

The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave

1. Write down five words that you don't know or are unsure about their meaning in the context they are being used. Then define each one.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.

2. Look at the last two sentences of the first paragraph (they begin with "She at first lacked..."). What comment is Douglass ultimately making about the nature of human beings with this description of his master's wife (his mistress)? Explain your answer.

3. In the first half of paragraph two, Douglass then goes on to praise his mistress. Why would he include this description of her, knowing what she ultimately becomes?

4. On page 396, Douglass describes the children who helped him come to read. Look at the final sentence of paragraph four on that page. How does this sentence seem, once again, to speak to the nature of humanity, rather than just these individuals? Explain your reasoning.

5. When we come to learn Douglass' age at this part of his narrative, did you find yourself surprised or did you seem to feel that this was about the age that you pictured him to be so far during the narrative? Explain *why* you came to think the way that you did about his age.

6. Irony appears on page 397, when Douglass comes to resent that he knows how to read. Explain why he came to feel that way.

7. What are your thoughts and reactions to his writing—not his experiences, but the way he writes about them?

8. Where, if at all, does Douglass write something that seems especially believable/true/trustworthy? Write down a sentence and/or a section of the text in which Douglass' account seems especially believable. What is it about his telling of this sentence/section that makes it so believable/trustworthy?

9. Where, if at all, does Douglass write something that seems especially exaggerated and/or unbelievable? Where in the narrative do you feel like Douglass seemed to exaggerate his circumstance or his experiences? What is it about his telling of that sentence/section that makes it seem less believable?