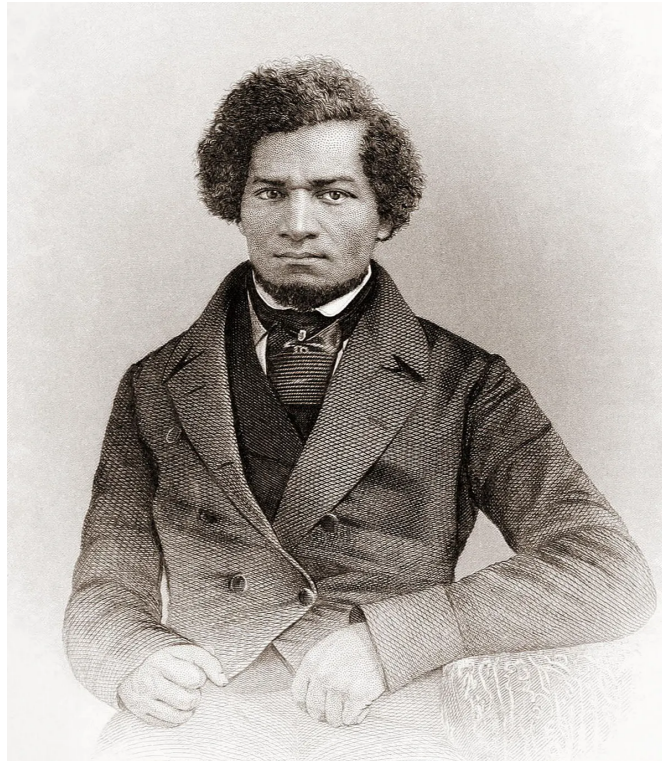


Summer Reading: Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave (1845)



Step One: Read two short essays: [Douglass, the Autobiographer](#), by Robert Levine and [The Lion for All Occasions](#), by Manisha, Sinha

- How do the authors put Douglass's autobiography in context?
- What did you find important about Douglass's life after slavery? Did you find anything surprising? What does his post-slavery life tell us about the United States in the 1840s and 50s?

Step Two: Read (and annotate, of course) Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave

Step Three: Reflect and Review the questions below. You should annotate your text and be ready to share your thoughts and ideas with the class. You do not need to write any answers to the questions, just be ready to discuss them with references to the text. We will be referencing the narrative throughout the course and you will be expected to utilize it in assignments in the first unit.

- Pay particular attention to the episode with Covey referenced in both Levine's and Sinha's essays as well as the story of how Douglass learned to read and write. Note at least two additional passages that you found particularly illuminating about Douglass's life as a slave.

- What do the anecdotes you selected as well as the Covey and literacy stories tell us about the life of an enslaved person? About Douglass?

-Why do you think Douglass chose to include these stories?

-What, if as Levine suggests, these stories are not entirely “true?” In other words, what if these stories didn’t happen in exactly the way that Douglass tells them? Does this matter? What is “true” in the context of a document like Douglass’s narrative?

Step Four: After you have had a chance to read Douglass and reflect on his work, spend a few minutes with [these images](#). Douglass was, arguably, the most photographed person in the 19th Century. He was a big proponent of photography as an art form but also seemed to be enamored with the technology. He had dozens of portraits taken and encouraged their reproduction and wide distribution. If Douglass had been alive today, he would have likely been very active on social media.

-Why do you think Douglass took such an interest in photography and being photographed?

-What do you notice about the photographs?

-What is Douglass trying to say through these images?