

AP Language and Composition

TASK 3 (Version 1)

Writing Task: Essay Prompt

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself*

Write a 3-5 page formal essay that skillfully addresses the prompt below.

Your paper MUST use quotations and specific examples from the text to support your argument, and make sure to include MLA style page citations. This essay should be typed and double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font, and stapled.

INTRODUCTION

Frederick Douglass was a former slave who became a renowned public speaker, politician, educator, and anti-slavery advocate during the 19th century. He traveled throughout America and abroad, sharing his stories about and views on the slave system with abolitionists. In 1845, he published his autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, a text widely read and praised by abolitionists of the time.

ESSAY PROMPT

“How does Frederick Douglass make an effective argument against slavery?”

In order to answer the above question fully, your essay should contain a clear and detailed thesis that responds to the prompt above, and actively and precisely reference Douglass’s use of language and how he advances an argument against slavery through his *Narrative*.

PREWRITING QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO CONSIDER

A. How does Douglass use examples that get an emotional reaction from the reader?

- Where does he try to make readers feel a specific emotion, such as sadness, anger, hope, sympathy, or any other emotion?
- How does he get them to feel this way, and how does this help convince his audience of his overall argument?

B. How does Douglass use examples and strategies that make logical sense to the reader?

- Where does Douglass use techniques like compare & contrast, cause & effect, or analogy to show how slavery is unjust?
- Where does he make allusions to literary or religious doctrines, or examine the historical, economic, or political impacts of slavery?
- Where does he employ expert opinions, quotations, or other, similar evidence?
- How do any of these strategies help convince his audience of his overall argument?

C. How does Douglass present himself as an ethical and moral person to the reader? How does this establish his credibility as a writer?

- *Where does he show himself to be intelligent, well-informed, or knowledgeable?*
- *Where does he show himself to be kind, sympathetic, or sensitive to others?*
- *Where does he show himself to be honest, moral, patriotic, or an overall “good person”?*
- *How do any of these strategies help convince his audience of his overall argument?*

Make sure you include a thesis that answers the actual prompt, and remember, this essay is not about whether or not you agree with Douglass, or whether or not slavery is wrong. **This essay is about Douglass’s argument, and how he creates a strong, persuasive text using a variety of techniques and strategies.**

Use the work you completed with TASK 2.1 RHETORICAL FLASHCARDS to get a jump start on looking at the RHETORICAL STRATEGIES & MOVES utilized by Douglass to construct his argument.

As you write your essay and analyze the text, keep in mind how Douglass’s support for his argument contributes to his purpose. Do not simply summarize the events and ideas in the book! Think of the events in Douglass’s *Narrative* as intentionally and consciously chosen to support his argument.