

Frederick Douglass | Lesson Plan

What was Frederick Douglass' role in advocating for the abolition of slavery?

Students will explore the abolitionist movement in the United States and learn about Frederick Douglass' pivotal role in advocating for the abolition of slavery. They will gain insights into how Frederick Douglass worked to eradicate slavery and pursued effective change within the American political framework.

Learning Objectives:

- Explain the meaning of abolition as it relates to slavery.
- Identify key factors and issues of the abolitionist movement in the United States.
- Identify the significance of education in Frederick Douglass' life and how it empowered him to fight against slavery.
- Identify differences between Frederick Douglass' and William Lloyd Garrison's approaches to abolition and problem-solving.
- Analyze Frederick Douglass' approach to solving the problem of slavery in the U.S.
- Evaluate Frederick Douglass' role in the abolition of slavery within the American system.

Key Vocabulary:

- **Abolish:** To end something.
- **Abolitionist:** Someone who works to end or abolish a particular practice, especially referring to the movement to end slavery.
- **Radical:** Describing ideas, approaches, or changes that are extreme and seek to overhaul or replace established norms and systems.
- **Amendment:** A change to the Constitution.

Educational Standards: CCRA.L.1, CCRA.L.2, CCRA.L.4, CCRA.W.2, CCRA.W.4, CCRA.R.7, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2, CCRA.SL.4

Academic Subject Areas: Biography, America, Racism

What You'll Need

- Video: *Frederick Douglass: The Outspoken Abolitionist* (Watch [Here](#))
- Worksheet: *Frederick Douglass: The Outspoken Abolitionist* (Click [Here](#))
- Pictures of Frederick Douglass

Lesson Plan (45 minutes)

Warm-Up: (15 minutes)

1. Initiate a class discussion on problem-solving. Ask students to think of a problem they have encountered in their everyday life that needs a solution—a decision, an inconvenience, a conflict, etc.



2. Display a copy of the “Frederick Douglass Worksheet” and pass out individual worksheets to students.
3. Instruct students to complete the Warm-Up Activity. Students will write a problem and one solution.
4. Once completed, divide students into groups of at least three students per group. Students will take turns sharing their problems with one another, and the other members of the group will suggest solutions to each problem. Students will write down two other solutions that they received from their partners.
5. Once completed, initiate a class discussion on the students’ experience with problem-solving. Encourage students to consider how approaches to problem-solving differed within each group.
6. Prompt students to consider which solution they think is best and circle the best solution of their three options. Invite students to share how they reached their decision.
7. Introduce the focus of the lesson: Frederick Douglass and abolition. Show students pictures of him. Invite students to share what they know about Frederick Douglass, his work as an abolitionist, and different approaches to abolish slavery within the abolitionist movement. Some topics can include:
 - Frederick Douglass was born into slavery in Maryland around 1818. From a young age, he faced the harsh realities of slavery but also developed a strong desire for freedom and equality. Douglass taught himself to read and write, which opened new worlds to him and fueled his passion for justice.
 - Frederick Douglass is a key figure in American history because of his role as a fierce advocate for abolition and civil rights.
 - After escaping from slavery, he became a leader in the abolitionist movement, using his powerful voice and eloquence to speak out against the injustices of slavery and discrimination.
 - He wrote several autobiographies, which not only shed light on the cruel realities of slavery but also served as influential texts in the fight for abolition. Douglass’ efforts contributed significantly to the changes in laws and attitudes that led to the abolition of slavery in the United States.
 - Within the abolitionist movement, different people used various approaches to end slavery. Some people gave powerful speeches and wrote books to show the injustice of slavery, while others helped slaves escape to freedom through the Underground Railroad. Some abolitionists took more radical approaches and did very startling things to get people's attention during demonstrations.
8. Read the rest of the worksheet as a class so students understand directions and know what to listen for during the video.
9. Set the stage for the upcoming video by highlighting the theme of freedom and effective problem-solving. Encourage students to look for ways throughout the video of how Frederick Douglass fought to abolish slavery while simultaneously working to preserve the American system.

Watch and Complete: (20 minutes)

1. Watch the video.
2. Assist students with completing the worksheet alongside the video, encouraging note-taking and active listening.

3. Pause throughout the video to allow students to answer questions—especially short answer responses. If necessary, model short answer responses by restating the question and writing a complete sentence.

Wrap-Up: (10-15 minutes)

1. Allow students 10 minutes to complete the worksheet independently.
2. Collect as a formative assessment or discuss in class.
3. Ask students to read aloud their responses to the Making Connections section, reflecting on ways they can better approach problem-solving or creating change within their communities.
4. Conclude with an open-ended prompt on the qualities of Frederick Douglass that made him a strong and effective leader in the abolitionist movement. Encourage students to strive to be like Frederick Douglass when they are passionate about creating change or helping to solve an issue in their community.

Don't have time for the full lesson? Quick Activity (15-20 minutes)

Distribute the worksheet and allow students to complete it while they follow along with the video.