



Activity Guide

800-788-1121

A Picture Book of Frederick Douglass

ABOUT THE STORY

This biography tells the story of Frederick Douglass's life, from his birth in slavery to his days as an abolitionist to his activism after the Civil War. It gives the vital details of this fascinating individual's life.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David A. Adler grew up in a large family and got his start in storytelling by making up tales for his brothers and sisters. He received his M.B.A. from New York University and taught math to children for several years. He has written more than a hundred books, including picture book biographies of such notables as George Washington, Rosa Parks, and Harriet Tubman (all Live Oak Readalongs).

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Samuel Byrd has been an artist since childhood. He studied art at the Philadelphia College of Art and has exhibited his work all over the country. He is the illustrator of several picture books, including *A Picture Book of Harriet Tubman*, *A Picture Book of Rosa Parks*, and *A Picture Book of George Washington*.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Explain to children that before the Civil War in the 1860s, many people in America owned slaves. They made these people work without pay and often treated them very cruelly. A group of people began to protest against slavery. They were called abolitionists. Tell children that the book they will read is about an important abolitionist who was once a slave himself.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- "Why didn't Frederick Douglass see his mother very often?"
- "How did Frederick Douglass learn to read?"
- "Why did Frederick Douglass go to jail?"
- "How did Frederick escape from slavery?"
- "What might have happened to Frederick if he had not going to England after his book was published?" (*Make Predictionst*)
- "How did learning to read change Frederick's life?" (*Analyze*)
- Why do you think audiences found Frederick Douglass's speeches against slavery so persuasive? (*Draw Conclusions*)

Vocabulary

Write these words on the chalkboard. Have children copy the sentences below and fill in each blank with one of the words from the board.

- errands surname prejudice outlawed
- Frederick Douglass changed his _____ so slave catchers couldn't find him.
 - The abolitionists fought against slavery before the war and _____ after the war.
 - Frederick was forced to run _____ for his owners when he was a slave.
 - During the Civil War, slavery was finally _____.

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Social Studies: Other Abolitionists

Ask students to research one of these other abolitionists: William Lloyd Garrison, Levi Coffin, Josiah Henson, or David Ruggles. When they have collected information about their subjects, children can write a brief biography of the person they have chosen. Encourage them to share their biographies and explain how their subject protested against slavery.

Music: Slave Music

Play one or more of these spirituals for children: "Go Down, Moses," "Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho," "Steal Away," or "Follow the Drinking Gourd." Ask children to listen carefully to the words and think about what the songs might have meant to slaves before the Civil War. Lead a discussion in which you talk about how the songs were used as protest and as a way of looking to a future that might include escape.

Language Arts: Writing for The Liberator

Frederick Douglass wrote for the newspaper *The Liberator*, which was an anti-slavery paper. Ask children to work in pairs to write an article or create a cartoon that could be printed in *The Liberator*. Stress that the article or cartoon should be anti-slavery in sentiment. When children are finished, you can collect their work in a class issue of *The Liberator*.

Math: Slave and Non-Slave Population

Give children these statistics about the U.S. population in 1860, just before the Civil War. Have them work in small groups to prepare a circle graph showing the division of population in the country.

Total population: 22 million; Slave population: 3.5 million; Free Black population: 125,000; Slave-owning population: 350,000; Other white population: 18,050,000

INTERNET ACTIVITY

Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to be sure the sites are suitable.

On the Underground Railroad

Have children take a trip on the Underground Railroad by going to this website: <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/railroad/>. They can follow the path many slaves took to freedom and experience the hardships and dangers they experienced. Encourage children to write a brief review of their experience on the railroad when they have finished.