

Sample Lesson #3

The Valuation

from *Narrative Of The Life Of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself, 1818-1895*

Frederick Douglass was born a slave. At age eight, he was sent to Baltimore to be a house servant, where he learned to read and write with the assistance of his master's wife. After he escaped in 1838, Douglass became an abolitionist, writer, and orator. During the Civil War, he helped to recruit African Americans for the Union Army and consistently argued for the emancipation of slaves. After the war, he was active in securing and protecting the rights of African Americans and women.

I never saw my mother more than four or five times in my life, and each of these times was very short in duration. We were separated when I was but an infant, before I knew her as my mother. She made her journeys at night, traveling the whole distance—about twelve miles—on foot. She would lie down with me, and get me to sleep, but long before I awakened she was gone, for she was a field hand, and a whipping is the penalty for not being in the field at sunrise. Death soon ended what little we had and with it, her hardships and suffering. I was about seven years old and was not allowed to be present during her illness, her death, or her burial. She was gone long before I knew anything about it.

My first master's name was Captain Anthony, a cruel man, hardened by a long life of slaveholding. He lived with his two sons, Richard and Andrew, and his daughter, Lucretia, in a house on the plantation of Colonel Edward Lloyd. Captain Anthony was Colonel Lloyd's clerk and superintendent. I was probably eight years old when I left that plantation, and I left it with joy.

A short time after I went to Baltimore, Richard died. About three-and-a-half years later, Captain Anthony died, leaving only Andrew and Lucretia to inherit Anthony's estate. A valuation was necessary, so that the property might be equally divided between Andrew and Lucretia, and I was immediately sent for to be valued with the other property. I left Baltimore with a heart full of sadness and a soul full of apprehension.

We were all ranked together at the valuation. Men and women, old and young, married and single, we were ranked with horses, sheep, and swine, all the same rank. We were all subjected to the same humiliation and narrow examination. At this moment, I saw more clearly than ever the brutalizing effects of slavery upon both slave and slaveholder.

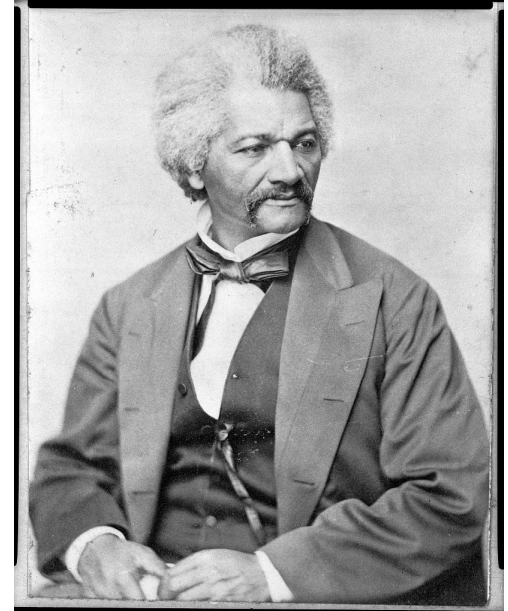


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- RI.6.4 1. What is the meaning of the word *abolitionist*, as it is used in the text?
- A) person who worked to end slavery
 - B) a soldier who led others during the Civil War
 - C) a newspaper writer or publisher
 - D) someone who has escaped from slavery
- RI.6.1 2. Which detail supports your answer to the item above?
- A) Douglass recruited African Americans for the Union Army.
 - B) Douglass learned to read with the assistance of his master's wife.
 - C) Douglass consistently argued for the emancipation of slaves.
 - D) Douglass never saw his mother more than four or five times in life.
- RI.6.2 3. Why is this excerpt called "The Valuation"?
- A) The excerpt is from an autobiography by Frederick Douglass.
 - B) The passage tells how Frederick Douglass and other slaves were ranked in value in order to settle his master's estate.
 - C) It is a story about the values of people who owned slaves.
 - D) The passage gives many examples of how African Americans were treated when slavery was legal.
- L.6.5.A 4. Douglass says, "Death soon ended what little we had..." He is referring to _____.
- A) his family's home on the plantation
 - B) his time at Colonel Lloyd's plantation in Baltimore
 - C) the bond between himself and his mother
 - D) the value of Andrew and Lucretia's property
- RI.6.5 5. Douglass refers to "the brutalizing effects of slavery upon both slave and slaveholder." The word *brutalize* has two meanings:
- 1) to hurt someone in a very cruel and violent way
 - 2) to make someone insensitive to cruelty
- Which meaning of the word *brutalize* goes with each sentence?
- ___ Captain Anthony was a cruel man, hardened by a long life of slaveholding.
- ___ We were all subjected to the same humiliation and narrow examination.