



NPS Teaching with Museum Collections Lesson Plan

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A. **Title: Forward March: Continuing Frederick Douglass' Footsteps**

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Grade Level: Middle School

Length of Lesson: Three 45-minute sessions or activities

B. **Overview of this Collection-Based Lesson Plan**

□ **Park Name:** Frederick Douglass National Historic Site

□ **Essential questions**

How is the study of Frederick Douglass' life relevant to us today?

How do the objects at Cedar Hill explain the complexities of Douglass' life?

□ **Description:**

Using the very objects owned by Frederick Douglass and his family, students will discover the thread that ties together his life and his place in history. The object-based inquiry will lead to a deeper understanding of this complex man. The goal of this lesson plan is to show the many-faceted life of Frederick Douglass through his personal objects. This collection is comprised of objects and documents from Frederick Douglass' home at Cedar Hill, Washington, DC.

Frederick Douglass' life was an amazing journey. Born in 1818 as slave, he escaped to the North when he was twenty. He became active in the abolitionist movement and was finally granted his manumission papers in 1846. Douglass wrote his personal narrative, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, which added fuel to the abolitionist movement. In 1872, he and his family moved to Washington, DC and purchased Cedar Hill. Frederick Douglass went on to become a local and



national spokesman, and a well-known international statesman. Throughout his life, he continued to champion the cause of human rights. His legacy is one that influences US history today.

C. Museum Collections Used in this Lesson Plan

Click on each of these objects from the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site museum collections for detailed information.

Catalog Number	Object
FRDO 3861	Bill of Sale
FRDO 1898	Cane [Lincoln cane]
FRDO 2191	Checkerboard
FRDO 3862	Deed for Bill of Sale
FRDO 3135, 3136	Dumbbells
FRDO 198	Hat Rack
FRDO 203	Hat Receiver
FRDO 200	Invalid Chair
FRDO 157	Lithograph
FRDO 161	Music Box
FRDO 2197	Panama Hat
FRDO 1895, 1896, 5315, 5313, 11753, 11753	Penholder and pens
FRDO 165	Photograph
FRDO 320	Photograph
FRDO 1894	Statuette
FRDO 2505	Violin

D. National Educational Standards

Social Studies

Content Standard 1: Students understand chronological order and spatial patterns of human experiences, by placing the stories of people and events in the context of their own time and place.

Content Standard 2: Students use varied methods and sources in research and writing.

Content Standard 5: Students explain the beliefs and principles of the major religions, ethical systems, philosophies and ideologies that have guided individual lives, shaped economic, social, and political institutions, and influenced the course of history.

Content Standard 6: Students understand the different ways individuals have expressed experiences, beliefs, and aspirations in art, architecture, music, and literature.



Student Learning Objectives

After these lessons students will be able to:

- Critically analyze objects from Douglass' home;
- Create a hypothesis based on student analysis about the use and significance of these objects to Douglass' life;
- Use the analysis to develop an understanding of the many layers of Frederick Douglass' life;
- Communicate their ideas and hypotheses with their classmates through an oral presentation;
- Create inferences about Frederick Douglass' life by examining his personal objects;
- Complete the web using objects from Frederick Douglass' life;
- Use a graphic organizer with their peers to categorize the objects and organize their thoughts;
- Make a connection between their lives and the life Frederick Douglass;
- Connect the activism in Frederick Douglass' life to the Civil Rights movement and analyze how our lives are affected by both today.

F. Background and Historical Context

Frederick Douglass was born in 1818 near Easton, Maryland. He spent his early years in a home that was broken beyond most people's comprehension. His mother, a slave, was forced to leave him as an infant. He never knew the identity of his father. Frederick lived in abject poverty. He was crowded into two rooms with his maternal grandparents and cousins. As a slave himself, Frederick was listed on an inventory along with mules and bushels of wheat. His owner could sell him on a whim because, at that time in America, slavery was legal. But all of this adversity did not break the spirit of young Frederick. He possessed an intellectual curiosity undeterred by his circumstances.

At age eight, he was sent to Baltimore as a house servant. The young boy was fascinated by the "mystery of reading." He decided then that education was "the pathway from slavery to freedom." Because it was illegal to educate slaves, Frederick learned how to read and write by trading bread for reading lessons. He traced over words in discarded spelling books until his handwriting was smooth and graceful. By age thirteen, Frederick was reading articles about the "abolition of slavery" to other slaves.

In 1838, at the age of twenty, Douglass escaped from slavery. He married Anna Murray, a free black woman he had met in Baltimore, in New York City. He relocated to New Bedford, Massachusetts and found work as a day laborer. His extemporaneous speech at a meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society in Nantucket in 1841 was so effective that he was made one of its agents. Douglass published his *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* in 1845. He later published a second, expanded, autobiography, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, in 1855. Fearing capture as a fugitive slave, he spent several years in England and Ireland. Douglass returned in 1847, after English friends had purchased his freedom. In Rochester, N.Y., he established the *North Star*, and ran it for seventeen years in the abolitionist cause. During the Civil War he helped organize two regiments of Massachusetts African Americans and urged other blacks to join the Union ranks. His sons served in the Union Army.

After the Civil War, Douglass continued to fight for African-American civil rights and women's rights. He moved to Washington, D.C. in 1872, after a fire, suspected to be arson, destroyed his



home in Rochester. At that time, Douglass became a public servant, serving as the secretary of the Santo Domingo Commission [1871], US marshal of the District of Columbia ([877–81], recorder of deeds for the same district [1881–86], and later, as minister to Haiti [1889–91].

In 1882, Anna Douglass passed away. Two years later, Douglass married Helen Pitts, a white woman. The marriage, performed in a private ceremony, sparked controversy. She was instrumental in saving Mr. Douglass' belongings and Cedar Hill for future generations.

Douglass' final published work was *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* [1881, 1882, 1892], a revised edition of his autobiography. He died on February 20, 1895, at the age of seventy two, at his Cedar Hill in Anacostia, Washington, DC.

Cedar Hill, now Frederick Douglass National Historic Site, Frederick Douglass' last residence.

Douglass purchased the 9¾ acre estate in Anacostia for \$6,700 in 1877. He and his wife Anna broke a "whites only" covenant with the purchase. In 1878, he bought an additional 5¾ acres adjacent to the property. The site is one of highest points in Anacostia with a magnificent view of Washington, DC. Today it is bounded on the north by Good Hope Road, on the south by W Street, on the west by Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, and on the east by 16th Street. The original brick structure was built in the 1850s and may have been used as an office for the land developers who subdivided a farm. Douglass and his family made many improvements to the house and expanded it in various stages. There were numerous orchards and outbuildings including a carriage house, stable, den, and a croquet field.

In 1886, *Cincinnati Enquirer* reporter described the house as "*a moderate sized mansion on an elevation surrounded by full-grown trees, cedars and forest trees. These trees provided both shade and protection from the winds. The house is perhaps fifty to seventy feet above the road, and a high flight of steps leads up to it.*"

After Douglass' death, his second wife Helen vigorously preserved his residence as a memorial. She organized the Frederick Douglass Memorial and Historical Association in 1900. The Association joined in 1916 with the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs. In 1962, the house and grounds of Cedar Hill became a part of the National Park Service. Furnished much as it was during Douglass' lifetime, each room at Cedar Hill contains items from Douglass' public life, his personal belongings, and gifts from well-known people.

Frederick Douglass Timeline. See page 10 for detailed timeline of events in Mr. Douglass' life.

G. Materials Used in this Lesson Plan

- How to Read an Object worksheet [p 11], Graphic Organizer for Museum Collections [p12], Teacher Cheat Sheet [13], and The Web [p14].
- Paper
- Pencils
- Tape
- Art supplies (poster board, markers, paint, glue)
- 4x6 lined index cards



- Blank audio cassettes and tape recorders (with built-in microphone)
- Technology (computers and internet connections)
- Optional: video cameras, digital or Polaroid cameras

H. Vocabulary

Abolitionist
Artifact
Analyze
Civil Rights
Complexities
Consensus
Deed
Document
Haiti
Minister/Ambassador
Era
Panama
Primary source
Object
Relevance

I. Teacher Tips

- Use the Frederick Douglass' Hat as the introductory lesson.
- All activities can be adapted for age and class length.
- We suggest these lessons are taught in succession, but can stand independently.
- Download the object images and captions for reference.
- Download images in color and laminate, if possible, student use and reuse.

J. Lesson Implementation Procedures

Activity 1: Introduction and Warm Up

- Printout copies of all the museum objects listed in Section C. Museum Collections Used in this Lesson Plan [use the hyperlink to see the images]. These objects are on exhibit in the *Frederick Douglass: American Visionary* web exhibit at www.cr.nps.gov/museum.
- Laminate images for reuse if possible.
- Make sets for each group of students (5 sets).
- Make copies of the blank Graphic Organizer for Museum Collections.
- Organize the students into groups of three or four.
- Assign each group a category: Individual, Family Man, Washingtonian, National or International.
- Post the initials for each category: Individual (In.), Family (F), Washingtonian (W), National (N), or International (I).



- Distribute sets of the object image with caption.
- Give students 15 minutes to look at cards in their small groups, and to choose three objects that they feel best represents their assigned category.
- On the graphic organizer for museum collections, have students highlight or circle the three objects they have chosen. **FILL OUT ONLY THESE THREE ROWS.**
- Have students complete the graphic organizer for museum collections for their three objects in these 15 minutes. [Teacher note: Make sure students understand they are only filling out three rows of the graphic organizer for their chosen objects.]
- One group at a time will stand; identify which category of Douglass objects they have, and which three objects they chose to best represent Douglass in this category.
- Have the group share why they chose each of these objects. Have students hold their picture up for the class to see. Repeat for each group.
- As groups present, have them mark on their graphic organizer, what objects were selected for other categories using the initials posted earlier.
- Allow 10 minutes for students to persuade members of other groups whose classifications may have been identified in one or more categories.
- To build class consensus, have the students choose only three objects for each category.



- Have students complete the writing prompt for homework or in class:
Think about your own life. Identify two aspects of your life and choose two objects that you own that represent each of these aspects. Write a paragraph about each object that explains its significance in these two parts of your life. For example: Describe your life at school compared to your life at home through these objects (for a total of four). Write a final paragraph connecting these four objects and how they represent a portrait of you.

Activity 2: The Multi-Faceted Frederick Douglass

Have students complete The Web to explore the many and varied roles that Frederick Douglass' played throughout his life. The roles are; an individual, a family man, husband and father; local leader in Washington, DC; and on the national stage as abolitionist, civil rights and women's right advocate, counselor to the President, and on the international stage, as U.S. minister to Haiti.

- Copy The Web for Activity #2 provided.
- Group children in five groups.
- Have children select three objects from the object cards.
- Distribute web charts to each group.
- Have students put the name of their objects in the three blank circles that web from Frederick Douglass' name.
- Give 10 minutes for students to write down inferences they may make from the object or to write questions they have about this object and how it relates to Frederick Douglass.
- Pass out the rest of the set to each group.
-



- ❑ Ask each group to stand up, one at a time, and to share one of their three objects with the class. Have the rest of the class follow along with the copies of the objects that have been distributed to the table.
- ❑ Students should share their words, their thoughts, and their questions. When students are finished with one of their objects, invite other classmates to share how they might think it is connected. Limit to three comments.
- ❑ Using the sheet provided, teachers may then share with the class, how the object was related to Frederick Douglass.
- ❑ When all five groups have presented and five total objects have been presented (one from each group), put a transparency of the teacher guide sheet on an overhead and allow students to investigate their other two objects, or objects of interest.
- ❑ As a class, collectively write one paragraph that summarizes the complexity and intricacies of Frederick Douglass as portrayed through the objects.
- ❑ Complete writing prompt: Write one paragraph that summarizes the complexity and intricacies of Frederick Douglass as portrayed through the objects.

Activity 3: Creating our Community Civil Rights Museum

- ❑ Divide class into groups of 2-3 students per group.
- ❑ Identify a designated family member or family friend who was alive during the Civil Rights period in the United States [1950-1967].
- ❑ Students will use the interview questions listed below to gather an oral history from their designated interviewee.
- ❑ While conducting the interview, students should ask to photograph or videotape their subject; and students should ask to photograph or videotape pictures of any artifacts or documents (such as newspaper clippings, political buttons, t-shirts, banners, programs, flyers, records, protest signs, song lyrics, etc.) that the interviewee may have that connect to their oral history. Students may wish to make an audio-recording of any Civil Rights era songs that are important to the interviewee that are reflective of the spirit of the Civil Rights movement.
- ❑ Working together in their small group, the students will analyze the information that they have gathered from their interviewee to decide what they want to include in their group's poster, collage, mural, or exhibit display.
- ❑ Assign each small group a space in the classroom to set up their part of the classroom museum exhibit.
- ❑ Have students create invitations to your classroom museum. These invitations can take many forms. Some ideas include student written press releases, school wide cable TV, announcements, e-mail announcements, hallway posters, etc.
- ❑ Send out separate hand written or computer generated invitations to interviewees, parents, and other classes to come to visit your class's museum.
- ❑ After the classroom museum exhibit has occurred, have the students write, discuss, or chart the influences of Frederick Douglass on the Civil Rights movement.

Interview Questions

Have the students ask the following questions during the interview:

1. Where were you living during the Civil Rights period?
2. How old were you?
3. How is your community different today than it was during this period?



4. Did you or any members of your family participate in or witness any protest activities during this period?
5. Do you have any artifacts, documents, songs, or other memorabilia from this period? Would you be willing to share *copies* of these items (or pictures/video/audio recordings) with your classmates or have them included in the exhibit?

Note to Interviewers: REMEMBER to do the following:

- Inform your interviewee that her/his recollections will be shared publicly in your classroom at school.
- Make copies of the items for the classroom display in order to safeguard the precious original materials.
- Thank the person you interviewed.
- Consider inviting him or her to your classroom to view your class's museum exhibition.

Wrap Up Activity and Discussion

K. Evaluation/Assessment for Measurable Results

For Activity 1:

1. Successful completion of graphic organizer.
2. Successful categorization of the objects.
3. Demonstrate effective listening, oral and written communication skills, both within small groups and during oral presentation (see rubric).
4. Successful completion of writing prompt.

For Activity 2:

1. Demonstrate effective listening, oral and written communication skills, both within small groups and during oral presentation.
2. Successful completion of web diagram.
3. Successful completion of writing prompt.

For Activity 3:

1. Students' display has to reflect the emotions, changes, and tensions of the Civil Rights period.
2. Exhibit labels need to contain correct grammar, usage, punctuation and capitalization.
3. Display should be well organized and include a title.
4. Display should include written and pictorial components. Use of other multimedia components is encouraged if resources are available.
5. Each interviewee's role, perspective, or experience should be clearly evident in each student group's display.

L. Extension and Enrichment Activities

- Compare the National Park Service's resources on Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site, the Underground Railroad program, Brown vs.



Board of Education National Historic Site with those of the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site.

- ❑ Visit a historical home near you. Look at how the objects in the house, represent the person or the family who lived there. What objects would you choose to represent that person/family?
- ❑ Brainstorm other historical figures who could also be categorized in layers. What labels would you choose for your categories and why? Go online to do your research.
- ❑ Brainstorm local and community members who also can be "categorized." Invite them to speak in the classroom.

High School

- ❑ Have the students write Document Based Questions [DBQs] using the materials that have been provided in this lesson. Have students answer each others' DBQs.
- ❑ Go online and look at other objects that are showcased. Have students choose an object to do further research on Douglass, his life, his home and his legacy.

Elementary School

- ❑ Have students use the pictures of the objects provided to make their own picture book biography of Fredrick Douglass. Have them share with their peers.
- ❑ Have the students write riddles about the objects provided. Have the students test their riddles on their peers to see if they can guess the object being described.

M. Resources

Reading List:

Adler, David A. (1993). *A Picture Book of Frederick Douglass*. New York: Holiday House.

Marlowe, Sam. (1996). *Learning About Dedication from the Life of Frederick Douglass*. New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc.

Patterson, Lillie. (1965). *Frederick Douglass: A Discovery Book*. Champaign, Illinois. Garrard Publishing Company.

Frederick Douglass Papers. Library of Congress.
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/doughtml/doughome.html>

Artifacts and Analysis.
http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/educators/lesson_plans/idealabs/artifacts_analysis.html

N. Site Visit:

Contact the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site to arrange for a tour.



National Park Service
Teaching with MUSEUM Collections
Management Program
<http://www.cr.nps.gov/museum>

Take a virtual tour of rooms at Cedar Hill at:

Museum Management Program: Frederick Douglass: American Visionaries exhibit

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/museum/exhibits/douglass/>

And visit the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site: <http://www.nps.gov/frdo/freddoug.html>



Frederick Douglass Time Line

1818 born in Talbot County, Maryland, exact date unknown, his mother a slave, his father was white, perhaps her owner; christened Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey.

1826 sent to Baltimore as a house servant; his owner's wife begins teaching him to read but stops when warned that education means "there will be no keeping him." Convinced that knowledge is freedom, Frederick teaches himself in secret to read and write.

1833-34 is moved to nearby plantation; deemed unmanageable; is hired out to a slave-breaker who starves and whips him- which fuels his dreams of freedom.

1836 attempted escape fails; is returned to Baltimore; learns trade as ship caulker; meets many free African Americans, including Anna Murray.

1838 boards train in sailor disguise; escapes to freedom in New York City; Anna Murray joins him; they marry and move to New Bedford, Massachusetts; adopts Douglass surname from Sir Walter Scott's poem, *Lady of the Lake*.

1841-44 becomes active in abolition movement; hired by Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society; lectures in New England.

1845-47 publishes *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*; leaves at once for Europe to escape slave hunters now alerted to his identity; speaks out for world peace; Irish home rule, and "*the cause of the poor, no matter whether black or white.*" English friends buy his freedom; returns to USA in 1847.

1847-59 launches newspaper, the *North Star*, later renamed *Frederick Douglass Paper*, Rochester, N.Y.; outspoken defender of women's rights and of political action as means to abolish slavery; in 1855 publishes *My Bondage and My Freedom*; opposes John Brown's raid in 1859, but his alliance with Brown compels brief asylum in Canada and England.

1863 in wake of Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, Douglass issues "Men of Color, to Arms!" urging free African Americans to join the U.S. Army; meets with President Lincoln on treatment of soldiers; serves as his advisor.

1872-81 Frederick and Anna move to Washington, D.C. ;buy a house at 316 A Street N.E. in 1877 they break "whites only" covenant by purchasing Cedar Hill; serves as U.S. Marshal of the District of Columbia from 1877 until 1881.

1881-84 publishes third autobiography, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*; Anna Murray Douglass, mother of their 5 children dies in 1882; marries Helen Pitts, a white woman, in 1884. Their mixed marriage sparks controversy; they travel to Europe and Africa.

1889 on 26th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, denounces the government for abandoning African Americans; President Harrison appoints him Minister to Haiti; resigns post in 1891; continues to address human rights.

1894 delivers speech, "The Lesson of the Hour," an attack against lynching; censures politicians and citizens alike for empowering segregation and rejects "the idea that one class must rule over another."

1895 on February 20, shortly after attending a women's rights rally, Douglass dies at Cedar Hill; nationally mourned and acclaimed as gifted orator and champion of the oppressed.



How to Read an Object Worksheet
Activity #1

1. Who do you think made this object? Who do you think it was made for? Who used it?
2. When and where do you think it was made?
3. Why was it made? How was it actually used?
4. What does it say about fashion of the time?
5. What does it say about the technology of the time?
6. How has the object's meaning changed over time?
7. What does it tell you about the social conditions of the time?
8. What cultural issues does it raise?



Graphic Organizer for Museum Collections

Object	Attributes and Object Questions	How does this object relate to Frederick Douglass?	Do you think this object represents Frederick Douglass in his role as an international figure, a national figure, a Washingtonian, a family man or an individual?
Bill of Sale, November 1846			
Cane [Lincoln Cane]			
Checkerboard			
Checkers			
Dumbbells, c. 1878			
Freedom Papers, December 1846			

Hat receiver				
Invalid chair, 1880				
Lithograph of Frederick Douglass in Haiti, c. 1891				
Music Box, c. 1885				
Panama Hat, 1889-1891 Penholder and pens				
Photograph of Metropolitan AME Church, c. 1900				
Photograph of people in front of AME Metropolitan Church, c. 1900				
Statuette				
Violin, c. 1891				

Activity #1
Teacher Cheat Sheet

Object	Information about the object
Bill of Sale, November 1846	Slave owner Thomas Auld bought Frederick Bailey [Douglass] for \$100 from Hugh Auld on November 30, 1846.
Checkerboard	Who did he play checkers with? How often? Did he purchase it? Was it a gift? Did he have this from childhood?
Checkers	Ditto from above.
Dumbbells, c. 1878	The dumbbells weighed 35-40 pounds. In the morning before breakfast and in all weather, Frederick Douglass would go out on the porch or in the yard and swing the dumbbells by his side, and then overhead, behind and in front.
Freedom Papers, December 1846	Frederick Douglass was given his freedom on December 5, 1846 by Hugh Auld. His freedom was paid by Walter Lowrie, an abolitionist, of New York for \$711.66.
Hat rack	Racks were formed by ten cattle horns. A metal pan is on the base for dripping umbrellas. Douglass had guests to his house for important meetings all the time. Was this considered grand for the time? Or is it a traditional hat rack?
Hat receiver	In the day, it was improper to touch another person's hat. The guest placed his/her hat on the hat receiver upon entrance and the doorman would then use the hat receiver to place the hat on the hat rack.
Invalid chair, 1880	Anna, Douglass' first wife, used this chair as a wheelchair. It has a foot rest, casters on the legs and it is padded with horse hair, cotton and straw.
Lincoln Cane, 1850-1864	Originally owned by President Abraham Lincoln and given to Frederick Douglass by Mary Todd Lincoln after her husband's death. In a letter Douglass thanked Mrs. Lincoln for giving him the President's favorite walking stick.

Lithograph of Frederick Douglass in Haiti, c. 1891	He was US Minister (ambassador) to Haiti. When? For how long? How was he elected to go there and represent the US? How did an African-American male get this job?
Music Box, c. 1865	Who gave to him? What was the significance? Was it a cherished momento?
Panama Hat, 1889-1891	Worn by Douglass. Did he buy this in Haiti? Did he also wear it in DC?
Penholder and pens	These were not Douglass' originals, however he was an avid and prolific reader and writer. Author to many writings and thoughts.
Photograph of Metropolitan AME Church, c. 1900	Did he attend this church? What is the significance of this church to Douglass' life (other than his funeral)?
Photograph of people in front of AME Metropolitan Church, c. 1900	The Metropolitan Church is located at M Street between 15th and 16th Sts, NW in Washington, DC. This church is where Douglass' funeral was held.
Statuette	This object was on Douglass' desk in his study. It is of two bears, one doing dental work on the other bear sitting in the dental chair. This was a trinket he acquired and gives a snapshot of his sense of humor.
Violin, c. 1891	Where did he get it? How did he learn to play it? Who taught him? When did he play it (in his life and usually in the day?)



The Web Organizer

