

IDEAS & CONTENT: Formulate a thesis about the book using one of the three topics below and plan specific examples you will use to prove your point.



TOPIC #1 The Paradox of Education in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

The power of education in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, though one of the most important themes in the entire work, does not have a consistent meaning through the book. At one point, Douglass states, “It [education] opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but offered no ladder upon which to get out” (47). With this important quote as your starting point, examine the shifting meaning and importance of education in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. Finally, consider if Douglass ultimately views education as important or as something fraught with danger and disappointment.

TOPIC #2 Representations of Christianity and Religion in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

Just as the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* presents education as a paradox, it also shows conflicted views of the issue of religion and Christianity. To many of the slaves, religion offers a saving grace and they take great joy in participating in religious activities, songs, and other forms of worship. Conversely, though, Douglass reveals a false form of Christianity, one that is practiced by the white people he encounters. For this topic, examine the two forms of religion in the narrative (using characters such as Mr. Covey, for instance) and consider what points Douglass attempts to make by showing the duality of Christianity for the slave.



TOPIC #3 The Purpose of *The Narrative of The Life of Frederick Douglass*



Certainly, *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* relates a personal, inspirational story about slavery and the way one man could escape it and find safety and success; however, this text would have also served other purposes, particularly during Douglass’ lifetime. Since he was one of the few ex-slaves who was given ample opportunity to speak publicly about his experiences, often to white audiences (who were generally abolitionists), this was also a way for him to get across the pure cruelty of slavery as an institution to a captive audience. Such a forum allowed him to speak directly to whites, particularly in the North, about what was happening in the South and the typical treatment of a slave. For this topic, explore how specific examples of the stories of slavery Douglass shared might have served his intentions to influence those involved in the Northern abolitionist movement.

ORGANIZATION: Write in traditional, five-paragraph format.

VOICE: Write in formal, academic voice (third-person, serious, etc.)

WORD CHOICE: Use exact, concise, sophisticated vocabulary and active verbs.

SYNTAX/SENTENCE FLUENCY: Vary sentence structures and openings. Be clear.

MECHANICS: Use precise punctuation, spelling, paragraphs, etc.

REMEMBER: As an in-class essay, this is a first draft and will be graded as such. Do your best, of course, but know that your IDEAS matter most! Consider, also, that this is your exam on the book—your first priority is to show you know and understand the book.