below by highlighting levels of complexity for this text for each qualitative category (structure, language, meaning, and knowledge).*

*Take care to* ***note specific examples from the text*** *that support your determinations in each section.*

|  | **EXCEEDINGLY COMPLEX** | **VERY COMPLEX** | **MODERATELY COMPLEX** | **SLIGHTLY COMPLEX** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***STRUCTURE*** | **Organization:** Is intricate with regard to such elements as point of view, time shifts, multiple characters, storylines and detail  **Use of Graphics:** If used, illustrations or graphics are essential for understanding the meaning of the text | **Organization:** May include subplots, time shifts and more complex characters  **Use of Graphics:** If used, illustrations or graphics support or extend the meaning of the text | **Organization:** May have two or more storylines and occasionally be difficult to predict  **Use of Graphics:** If used, a range of illustrations or graphics support selected parts of the text | **Organization:** Is clear, chronological or easy to predict  **Use of Graphics:** If used, either illustrations directly support and assist in interpreting the text or are not necessary to understanding the meaning of the text |
| ***LANGUAGE*** | **Conventionality:** Dense and complex; contains abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language\*  **Vocabulary:** Complex, generally unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic language; may be ambiguous or purposefully misleading\*  **Sentence Structure:** Mainly complex sentences with several subordinate clauses or phrases; sentences often contain multiple concepts | **Conventionality:** Fairly complex; contains some abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language\*  **Vocabulary:** Fairly complex language that is sometimes unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic\*  **Sentence Structure:** Many complex sentences with several subordinate phrases or clauses and transition words | **Conventionality:** Largely explicit and easy to understand with some occasions for more complex meaning\*  **Vocabulary:** Mostly contemporary, familiar, conversational; rarely unfamiliar or overly academic\*  **Sentence Structure:** Primarily simple and compound sentences, with some complex constructions | **Conventionality:** Explicit, literal, straightforward, easy to understand\*  **Vocabulary:** Contemporary, familiar, conversational language\*  **Sentence Structure:** Mainly simple sentences |
| ***MEANING*** | Multiple competing levels of meaning that are difficult to identify, separate, and interpret; theme is implicit or subtle, often ambiguous and revealed over the entirety of the text | Multiple levels of meaning that may be difficult to identify or separate; theme is implicit or subtle and may be revealed over the entirety of the text | Multiple levels of meaning clearly distinguished from each other; theme is clear but may be conveyed with some subtlety | One level of meaning; theme is obvious and revealed early in the text |
| ***KNOWLEDGE*** | **Life Experiences:** Explores complex, sophisticated or abstract themes; experiences portrayed are distinctly different from the common reader\*  **Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge:** Many references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements\* | **Life Experiences:** Explores themes of varying levels of complexity or abstraction; experiences portrayed are uncommon to most readers\*  **Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge:** Some references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements\* | **Life Experiences:** Explores several themes; experiences portrayed are common to many readers\*  **Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge:** Few references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements\* | **Life Experiences:** Explores a single theme; experiences portrayed are everyday and common to most readers\*  **Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge:** No references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements\* |

**IDENTITY & RELEVANCE**

*What do I bring to this text, what do my students bring, and how can I use this to prepare for instruction?*

| *How will* ***my identities,[[3]](#footnote-2) lived experiences, and perspectives*** *impact my instruction of these texts?*  *What* ***biases*** *do I hold related to this text’s/unit’s content? How can I continuously reflect on and work against those biases?* | | **I am a(n)** | Asian American | **person** | | --- | --- | --- | | **teaching about** | the experience of a Black man who was enslaved during the 19th century. | | | **I must attend to this while teaching this unit by** | spending adequate time to fill in the knowledge gaps I have about this history and experience, also keeping in mind that the people who were enslaved experienced slavery in many different, complex ways. I need to make sure that our classroom discourse acknowledges this rather than using a broad stroke to draw conclusions. | |  | **I hold biases about** | “archaic” texts that were written more than a hundred years ago; I hold a bias that both myself and my students will find the text extremely challenging to get through because of its language and the (perceived) distance between this history and our contemporary reality. | | --- | --- | | **and will work against these by** | regularly keeping in mind the essential questions, that definitively challenge my previously identified bias:   * What factors drive one human’s inhumanity to another human? * What is the impetus behind power structures? * How does the slave narrative contribute to our understanding of our world today? | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Students’ Identities** | |
| *What do I know about* ***students' identities, lived experiences, and perspectives*** *related to this text? What* ***do I NOT know*** *(or am assuming)?*  *How might I use this unit as an opportunity to use what I know about students as an* ***asset*** *to discussion/analysis OR to* ***deepen my knowledge*** *and understanding of students?* | | **To attend to students who self-identify as** | coming from a genealogy that has been affected by oppression and slavery, | | --- | --- | | **I will** | regularly make space for students to process the text in conjunction with the essential questions, also keeping in mind that every student has a different degree/way by which they unpack texts that closely overlap with their personal histories/identities, and I want to be mindful of that. | | **My students bring to our understanding**  **of the text the assets of** | A few students are practicing Catholics and Muslims, so they might be able to share their thoughts on religion. | |
| **Making It Relevant** | |
| *What is happening in* ***students'*** *other classes, neighborhoods, communities, and worlds right now that could* ***enhance their connection to this text?***  *What are my* ***assumptions and/or potential concerns*** *about how this text might land with my students? How will I delve into these potential concerns?*  *How might this text connect to experiences that lead students to* ***take action*** *in their lives and communities?* | | **I think my students may be able to relate to this text by connecting with** | our world today, which still deals with racist ideologies and oppressive systems that share the same roots of hatred and dehumanization that drove the enslavers of the 19th century to enslave and dehumanize Black people. | | --- | --- | | **I want to be sensitive to my students’ reaction to the text when it references** | the very dehumanizing ideologies held by the White enslavers in the book. | |

**CRITICALITY & CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS**

*How will I support my students to use their literary skills to understand, interrogate, and address oppression, power, and justice?*

| **Connections to Big Ideas & Criticality[[4]](#footnote-3) 📍** | |
| --- | --- |
| *Guiding Questions for Teachers* | *Additional PLC Discussion Activities and Thought Stems for Unit Processing* |
| *What do I/my* ***students already know, think, and believe*** *about the* **📍***Big Ideas in this text?*  *What* ***assumptions*** *am I making about the realities and experiences that impact the people/events in this text? How will I uncover the assumptions students might be making?*  *What opportunities exist in the text for relevance and connection to* ***power, privilege, social justice, and oppression*** *and their impacts on communities and society?*  *What are the connections to these* **📍***Big Ideas from* ***multiple perspectives****, including culture, identities, beliefs, and values?* | Consider both the Big Ideas and Criticality Objectives for this unit as you reflect on the Guiding Questions:   | **📍Big Ideas from**  **the Unit Overview:** | * Throughout history, humankind has proven itself capable of great acts of cruelty and inhumanity in order to preserve social and racial hierarchies.   + White farmers’ and plantation owners’ ability to “own” another human being cemented their economic and social status.   + The inhumanity of one race towards another is clearly revealed in the treatment of slaves by white Southerners. * The resilience of the human spirit is a triumph of will, determination and perseverance, even in the face of severe adversity. * Education is a way out of poverty and oppression.   + Withholding education is a means of oppression. * The actions and beliefs of Southerners, particularly slave owners, are hypocritical to Christian values and beliefs.   + Slaveowners deliberately misread and misrepresented biblical passages in order to justify their actions and the concept of slavery. | | --- | --- | | **📍Criticality Connection from**  **the Unit Overview:** | Students will consider how a majority culture deliberately devalues another to gain both economic power and social status. |  | **My students already know, think, and believe that** | slavery is wrong, and there are many ways that slavery’s effect pervades our society today. | | --- | --- | | **As a class, we need to be careful about making the assumption(s) that** | everyone has a common understanding of racism. |  | **This text provides an opportunity for oral and written discourse on how society is impacted by:** | | | | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | * **Power** | * **Privilege** | * **Social Justice** | * **Oppression** | | **For example:** | | | | | In thinking about the agricultural economy of the Civil War era and its dependence on human labor, our class will discuss how our current society is impacted by a labor market that requires many minority groups to work without earning a living wage. We will discuss how this continual disparity between different socioeconomic classes is problematic and systematizes oppression. | | | | |
| **Difficult Topics and Disrupting Oppression** | |
| *Which part(s) of the text* ***connects to what I believe and value****?*  *Which part(s) of the text reflects* ***how we view injustice*** *in our communities and society at large?*  *What* ***cautions exist*** *in the text that include harmful content (including language and images), stereotypes, or misinformation? How will I respond to these cautions in the text?*  *Are there any* ***students who might be STRONGLY affected*** *by the topic? Who? What are the necessary conditions to prevent isolating or tokenizing the student(s)?* | | **In the text, I read** |  | | --- | --- | | **which connects to my belief/value of** |  | |  | | | **In the text, I read** | “He who proclaims it a religious duty to read the Bible denies me the right of learning to read the name of the God who made me.” | | **which pushes against my belief/value of** | religion. As someone who identifies as a person of faith, I need to grapple with the ways that organized religion has hypocritically abused (and surely continues to abuse) their spiritual authority. I think it’s important to understand that Douglass, as someone of faith himself, intentionally separates his personal faith with the religious institution that was a major player in sustaining the practice of enslaving Black people. |  | **Note any key areas of the text that may require considerations to navigate heavy, difficult, or “hot button” topics. (e.g., death, harassment, racism, religion, sexuality, violence).** | | | --- | --- | | **Sensitive Topic** | **Text Passage** | | The use of the n-word | It occurs eleven times throughout the text. | | The abuse of both Black women and men by enslavers | Occurs throughout the book, but I want to specifically flag Mr. Plummer’s abuse of Douglass’s aunt in Chapter 1. | |  |  |   ***RESOURCE:***   * [***Facilitating Critical Conversations from Let's Talk! - A Learning for Justice Guide***](https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/LFJ-2111-Lets-Talk-November-2021-11172021.pdf#page=18) |

| **ADDITIONAL NOTES/ACTION STEPS**  *As you reflect independently and/or with your team, identify some actions you want to take in preparing for instruction and adapting the unit/lesson guidance.* | |
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| *For example:*  📘 Prioritize/deprioritize [section(s) of the text] for classroom instruction/small group support/independent reading/homework...  👋 Reach out to [colleague, student, family or community member, etc.]...  🪞 Reflect more on… / 🧠 Learn more about…  🔃 Adjust the [pacing/activities/support/ Big Ideas/Essential Questions] by… | **My Notes:** |

1. The 📍symbol is used throughout to note connections to the Unit Overview. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. Original rubric: [Literary and Informational Text Qualitative Rubrics](http://navigatingtextcomplexity.kaulfussec.com/files/QualitativeRubricsforLiteraryandInformationalText.pdf) from the State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS)

   \* In making these determinations, consider the students in the room. For whom is language conversational? From whom would it be “easy-to-understand”? How much do you know about students’ cultural/literary knowledge related to the content in this text? Whose cultural/literary knowledge are you considering as you think about what will be “common”? How does this allow you, or not allow you, to center historically and/or currently marginalized students? [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. In considering identity, you might think about any of the following: ability, age, body type, ethnicity, gender, home language, immigration status, socio-economic status, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or other considerations important to you. For more, see [Let’s Talk, Facilitating Critical Conversations with Students, Learning for Justice](https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/TT-Let-s-Talk-Publication-January-2020.pdf#page=8), p. 6 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. From Dr. Gholdy Muhammad’s *Five Learning Pursuits*. Read more [here](https://magazine.achieve3000.com/issue/volume-1-issue-4/cultivating-genius/). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)