



# ***THE NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS***

## **A MICRO-ANALYSIS ESSAY**

**DUE DATE:** Tuesday, May 15th—hard-copy printout to be handed to me at the beginning of class. Papers will *not* be accepted by email.

**LENGTH:** Roughly three pages of double-spaced, Times New Roman twelve-point font with one-inch margins

**THE ASSIGNMENT:** The goal of this assignment is for you to analyze a brief passage from the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. Choose one or two paragraphs from the *Narrative* and copy and paste your choice at the very beginning of your paper. You can find the whole *Narrative* online here:

<http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Literature/Douglass/Autobiography/>

You should choose a passage that you believe is very important to Douglass's story as a whole, or choose one that is particularly meaningful, moving, or intriguing to you. After you have chosen your passage, answer the following questions about it in clear, concise language. REMEMBER: Simple sentences with clear and strong language are preferable to long and convoluted ones in which the meaning gets lost. KEEP IT SIMPLE!

1. BRIEF SUMMARY: Explain where this piece fits into the overall narrative. What happened before this passage? What events or decisions led up to this moment? What actually happens in the passage itself?
2. JUSTIFY YOUR CHOICE: Why did you choose this passage? What did you find so significant about it? Why is it so important in the context of the whole narrative?
3. ANALYSIS: Why do you think Douglass wrote this passage? How would you describe the type of language that he used in this passage? What effect do you think he intended it to have on his audience? Do you think that Douglass succeeds in getting his message across? Are there any ways the audience might misinterpret his meaning?

### **How Your Paper Will Be Evaluated**

- **Addressing the Assignment:** You must address all three components of the writing prompt above to get full credit. You should spend devote roughly an equal amount of space to each component, although your analysis might be a little bit longer.

- **Clarity:** Your summary for the first component should be clear and concise, covering the most important events but leaving out details that are not relevant to your selected passage. Your response to the second prompt should lay out strong and convincing reasons for your choice of passage—why is it important to the whole narrative, and why does it resonate with you? Your analysis section should demonstrate a thought-out understanding of the Douglass’s intentions behind writing the passage.
- **Choice of Passage:** Your choice of passage will be a part of the evaluation. You should be able to demonstrate why the passage is important to the narrative as a whole, and present good reasons why it resonates with you.
- **Originality of Analysis:** While it is difficult to bring a truly original analysis to the table, you will be given considerable credit for an essay that looks at Douglass’s narrative in a particularly thoughtful or innovative way.

## General Guidelines

- **Avoiding Plagiarism:** “General knowledge” information—such as dates or well known facts—do not need to be cited. But if you use a specific idea (for example, an interpretation of a particular historian) or quotation from the textbook or another source, please provide a citation after the quote/idea.  
*For a book assigned in class, you can use a simple parenthetical citation: (Douglass, p. 38) or (Brinkley, p. 321)*  
*For web sources and print sources that are not either the Brinkley or Wallace texts, I would like you to provide a full citation as a footnote according to the Chicago Manual of Style, which includes a full citation. You can find a quick guide to the Chicago style here:*  
 { HYPERLINK "http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\_citationguide.html" }  
 Note that if you use web sources, please make sure that they are reliable and trustworthy ones! Crazy conspiracy-theory sites are NOT good sources. Your paper will be graded down if it uses unreliable sources.
- **Format:** Essays must be in a twelve-point, double-spaced, in Times New Roman font, and have one-inch margins.
- **Writing Style Counts:** Make sure that you write complete, clear, and coherent sentences. Don’t overreach in your writing: avoid overly long and convoluted sentences, pretentious language, or words or phrases with ambiguous meanings.
- **Spelling Counts:** Note that the spell-check function can sometimes be wrong!
- **Avoid repeating the language of the question in your answer.**
- **Avoid “non sequiturs”:** The phrase “non sequitur” means “it does not follow” in Latin. A non sequitur happens when a writer moves from one idea to the next without a logical flow. Make sure to provide a smooth transition between each section of your answer.