

Plan a circle: “Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass”

Frederick Douglass (1845) · public-domain memoir (selected chapters) · grades 9–12 · ~2 weeks. Rights: Public domain.

Kit section 5 (group agreement & calendar), scaffolded for this text. Students fill the group, calendar, and roles.

Preview note: Plan context and support for accounts of enslavement, violence, and racist language.

Text, group, and target

Text / author / edition	“Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass” — Frederick Douglass (1845). _____ (edition)
Group / period / dates	
Grade / TEKS target (p. 3)	English III · §110.38 — author’s purpose and rhetoric (informational); 5(C,D): analytic commentary and summary; 1(D): student-led discussion.
Learning intention	We are learning to explain how Douglass connects literacy and freedom (author’s purpose).
Success criteria	I bring one open question, cite two details with chapter, respond to a peer, and name how my thinking changed.

Reading map & calendar

Chunk	Read through	Meeting date · leader
1	Ch. 1–5: birth, separation, witnessing violence, and being sent to Baltimore.	
2	Ch. 6–8: learning to read — “the pathway from slavery to freedom.”	
3	Ch. 9–11: Covey, the turning point, and escape (details withheld).	

Members & first-meeting jobs (p. 7 roles)

Member	First job	Rotates to (next meeting)

Text-specific discussion questions (open — more than one answer)

- **Predict:** Douglass says learning to read was forbidden — what will literacy open, or endanger, for him?
- **Question:** Why might Douglass withhold the exact means of his escape?
- **Clarify:** What does he mean that literacy showed him “the pathway from slavery to freedom” yet also discontent?
- **Summarize:** Trace how Douglass learns to read despite obstacles, without opinion.
- **Interpret the theme:** How does Douglass connect literacy and freedom (his purpose)? Use two details.

Optional Jigsaw lenses (p. 4): *Purpose* (the abolitionist argument) · *Structure* (the chronological memoir) · *Rhetoric* (appeals and irony) · *Theme* (literacy as freedom) · *Context* (American slavery, 1845).

Reading notes: "Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass"

Name: _____ · **Home group:** _____ · **Section:** "Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass,"
 _____ · **Expert lens:** _____

Everyone prepares. Read the whole assigned section. Write or draw three important ideas, two supporting details with locations, and one summary in your own words. Keep interpretation separate from summary.

Questions

What needs clarification?
 What could the group explore?

3 · Important ideas

Character choices, conflicts, themes, or central ideas.

1.

2.

3.

Vocabulary

Word + location + meaning or clue.
 Mark anything still uncertain.

2 · Supporting details

Short quote or accurate paraphrase + page/paragraph + what it shows.

1.

2.

1 · Summary in my own words

Bring to the circle

My interpretation: These details suggest _____

Synthesis (connect two lenses): _____

After discussion: My thinking changed / became clearer because _____

TEKS evidence: 6(C,D) supported inference; 7(A) theme through characters/events; 1(D) response to a peer. · Pair with the PlotPoint "Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass" room.