

Close Reading of Informational/ Literary Nonfiction Texts

Learning Targets

- Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.
- Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.
- Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others.
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grade 7 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.
- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Close Reading for Meaning

What does learning to **read closely** mean? As readers, we should not just consider what information is conveyed by a text. We must consider the author's point of view and purpose for writing the text, as well as the author's tone, or attitude toward the subject.

An author or speaker's experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and values shape the **point of view**, or perspective, of a text. For example, an author's point of view might be shaped by experiences growing up in a particular part of the world, by cultural values, or by religious beliefs. Along with analyzing the author or speaker's **tone**, understanding point of view can help the reader determine the author's purpose.

In this workshop, you will read three different texts and will practice close reading using strategies that will help you make meaning of the text. Your teacher will guide you through the first activity. In Activity 2, you will work in a collaborative group to read and respond to the text. For the third activity, you will work independently to apply close reading strategies to determine meaning in a new text.

Introducing the Strategy: Diffusing

Diffusing is a strategy for close reading of text. Using this strategy, the reader reads a passage to identify unfamiliar words. The reader uses context clues, dictionaries, and/or thesauruses to discover the meaning of unfamiliar words. Writing notes about meaning or substituting synonyms for unfamiliar words helps the reader increase comprehension of the text.

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Diffusing, Close Reading, Marking the Text, Questioning the Text, Rereading, Summarizing, Paraphrasing

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

Point of view is the position or perspective conveyed by an author or speaker. **Tone** is the author or speaker's attitude toward a subject.

PLAN

Pacing: Each workshop has four activities. Allow approximately two days per activity. Pacing for this set of activities will be flexible based on the needs of your students and the demands of your schedule.

Materials: Lined paper, highlighters, pens or pencils for marking the text, access to dictionaries, overhead projector or electronic whiteboard

ACTIVITY 1

Guided Practice

TEACH

1 Review the learning targets to help set a context for what students will be doing in this workshop. Note also that the reading passages include a special emphasis on vocabulary in the first two readings. Words that students might be expected to know are **bolded**, and words that students may find challenging are underlined and defined for students.

2 Activity 1: Guided Practice requires the teacher to guide students with explicit, direct instruction in reading challenging texts using oral reading, strategy instruction, and text-dependent questioning. This activity is the first of four activities: a guided practice activity, a collaborative activity, an independent reading activity, and a fourth activity that provides assessment opportunities for the entire workshop.

3 Before students read the first text, note the underlined and bolded words with them. Introduce **diffusing** as a vocabulary strategy. As students read independently, be sure they use the underlined, defined words to practice diffusing vocabulary by replacing the new word with its definition/synonym. Consider asking students to write the definitions above the underlined words *before* they read.

ACTIVITY 1 (continued)

4 In Activity 1, students are to first focus on reading the text to themselves silently to gain a general understanding of what it means.



Text Complexity

Overall: Complex

Lexile: 1050

Qualitative: Moderate Difficulty

Task: Moderate (Analyze)

Context: These paragraphs are excerpted from *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, a seminal example of a slave narrative and a pivotal text in the American abolitionist movement. This autobiography details Douglass's life as a slave and his journey to freedom. The book was published in 1845; Douglass fled to Europe for two years after its publication to avoid recapture or retribution.

TEACHER TO TEACHER

Notice that context information is included for your reference. Background information is supplied for students just before the Third Reading. You need to decide how much context information to give for the initial readings. The first two readings are intended to give students an opportunity to independently make meaning of the passage, then to give them intensive practice with in-text vocabulary study that leads to deep comprehension and the ability to interpret. The text is formatted with space between the lines so that students can write notes in between the lines of the text.

Close Reading of Informational/Literary Nonfiction Texts (continued)

ACTIVITY 1

Guided Practice

You will read the text in this activity at least three times, focusing on a different purpose for each reading.

First Reading: First Impressions

Read the following passage silently. Your focus for this first reading is on understanding the meaning of the passage. As you read, practice diffusing the words you may not know by replacing unfamiliar words with synonyms or definitions for the underlined words. Use the definitions and synonyms beside the paragraphs to help your understanding.

Autobiography

From

NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF

Frederick Douglass

by Frederick Douglass

cartwrighting, coopering:
cart making and barrel
making

reposed: placed,
entrusted

conferred: granted to;
awarded to

diligently: persistently;
energetically

The home **plantation** of Colonel Lloyd wore the appearance of a country village. All the mechanical operations for all the farms were performed here. The shoemaking and mending, the blacksmithing, cartwrighting, coopering, weaving, and grain-grinding, were all performed by the slaves on the home plantation. The whole place wore a business-like **aspect** very unlike the neighboring farms. The number of houses, too, **conspired** to give it advantage over the neighboring farms. It was called by the slaves the "Great House Farm." Few privileges were **esteemed** higher, by the slaves of the out-farms, than that of being selected to do errands at the Great House Farm. It was associated in their minds with greatness. A representative could not be prouder of his **election** to a seat in the American Congress, than a slave on one of the out-farms would be of his election to do errands at the Great House Farm. They regarded it as evidence of great confidence reposed in them by their overseers; and it was on this account, as well as a constant desire to be out of the field from under the driver's lash, that they esteemed it a high privilege, one worth careful living for. He was called the smartest and most trusty fellow, who had this honor conferred upon him the most frequently. The competitors for this office sought as diligently to please their overseers, as the office-seekers in the political parties seek to please and **deceive** the people. The same traits of character might be seen in Colonel Lloyd's slaves, as are seen in the slaves of the political parties.

The slaves selected to go to the Great House Farm, for the monthly **allowance** for themselves and their fellow-slaves, were **peculiarly** enthusiastic. While on their way, they would make the dense old woods, for miles around, **reverberate** with their wild songs, revealing at once the highest joy and the deepest sadness. They would compose

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Differentiating Instruction

This text will be challenging not only because of 19th-century sentence structure and vocabulary use, but also because of the complexity of Douglass’s rhetoric. Providing contextual information, careful guidance through diffusing, and an examination of vocabulary and sentence structure will yield greater understanding.

5 After the first reading, you may want to diffuse the text with your students, working with the underlined words as well as the bolded Tier 2 words. Use this as an opportunity for a lively conversation about vocabulary and meaning. This may be the time to supply students with more context information.

and sing as they went along, consulting neither time nor tune. The thought that came up, came out—if not in the word, in the sound;—and as frequently in the one as in the other.

They would sometimes sing the most pathetic sentiment in the most rapturous tone, and the most rapturous sentiment in the most pathetic tone. Into all of their songs they would manage to weave something of the Great House Farm. Especially would they do this, when leaving home. They would then sing most exultingly the following words:—

“I am going away to the Great House Farm!
O, yea! O, yea! O!”

This they would sing, as a chorus, to words which to many would seem unmeaning jargon, but which, nevertheless, were full of meaning to themselves. I have sometimes thought that the mere hearing of those songs would do more to impress some minds with the horrible character of slavery, than the reading of whole volumes of philosophy on the subject could do.

I did not, when a slave, understand the deep meaning of those rude and apparently incoherent songs. I was myself within the circle; so that I neither saw nor heard as those without might see and hear. They told a tale of woe which was then altogether beyond my feeble comprehension; they were tones loud, long, and deep; they breathed the prayer and complaint of souls boiling over with the bitterest anguish. Every tone was a testimony against slavery, and a prayer to God for deliverance from chains. The hearing of those wild notes always depressed my spirit, and filled me with ineffable sadness. I have frequently found myself in tears while hearing them. The mere recurrence to those songs, even now, afflicts me; and while I am writing these lines, an expression of feeling has already found its way down my cheek. To those songs I trace my first glimmering conception of the dehumanizing character of slavery. I can never get rid of that conception. Those songs still follow me, to deepen my hatred of slavery, and quicken my sympathies for my brethren in bonds. If any one wishes to be impressed with the soul-killing effects of slavery, let him go to Colonel Lloyd’s plantation, and, on allowance-day, place himself in the deep pine woods, and there let him, in silence, analyze the sounds that shall pass through the chambers of his soul,—and if he is not thus impressed, it will only be because “there is no flesh in his obdurate heart.”

I have often been utterly astonished, since I came to the north, to find persons who could speak of the singing, among slaves, as evidence of their contentment and happiness. It is impossible to conceive of a greater mistake. Slaves sing most when they are most unhappy. The songs of the slave represent the sorrows of his heart; and he is relieved by them, only as an aching heart is relieved by its tears. At least, such is my experience. I have often sung to drown my sorrow, but seldom to express my happiness. Crying for joy, and singing for joy, were alike uncommon to me while in the jaws of slavery. The singing of a man cast away upon a desolate island might be as appropriately considered as evidence of contentment and happiness, as the singing of a slave; the songs of the one and of the other are prompted by the same emotion.

pathetic: causing feelings of sadness and sympathy
rapturous: expressing great enthusiasm or pleasure
exultingly: joyously

jargon: a confused or meaningless language

anguish: severe pain or suffering

ineffable: too great or extreme to be described in words

brethren: fellow members of a group or society

obdurate: stubbornly refusing to change one’s opinion

ACTIVITY 1 (continued)

6 Second Reading: Students will now read along as you read the text aloud as an “expert” reader. This read-aloud gives students an opportunity to hear a text read with careful consideration of meaning. During this reading, students should continue vocabulary study by circling unfamiliar and/or important vocabulary. Stop occasionally to monitor and clarify students’ understanding of words in context.

7 With selected vocabulary, conduct a **think-aloud** of **rereading** and **diffusing** vocabulary with definitions/synonyms. Help students work toward comprehension of both the explicit and implicit meaning of not just the words, but also how diffusing helps the understanding of words within the sentence context.

8 Check Your Understanding: Have students work in pairs to choose a certain number of words to examine more deeply. You may want to have students create an organizer to record their vocabulary choices. This is an opportunity for students to synthesize their understanding of the passage and of significant vocabulary. They may paraphrase definitions and use new vocabulary to summarize their understanding of Douglass’s narrative. You may want to allow students to think through their ideas in pairs or small groups before they write.

9 Third Reading: The Key Ideas and Details questions lead students into textual analysis by posing interpretive questions about the passage. Students should answer by annotating and noting textual evidence with underlining or highlighting.

Close Reading of Informational/Literary Nonfiction Texts (continued)

Second Reading: Vocabulary in Context

Now that you have read the passage silently, listen and follow along as your teacher reads the passage aloud. As you read along with your teacher, circle words and/or phrases (other than the underlined words) that you do not know or that you feel are important to the meaning of the passage. Diffuse these words/phrases for comprehension.

Check Your Understanding

1. Pair with another student and, using context clues and reference resources, determine the meaning of any new words you need to define. Then choose six words from the vocabulary that has been underlined, bolded, and/or you have circled, **paraphrase** the definitions to show your understanding, and discuss how the definitions help you understand the meaning of the passage as a whole.

“Pathetic” means expressing great sadness.
“Rapturous” means expressing great joy.
“Anguish” is feeling pain or suffering.
“Incoherent” means unintelligible or confused.
“Afflict” means to cause pain.
These words give me the sense of sadness and confusion of this passage.
2. Choose two or three of the words you have examined that you think are significant to understanding the passage. Use the words in sentences as part of a **summary** explaining the central ideas in the passage and explaining how these words contribute to your understanding of the passage.

Frederick Douglass argues that the apparently rapturous songs of the slaves going to the “Great House Farm” are actually expressions of an incoherent anguish.

Third Reading: Text-Dependent Questioning

Now read the passage again, this time reading to respond to the Key Ideas and Details text-based questions. As your class discusses the text, write your responses to each question and highlight or underline the textual evidence that supports your answer. During discussions, you may also want to annotate the text to record a new or different meaning of the text.

Background Information: Frederick Douglass was one of the most well-known forces behind the abolitionist movement in America. Born as a slave in Maryland, Douglass later escaped slavery and became a powerful orator and writer, speaking out against slavery. The following excerpt is taken from one of his autobiographies, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, which details his life as a slave and his desire for freedom. It was published in 1845, eighteen years before Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation.

From *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*
by Frederick Douglass

The home **plantation** of Colonel Lloyd wore the appearance of a country village. All the mechanical operations for all the farms were performed here. The shoemaking and mending, the blacksmithing, cartwrighting, coopering, weaving, and grain-grinding, were all performed by the slaves on the home plantation. The whole place wore a business-like **aspect** very unlike the neighboring farms. The number of houses, too, **conspired** to give it advantage over the neighboring farms. It was called by the slaves the “Great House Farm.” Few privileges were **esteemed** higher, by the slaves of the out-farms, than that of being selected to do errands at the Great House Farm. It was associated in their minds with greatness. A representative could not be prouder of his **election** to a seat in the American Congress, than a slave on one of the out-farms would be of his election to do errands at the Great House Farm. They regarded it as evidence of great confidence reposed in them by their overseers; and it was on this account, as well as a constant desire to be out of the field from under the driver’s lash, that they esteemed it a high privilege, one worth careful living for. He was called the smartest and most trusty fellow, who had this honor conferred upon him the most frequently. The competitors for this office sought as diligently to please their overseers, as the office-seekers in the political parties seek to please and **deceive** the people. The same traits of character might be seen in Colonel Lloyd’s slaves, as are seen in the slaves of the political parties.

The slaves selected to go to the Great House Farm, for the monthly **allowance** for themselves and their fellow-slaves, were **peculiarly** enthusiastic. While on their way, they would make the dense old woods, for miles around, **reverberate** with their wild songs, revealing at once the highest joy and the deepest sadness. They would compose and sing as they went along, consulting neither time nor tune. The thought that came up, came out—if not in the word, in the sound;—and as frequently in the one as in the other. They would sometimes sing the most pathetic sentiment in the most rapturous tone, and the most rapturous sentiment in the most pathetic tone. Into all of their songs they would manage to weave something of the Great House Farm. Especially would they do this, when leaving home. They would then sing most exultingly the following words:—

*“I am going away to the Great House Farm!
O, yea! O, yea! O!”*

This they would sing, as a chorus, to words which to many would seem unmeaning jargon, but which, nevertheless, were full of meaning to themselves. I have sometimes thought that the mere hearing of those songs would do more to impress some minds with the horrible **character** of slavery, than the reading of whole volumes of **philosophy** on the subject could do.

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Why does Douglas compare slaves going to the Great House Farm to politicians? How does this comparison contribute to your understanding?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What is the contradiction between the meaning and the tone in the slaves’ songs? How could this contradiction confuse an outside observer?

ACTIVITY 1 (continued)

Key Ideas and Details Douglass implies that being a slave selected to work at Great House Farm was similar to being a politician elected to Congress. Just as politicians seek to “please and deceive the people,” slaves tried to be more pleasing to the overseer. In essence, the slaves campaigned to be selected to work at Great House Farm the way politicians campaign to be elected.

Key Ideas and Details Douglass points out the contrast between the melody of the song and the content of the lyrics. “They would sometimes sing the most pathetic sentiment in the most rapturous tone, and the most rapturous sentiment in the most pathetic tone.” The listener might get a wrong impression of the song, thinking it joyful when, in fact, it is full of sorrow and pain.

ACTIVITY 1 (continued)

Key Ideas and Details Douglass uses a variety of connotative diction to make clear his “hatred of slavery.” Examples might include the following:

- “the **horrible** character of slavery”
- “a tale of **woe**”
- “**complaint** of souls **boiling over** with the **bitterest anguish**”
- “**depressed** my spirits”
- “filled me with ineffable **sadness**”
- “found myself in **tears**”
- “**afflicts** me”
- “deepen my **hatred**”
- “**soul-killing**”

Key Ideas and Details Douglass points out the mistaken conclusion that the songs of slaves are proof of their contentment, because in truth they are a sign of their sorrows. He compares the singing of a slave to that of a castaway stranded on an island, because “the songs of the one and of the other are prompted by the same emotion.” Douglass does not explicitly state what emotion he means; this could be an interesting question to pose to students (loneliness, loss of hope, despair, depression, a desire to keep going despite the insurmountable odds, etc.).

Close Reading of Informational/Literary Nonfiction Texts (continued)

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How does Douglass’s choice of words help reveal his feelings about the institution of slavery? Which examples of powerful diction best reveal his tone?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

According to Douglass, what mistaken conclusion do people make from the singing of slaves? What simile does he use to illustrate his point?

I did not, when a slave, understand the deep meaning of those rude and apparently **incoherent** songs. I was myself within the circle; so that I neither saw nor heard as those without might see and hear. They told a tale of **woe** which was then altogether beyond my **feeble** comprehension; they were tones loud, long, and deep; they breathed the prayer and complaint of souls boiling over with the bitterest **anguish**. Every tone was a testimony against slavery, and a prayer to God for deliverance from chains. The hearing of those wild notes always depressed my spirit, and filled me with **ineffable** sadness. I have frequently found myself in tears while hearing them. The mere recurrence to those songs, even now, **afflicts** me; and while I am writing these lines, an expression of feeling has already found its way down my cheek. To those songs I trace my first glimmering **conception** of the dehumanizing character of slavery. I can never get rid of that conception. Those songs still follow me, to deepen my hatred of slavery, and quicken my sympathies for my **brethren** in bonds. If any one wishes to be impressed with the soul-killing effects of slavery, let him go to Colonel Lloyd’s plantation, and, on allowance-day, place himself in the deep pine woods, and there let him, in silence, analyze the sounds that shall pass through the chambers of his soul,—and if he is not thus impressed, it will only be because “there is no flesh in his **obdurate** heart.”

I have often been utterly astonished, since I came to the north, to find persons who could speak of the singing, among slaves, as evidence of their **contentment** and happiness. It is impossible to conceive of a greater mistake. Slaves sing most when they are most unhappy. The songs of the slave represent the sorrows of his heart; and he is relieved by them, only as an aching heart is relieved by its tears. At least, such is my experience. I have often sung to drown my sorrow, but seldom to express my happiness. Crying for joy, and singing for joy, were alike **uncommon** to me while in the jaws of slavery. The singing of a man cast away upon a **desolate** island might be as appropriately considered as evidence of contentment and happiness, as the singing of a slave; the songs of the one and of the other are prompted by the same emotion.

Check Your Understanding

Now that you have read closely and worked to understand challenging portions of this passage, choose a sentence that you think is important to understanding Douglass's point of view. Explain in your own words what the sentence means and why it is important to understanding the passage.

Possible sentence choices:

"I did not, when a slave, understand the deep meaning of those rude and apparently incoherent songs."

"Those songs still follow me, to deepen my hatred of slavery, and quicken my sympathies for my brethren in bonds."

Synthesizing Your Understanding

Now that you have read the passage three times and studied its vocabulary and sentences, work with your classmates and your teacher to synthesize your understanding by thinking about the **speaker**, the **subject**, the **purpose**, and the author's **tone** or attitude. Respond to the following questions as a way of bringing all your knowledge together.

1. Who is the **speaker** and what is the **subject** of the passage? What is the speaker's perspective on the subject? What experiences or beliefs contribute to his point of view?

The speaker is a man who was born and raised as a slave. This experience gives him a firsthand and authentic perspective on the topic. In addition, Douglass is literate and well-educated, possessing skills that allow him to write eloquently. As a result, the diction and style of the text is both familiar and elevated. He is able to recount his experiences and to reflect on their significance, now that he looks upon the world of slavery from without instead of within.

2. What is the **purpose** of the passage? Now that you have identified the **subject** and **speaker** of the passage, explain Douglass's reasons for writing these paragraphs. What does he hope to communicate to the audience about his subject?

Douglass is writing to offer his audience some insight into the experience of slavery. Particularly, Douglass wants to enlighten his audience about two topics: the pride felt by those slaves chosen to work at the Great House Farm, and the purpose and emotion behind the singing of slaves. He points out that contrary to the beliefs of Northerners, the singing of slaves is not evidence of their contentment. Rather, their songs belie their emotions, juxtaposing happy melodies with sad lyrics.

3. What is the author's attitude toward the **subject** of the passage? **Tone** describes the attitude of the author about the subject being discussed. Now that you have identified the subject and the **purpose**, explain how Douglass feels about this subject.

The excerpt opens with a somewhat straightforward, upbeat tone. The first paragraphs acknowledge the Great House Farm and its respected status by the slaves of Colonel Lloyd. As the piece transitions to the topic of slave songs, a deeper sadness is revealed. Douglass clearly feels horror toward the institution of slavery and anguish at the very thought of the songs of slaves.

ACTIVITY 1 (continued)

10 Check Your Understanding:

Remind students that a narrator's point of view is influenced by experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and values. Help them locate sentences that indicate Douglass's point of view, such as the following:

"I did not, when a slave, understand the deep meaning of those rude and apparently incoherent songs."

11 Synthesizing Your Understanding:

This is an opportunity for students to bring together all their thinking about the passage. Review the **speaker**, **subject**, **purpose**, and **tone** directions with the students.

12 You might ask students to write the answers to the follow-up questions about speaker, subject, purpose, and tone independently or in pairs first, then share as a whole class. Be sure to lead the class in a whole-group discussion to monitor their understanding.

ACTIVITY 1 (continued)

ASSESS

The writing prompt gives students an opportunity to focus on characterizing the point of view and tone of the passage. Note that this prompt requires summarizing and explaining using textual evidence. You might want to conduct this as a co-construction of a paragraph, being sure to discuss and respond to the requirements of the prompt.

ADAPT

Consider asking students to go beyond circling, underlining, and highlighting the text by having them write annotations in the margins. Students could work with paragraphs as chunks of text and define the purpose of each paragraph, or they could summarize the main idea of each paragraph. This additional strategy will help students examine the organization more explicitly.

ACTIVITY 2

Collaborative Practice

PLAN

This activity provides an opportunity for students to practice analyzing visual texts and comparing them to written texts using collaborative groups. It is important to understand that this activity is part of a flexible suite of close-reading activities, so depending on your students and their needs, more or less teacher guidance may be necessary. More independence further prepares students to succeed on the last independent activity.

TEACH

1 Review the historical information about the map with the class before they begin the activity.

2 Direct students' attention to the **First Reading** instructions and the three follow-up questions to consider as they view the map in small groups of mixed ability and varied strengths to work through this text.

3 First Reading: For the first reading of the visual, students will list only what they **see** explicitly in the map (textual evidence). Ask students to describe what they notice first. What

Close Reading of Informational/Literary Nonfiction Texts (continued)

Writing Prompt: Based on your current understanding of the passage, summarize Douglass's point of view and tone about slavery. Write a paragraph that explains your interpretation of his perspective on this topic. Be sure to:

- Identify the subject, speaker, purpose and tone of the passage in a topic sentence
- Provide several pieces of textual evidence that support your statement
- Explain how the evidence supports your topic sentence.

Possible topic sentences:

- Frederick Douglass conveys the horror of slavery that lies behind the slaves' singing.
- As a former slave, Douglass disputes the myth of slave contentment by showing the true desperation in slave songs.

ACTIVITY 2

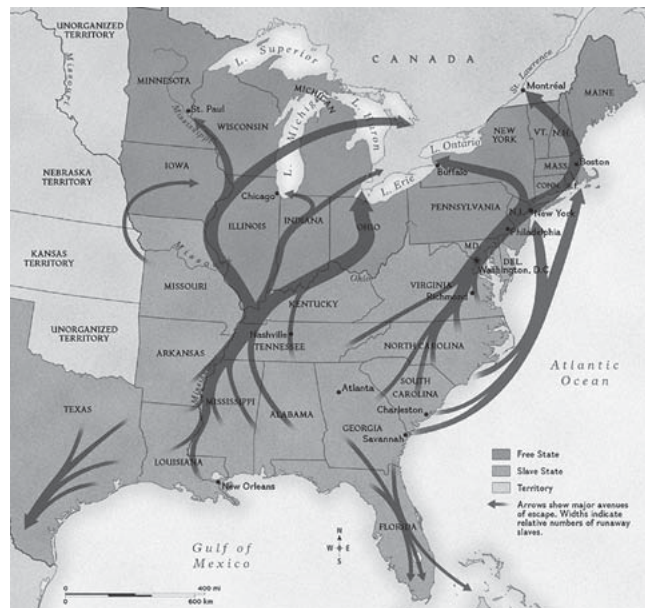
Collaborative Practice

Look carefully at the map that follows. It depicts the Underground Railroad, a network of safe houses and secret routes that existed in the 19th-century United States. With the aid of abolitionists and sympathetic allies, an estimated 100,000 escaped slaves had gained their freedom by 1850 via the Underground Railroad.

First Reading: What do you see?

As you look at the map, what catches your eye? What details do you notice? How would you describe the details in this map to someone who could not see it? To answer this question, keep your responses *only* on what you can see in the map.

A legend or key explains the meaning of the shaded states and the white arrows; names of cities are included; rivers are noted by dark, squiggly lines; arrows indicate movement—some indicate movement northward, some are on the ocean, some are going south; one escape route goes to Canada; another goes south to the Caribbean; the arrows seem to get thicker at certain points in the middle.



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more do they see with a closer look? Have them look at text features such as the symbols, key, scale, compass heading, state borders, and city names. Before students go

on to the next reading, you may want to lead a whole class discussion of what they see to assess their understanding and how well the groups are working together.

Second Reading: What does it mean?

Now that you have examined the map carefully, what inferences can you make? How do you interpret what you see? In other words, what might you say about the states or routes that goes beyond what is explicitly shown on the map?

The Underground Railroad appears to be organized and established in several areas where the routes converge. This might be because once a safe route was discovered, word would spread and slaves from other parts of the country would head in that direction. On the other hand, the various diverging paths both at the beginning and end of the journey imply a widespread desperation to escape the bonds of slavery. Some slaves traveled outside the United States to be free.

Third Reading: How do you know?

Explain the connection between the details you notice and your interpretation of these details. How might you use the details in the map as textual evidence to support the ideas or inferences you have made?

Possible responses might include the following:

- The widespread distribution of routes throughout the slave states
- The extension of the routes into Canada
- The convergence of disparate routes into general paths
- Major rivers seem to trace escape routes.
- The evidence of sea routes suggests organized and funded effort.

Writing Prompt: Now that you have carefully examined the content of this map and come to conclusions about what it shows explicitly and what inferences you can make about the meaning, write a paragraph that makes a connection between this map and the passage written by Douglass about his point of view of slavery. Be sure to:

- Write a topic sentence that connects the two texts.
- Include textual details and explain how they support your connection.
- Write a conclusion that follows from your explanations.

Possible topic sentences:

- The sadness and anguish expressed in slave songs helps explain the existence of the Underground Railroad as a way to escape slavery.
- The number and variety of escape routes indicated in the map show how widespread the desire to escape slavery was.

ACTIVITY 2 (continued)

4 Second Reading: Next, have groups discuss what these explicit details **mean**. That is, what is implied by the details of the map? What inferences can students make about the details? How would they interpret what they see? This reading prepares students more explicitly for the third reading and the writing prompt.

5 Third Reading: For the third reading, be sure to have students explain the connection between what they **see** and what it **means**. In other words, how do they support their interpretations with the concrete textual evidence that they have noted in the map?

ELL Support

For students who need additional support with writing topic sentences, you may want to provide a sentence starter for the writing prompt; for example, “Both Frederick Douglass’s autobiography and the map of the Underground Railroad show that . . .”

ASSESS

For the writing prompt, check that students have shown their understanding by making a connection between the details in a visual text and the inferences that can be made from those details. Students should also connect the visual text with some of the details in Douglass’s autobiography. Consider asking students to write this paragraph as a group effort.

ADAPT

You may want to assess by asking students to discuss connections to the Douglass piece and then having them write a paragraph of an objective summary only about the visual text.