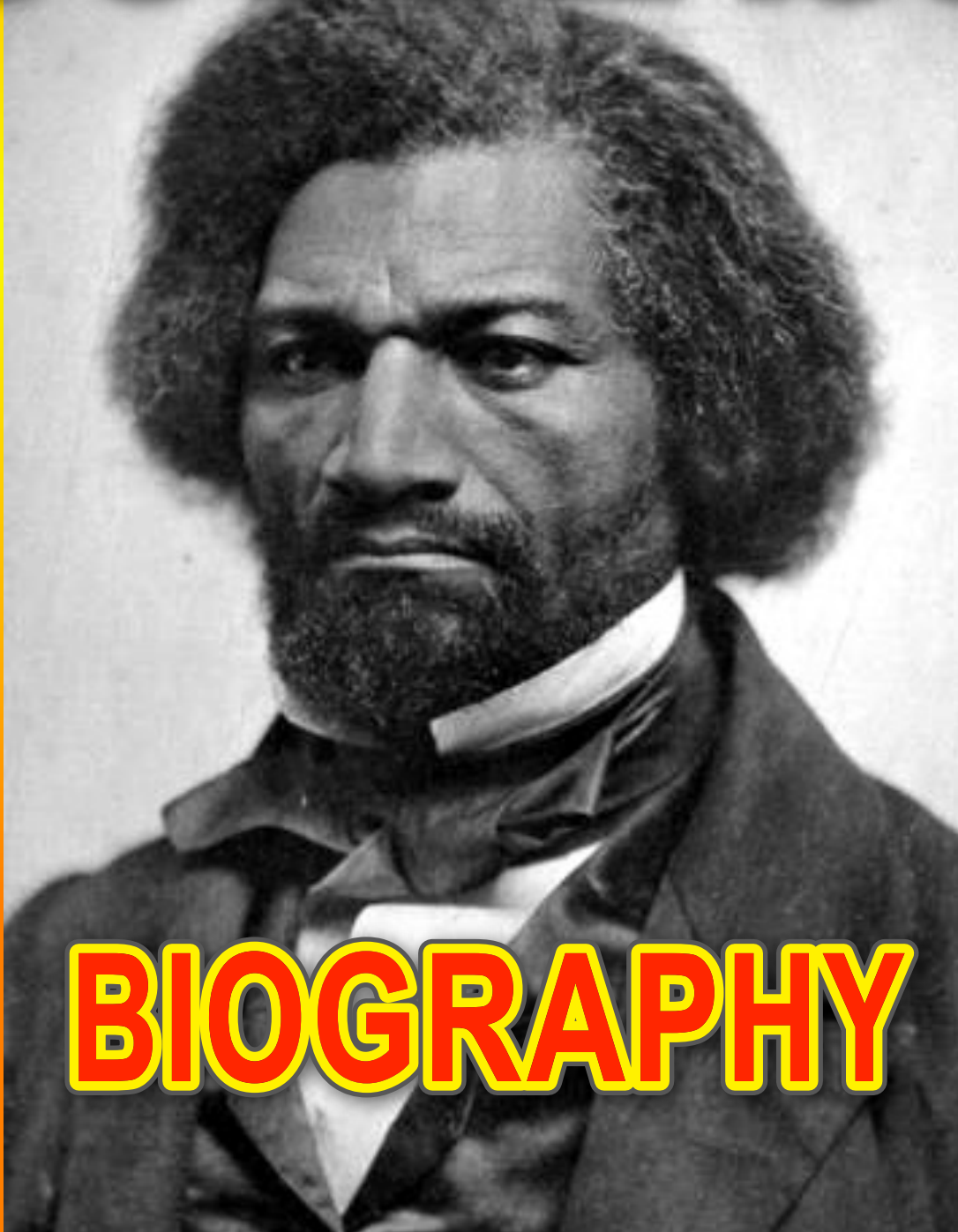


FREDERICK DOUGLASS



BIOGRAPHY

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

Frederick Douglass was born a slave in Maryland, around 1818. When he was eight years old, he started working for the Auld family, who were related to his owner. Sophia Auld began teaching Douglass to read, but she stopped when her husband reminded her that it was illegal in Maryland to teach slaves reading. But Douglass still wanted to learn, so he offered food to local boys in return for lessons. Later on, Douglass taught other slaves to read, even though slave owners often broke up their meetings.

As a teenager, Douglass worked on his owner's plantation. During this time, he was treated incredibly harshly. When he was twenty years old, Douglass escaped this terrible life. He pretended to be a free sailor, and traveled to Massachusetts, where many former slaves lived.

In Massachusetts, Douglass went to anti-slavery meetings. In 1841, he talked about his experiences of slavery at such a meeting, and the audience admired his public-speaking skills. After that, he kept on speaking at meetings, which brought him to the attention of prominent abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, who wrote about Douglass in his anti-slavery publication 'The Liberator'.

As well as giving speeches, Douglass wrote autobiographies describing his own experiences as a slave. The first was in 1845, and was called 'Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American slave'. It became a best-seller, but Douglass had to leave America for a while after. This was because he had named his former owner, who might come looking for him. He went to Ireland and spoke about slavery there. He proved so popular that his supporters bought his legal freedom.

After he returned to America as a free man, Douglass set up an anti-slavery newspaper, the North Star. He was also a supporter of women's rights, and took part in the first women's rights convention in New York in 1848. He spoke in favor of pushing for women's right to vote, gaining support for the idea as a result.

During the Civil War, Douglass advised President Abraham Lincoln on the treatment of black soldiers. After the war, he held diplomatic positions in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Douglass died on February 20, 1895 in Washington D.C.

Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'illegal'.

b From that sentence, suggest what 'illegal' means.

c Write a new sentence using the word 'illegal'.

d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'illegal'.

e Draw a small picture showing what you think 'illegal' means.

Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

Key word	Synonym (similar word)
Example: terrible	awful

Sequencing

Sequencing means getting the events in the right order. Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense.

Back in America, Douglass published an anti-slavery newspaper, and advised President Abraham Lincoln.

And so Douglass escaped, and traveled to Massachusetts.

As a teenager, Douglass was treated terribly on his owner's plantation.

As a boy, Douglass learned to read and write.

In 1845, Douglass published an autobiography about his experiences of slavery. He then spent time in Ireland, where supporters bought his freedom.

Frederick Douglass was born a slave in Maryland around 1818.

Douglass started speaking at anti-slavery meetings, and became famous for his public-speaking skills.

Get to the facts

1 Who taught Frederick Douglass to read and write?

2 What kind of meetings did Douglass go to in Massachusetts?

3 What was Douglass' 1845 autobiography called?

4 What was Douglass' newspaper called?

5 Who did Douglass advise during the Civil War?

Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.

Frederick Douglass speaks

It's 1841. You are at the anti-slavery meeting where Frederick Douglass spoke about his experiences as a slave... (now complete the story)

Below is a plain text version for printing:

Understanding words:

- a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'illegal'.
- b From that sentence, suggest what 'illegal' means.
- c Write a new sentence using the word 'illegal'.
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Finding key words:

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym).

For example:

Key word – terrible Synonym – awful

Sequencing:

Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense:

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