

Garrison and Douglass

Abolitionism in Black and White

by Jonathan Burack

Each unit in *The Historian's Apprentice* series deals with an important historical topic. It introduces students to a five-step set of practices designed to simulate the experience of being a historian and make explicit all key phases of the historian's craft.

The Historian's Apprentice: A Five-Step Process

1. Reflect on Your Prior Knowledge of the Topic

Students discuss what they already know and how their prior knowledge may shape or distort the way they view the topic.

2. Apply Habits of Historical Thinking to the Topic

Students build background knowledge on the basis of five habits of thinking that historians use in constructing accounts of the past.

3. Interpret the Relevant Primary Sources

Students apply a set of rules for interpreting sources and assessing their relevance and usefulness.

4. Assess the Interpretations of Other Historians

Students learn to read secondary sources actively, with the goal of deciding among competing interpretations based on evidence in the sources.

5. Interpret, Debate, and Write About the Topic Yourself

Students apply what they have learned by constructing evidence-based interpretations of their own in a variety of ways.



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Teacher Introduction

★ *Teaching the Historian's Craft*

The goal of *The Historian's Apprentice* units is to expose students in a manageable way to the complex processes by which historians practice their craft. By modeling what historians do, students will practice the full range of skills that make history the unique and uniquely valuable challenge that it is.

Modeling the historian's craft is not the same as being a historian—something few students will become. Therefore, a scaffolding is provided here to help students master historical content in a way that will be manageable and useful to them.

Historical thinking is not a simple matter of reciting one fact after another, or even of mastering a single, authoritative account. It is disciplined by evidence, and it is a quest for truth; yet, historians usually try to

clarify complex realities and make tentative judgments, not to draw final conclusions. In doing so, they wrestle with imperfect sets of evidence (the primary sources), detect multiple meanings embedded in those sources, and take into account varying interpretations by other historians. They also recognize how wide a divide separates the present from earlier times. Hence, they work hard to avoid present-mindedness and to achieve empathy with people who were vastly different from us.

In their actual practice, historians are masters of the cautious, qualified conclusion. Yet they engage, use their imaginations, and debate with vigor. It is this spirit and these habits of craft that *The Historian's Apprentice* seeks to instill in students.

★ *The Historian's Apprentice: Five-Steps in Four Parts*

The Historian's Apprentice is a five-step process. However, the materials presented here are organized into four parts. Part I deals with the first two of the five steps of the process. Each of the other three parts then deals with one step in the process. Here is a summary of the four parts into which the materials are organized:

Teacher Introduction. Includes suggested day-by-day sequences for using these materials, including options for using the PowerPoint presentations. One sequence is designed for younger students and supplies a page of vocabulary definitions.

Part 1. A student warm-up activity, an introductory essay, a handout detailing a set of habits of historical thinking, and two PowerPoint presentations (*Five Habits of Historical Thinking* and *Douglass: Abolitionism in Black and White*). Part 1 (including the PowerPoints) deals with *The Historian's Apprentice* Steps 1 and 2.

Part 2. A checklist for analyzing primary sources, several primary sources, and worksheets for analyzing them. Part 2 deals with *The Historian's Apprentice* Step 3.

Part 3. Two secondary source passages and two student activities analyzing those passages. Part 3 deals with *The Historian's Apprentice* Step 4.

Part 4. Two optional follow-up activities enabling students to write about and/or debate their own interpretations of the topic. Part 4 deals with *The Historian's Apprentice* Step 5.

★ Suggested Five-Day Sequence

Below is one possible way to use this *Historian's Apprentice* unit. Tasks are listed day by day in a sequence taking five class periods, with some homework and some optional follow-up activities.

PowerPoint Presentation: *Five Habits of Historical Thinking*. This presentation comes with each *Historian's Apprentice* unit. If you have used it before with other units, you need not do so again. If you decide to use it, incorporate it into the **Day 1** activities. In either case, give students the “Five Habits of Historical Thinking” handout for future reference. Those “five habits” are as follows:

- History Is Not the Past Itself
- The Detective Model: Problem, Evidence, Interpretation
- Time, Change, and Continuity
- Cause and Effect
- As They Saw It: Grasping Past Points of View

Warm-Up Activity. Homework assignment: Students do the *Warm-Up Activity*. This activity explores students' memories and personal experiences shaping their understanding of the topic.

Day 1: Discuss the *Warm-Up Activity*, then either have students read or review the “Five Habits of Historical Thinking” handout, or use the *Five Habits* PowerPoint presentation.

Homework assignment: Students read the background essay “Garrison and Douglass: Two Forms of Abolitionism.”

Day 2: Use the second PowerPoint presentation, *Garrison and Douglass: Abolitionism in Black and White*, to provide an overview of the topic for this lesson. The presentation applies the Five Habits of Historical Thinking to this topic. Do the two activities embedded in the presentation.

Homework assignment: Students read the “Interpreting Primary Sources Checklist.” The checklist teaches a systematic way to handle sources:

- Sourcing
- Contextualizing
- Interpreting meanings
- Point of view
- Corroborating sources

Day 3: In class, students study some of the ten primary source documents and complete “Source Analysis” worksheets on them. They use their notes to discuss these sources. (Worksheet questions are all based on the concepts on the “Interpreting Primary Sources Checklist.”)

Day 4: In class, students complete the remaining “Source Analysis” worksheets and use their notes to discuss these sources. Take some time to briefly discuss the two secondary source passages students will analyze next.

Homework assignment: Student read these two secondary source passages.

Day 5: In class, students do the two “Secondary Sources” activities and discuss them. These activities ask them to analyze the two secondary source passages using four criteria:

- Clear focus on a problem or question
- Position or point of view
- Use of evidence or sources
- Awareness of alternative explanations

Follow-Up Activities (optional, at teacher's discretion).

Do as preferred: the DBQ Essay Assignment and/or the Structured Debate.

★ Suggested Three-Day Sequence

If you have less time to devote to this lesson, here is a suggested shorter sequence. The sequence does not include the PowerPoint presentation *Five Habits of Historical Thinking*. This presentation is included with each *Historian's Apprentice* unit. If you have never used it with your class, you may want to do so before following this three-day sequence.

The three-day sequence leaves out a few activities from the five-day sequence. It also suggests that you use only six key primary sources. However, it still walks students through the steps of the *Historian's Apprentice* approach: clarifying background knowledge, analyzing primary sources, comparing secondary sources, and debating or writing about the topic.

Warm-Up Activity. Homework assignment: Ask students to read or review the “Five Habits of Historical Thinking” handout and read the background essay “Garrison and Douglass: Two Forms of Abolitionism.”

Day 1: Use the PowerPoint presentation *Garrison and Douglass: Abolitionism in Black and White*. It provides an overview of the topic for this lesson by applying the Five Habits of Historical Thinking to it. Do the two activities embedded in the presentation.

Homework assignment: Students read or review the “Interpreting Primary Sources Checklist.” The checklist teaches a systematic way to handle sources.

Day 2: In class, students study some of the ten primary source documents and complete “Source Analysis” worksheets on them. They then use their notes to discuss these sources. Documents 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8 are suggested.

You may wish to make your own choices of primary sources. Use your judgment in deciding how many of them your students can effectively analyze in a single class period.

Homework assignment: Student read the two secondary source passages.

Day 3: In class, students do the two “Secondary Sources” activities and discuss them. These activities ask them to analyze the two secondary source passages using four criteria.

Follow-Up Activities (optional, at teacher's discretion):

Do as preferred: the DBQ Essay Assignment and/or the Structured Debate.

★ *Suggestions for Use with Younger Students*

For younger students, parts of this lesson may prove challenging. If you feel your students need a somewhat more manageable path through the material, see the suggested sequence below.

If you want to use the *Five Habits of Historical Thinking* PowerPoint presentation, this sequence takes four class periods. If you do not use this PowerPoint, you can combine **Day 1** and **Day 2** and keep the sequence to just three days. We suggest using six primary sources only. The ones listed for **Day 3** are less demanding in terms of vocabulary and conceptual complexity. For **Day 4**, we provide some simpler DBQs for the follow-up activities.

Vocabulary: A list of vocabulary terms in the sources and the introductory essay is provided on page 7 of this booklet. You may wish to hand this sheet out as a reading reference, you could make flashcards out of some of the terms, or you might ask each of several small groups to use the vocabulary sheet to explain terms found in one source to the rest of the class.

SUGGESTED FOUR-DAY SEQUENCE

Warm-Up Activity. Homework assignment: Students do the Warm-Up Activity. This activity explores students' memories and personal experiences shaping their understanding of the topic.

Day 1: Discuss the Warm-Up Activity. Show the *Five Habits of Historical Thinking* PowerPoint presentation (unless you have used it before and/or you do not think it is needed now). If you do not use this PowerPoint presentation, give students the "Five Habits of Historical Thinking" handout and discuss it with them.

Homework assignment: Ask students to read the background essay "Garrison and Douglass: Two Forms of Abolitionism."

Day 2: Use the PowerPoint presentation *Garrison and Douglass: Abolitionism in Black and White*. This introduces the topic for the lesson by applying the Five Habits of Historical Thinking to it. Do the two activities embedded in the presentation.

Homework assignment: Students read or review the "Interpreting Primary Sources Checklist." The checklist offers a systematic way to handle sources.

Day 3: Discuss the "Interpreting Primary Sources Checklist" and talk through one primary source document in order to illustrate the meaning of the concepts on the checklist. Next, have students complete "Source Analysis" worksheets after studying primary source documents 1, 2, 5, and 8.

Homework assignment: Students read the two secondary source passages.

Day 4: Students do *only* "Secondary Sources: Activity 2" and discuss it. This activity asks them to choose the two primary sources that best back up each secondary source passage.

Follow-Up Activities (optional, at teacher's discretion):

Do as preferred: the DBQ Essay Assignment and/or the Structured Debate.

Here are some alternative DBQs tailored to the six primary sources recommended here:

What did Douglass and Garrison disagree about most, and why do you think they came to disagree so strongly?

"Douglass and Garrison were not that far apart. It's just that one was more practical, the other more idealistic." Explain why you do or do not agree with this statement.

Vocabulary: The Introductory Essay

- **abolitionism:** In this case, the movement to abolish, or end, slavery
- **compromise:** To settle differences by having each side give up some of its demands
- **elite:** A small powerful or ruling group with superior social status
- **evangelical:** A religious spirit stressing a need to seek salvation through a personal conversion experience
- **fanatic:** Someone who is excessively devoted to an idea or cause
- **mentor:** A personal guide or teacher
- **patronizing:** Expressing a haughty or snobbish air of superiority
- **oratorical:** Relating to the ability to speak eloquently or with great effect and skill
- **regeneration:** In this case, a spiritual renewal or moral purification
- **temperance:** In this case, the movement to limit consumption of alcoholic beverages

Vocabulary: The Primary Sources

- **abettor:** Someone who actively aids or helps, usually with a crime
- **abhorrence:** An intense dislike or disapproval of something
- **allusion:** In this case, a hint about something, or an indirect or implied reference to it
- **avaricious:** Greedy
- **bequeathed:** Bestowed or passed on
- **commence:** To start or begin something
- **compelled:** Forced to do something
- **declamation:** Speaking in a formal or eloquent style
- **deprecate:** To play something down or express disapproval of it
- **disparity:** A great difference between two things
- **dissolution:** Dissolving or coming apart
- **fetters:** Chains or other things that bind or confine
- **indignation:** Outrage or anger
- **infamy:** A reputation for evil; a widely known evil
- **infidel:** An unbeliever in some religion or cause
- **null and void:** No longer enforceable or binding
- **perpetuate:** To continue something; to keep it going
- **vassalage:** A state of submission or being a vassal; owing service to someone
- **verity:** Truth
- **sacrilegious:** Irreverent or in violation of something sacred

Vocabulary: The Secondary Sources

- **complicit:** Associated with or taking part in something wrong
- **conventional:** Following what is acceptable or ordinary
- **denunciation:** Condemnation or severe disapproval
- **dissociate:** To separate from
- **entail:** To impose or involve as a part of something
- **heresy:** An opinion that goes against a doctrine or accepted body of ideas
- **hypocrisy:** Pretending or appearing to be what one is not
- **sanguine:** Optimistic

Part 1: Garrison and Douglass—Providing the Context

Note to the teacher: The next pages provide materials meant to help students better understand abolitionism and the disputes between Garrison and Douglass. The materials also seek to teach students the Five Habits of Historical Thinking.

This section includes the following:

- **PowerPoint Presentation: The Five Habits of Historical Thinking**

This presentation illustrates five habits of thought or modes of analysis that guide historians as they construct their secondary accounts of a topic. These Five Habits are not about skills used in analyzing primary sources. (Those are dealt with more explicitly in a handout in the next section.) These Five Habits are meant to help students see history as a way of thinking, not as the memorizing of disparate facts and pre-digested conclusions. The PowerPoint uses several historical episodes as examples to illustrate the Five Habits. In two places, it pauses to ask students to do a simple activity applying one of the habits to some of their own life experiences.

If you have used this PowerPoint with other *Historian's Apprentice* units, you may not need to use it again here.

- **Handout: “The Five Habits of Historical Thinking”**

This handout supplements the PowerPoint presentation. It is meant as a reference for students to use as needed. If you have used other *Historian's Apprentice* units, your students may only need to review this handout quickly.

- **Warm-Up Activity**

A simple exercise designed to help you see what students know about abolitionism, what confuses them, or what ideas they may have absorbed about it from popular culture, friends and family, etc. The goal is to alert them to their need to gain a clearer idea of the past and be critical of what they think they already know.

- **Introductory Essay: “Garrison and Douglass: Two Forms of Abolitionism”**

The essay provides enough basic background information on the topic to enable students to assess primary sources and conflicting secondary source interpretations. At the end of the essay, students get some points to keep in mind about the nature of the sources they will examine and the conflicting secondary source interpretations they will debate.

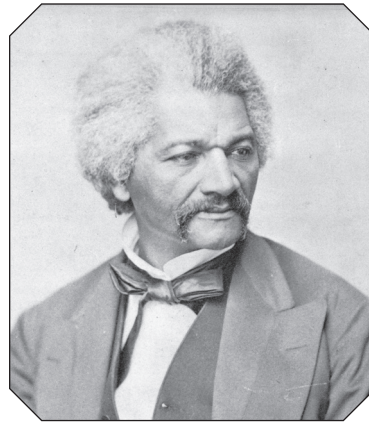
- **PowerPoint Presentation: *Garrison and Douglass: Abolitionism in Black and White***

This PowerPoint presentation reviews the topic for the lesson and shows how the Five Habits of Historical Thinking can be applied to a clearer understanding of it. At two points, the presentation calls for a pause and students are prompted to discuss some aspects of their prior knowledge of the topic. Our proposed sequences suggest using this PowerPoint presentation *after* assigning the introductory essay, but you may prefer to reverse this order.

Warm-Up Activity

What Do You Know About These Two Abolitionists?

This lesson deals with the views of William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass and the abolitionist movement. Whenever you start to learn something about a time in history, it helps to think first of what you already know about it, or think you know. You probably have impressions, or you may have read or heard things about it already. Some of what you know may be accurate. You need to be ready to alter your fixed ideas as you learn more. This is what any historian would do. To do this, take a few notes in response to the questions below on these two men.



Which of these men is William Lloyd Garrison and which is Frederick Douglass? What do you know about each man?

Both men were abolitionists. What do you know about the abolitionists?

Some say the abolitionists were fanatics, others say they were great idealists. Some say they helped end slavery, others say they had little to do with ending slavery. What do you know or think you know about each of these four views?

Garrison and Douglass: Two Forms of Abolitionism

William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass were dedicated, intelligent, and courageous fighters in the battle against slavery. For three decades before the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, they were key leaders in the American abolitionist movement. Supporters thrilled to their dramatic speeches and editorials. Each was a master of the oratorical style of the day. The two men agreed about much. However, their disagreements reveal even more about abolitionism and the reform spirit of early 19th-century America.

Garrison, a white man, was born in Massachusetts in 1805. His father was a merchant who fell on hard times and deserted the family in 1808. Garrison grew up in poverty, worked for a printer, and in time, became the nation's most famous abolitionist—an uncompromising opponent of slavery. In 1831, he began publishing his newspaper, *The Liberator*. In 1833, he was a key founder of the American Anti-Slavery Society. He never wavered in the struggle, and only stopped publishing *The Liberator* in 1865, after slavery was abolished.

Douglass was an African American, born a slave in Maryland in 1818. In 1838, he escaped to New Bedford, Massachusetts. He educated himself, learned about abolitionism, and was inspired by Garrison, who became his mentor. Douglass rose to fame speaking, writing, and organizing against slavery, especially through his journal *North Star*, founded in 1847. His split with Garrison began in 1851. After the Civil War, he continued to fight for equal rights for African Americans and women, and he held several important government positions.

The differences of background between Garrison and Douglass help explain their disagreements about abolitionism and American society. However, what is most important is to understand the disagreements themselves, not just the facts about the skin color or background of the two men.

In the early 1800s, the nation was growing and changing rapidly. A democratic spirit was spreading. Older merchant and planter elites were losing influence. Traditional churches were splitting apart, and new ones were emerging. Political parties were

bringing more citizens into the political process. Cities were starting to grow rapidly. Canals, roads, and railroads were linking new lands into a vast national market. Industrial factory towns were beginning to appear. Unlimited opportunities seemed to be opening up, for some. However, people also worried about the fading of ties that held communities together. They wanted change, yet they also longed for new sources of order.

In this setting, reformers looked to the idea of purifying or perfecting individuals as the best way to bring about a more just, orderly and moral society. This can be seen in the many religious revivals of the age. The evangelical Christianity this fostered also influenced social-reform movements, such as prison reform, temperance, help for the blind or the mentally ill, peace, women's rights, and more. The abolition of slavery would in time become the mightiest of these movements. All in one way or another stressed individual renewal as a way to change society.

William Lloyd Garrison is a good example of this spirit of reform and perfectionism. He worked with both white and African American groups, and insisted that women have an equal place in the abolitionist movement. Garrison was a deeply religious man. He defined slavery as a hideous national sin, and he called for its immediate abolition. Garrison also opposed all forms of racial prejudice. He was against colonization schemes that called for freeing African Americans only in order to send them back to Africa. He believed that, in time, whites and blacks could live together in perfect equality.

Garrison totally opposed the use of violence in the struggle against slavery, yet he also opposed peaceful political means to free the slaves. Garrison was a moral crusader who wanted the nation to undergo a complete spiritual renewal. He felt that the entire nation was guilty of sin, and only a total transformation and awakening of its moral spirit could save it. He saw the Constitution itself as a hopelessly corrupt, proslavery document that should not be respected at all. He opposed political action, such as voting or organizing political parties. These efforts always involved moral compromises. Moreover, they tried to force men to do right without having to face up to

their sinful natures and change their hearts. Garrison was not satisfied with that, nor was he willing to compromise even over flaws he saw in the antislavery movement itself. When he insisted that women should be able to take leadership roles in the American Anti-Slavery Society, this split the organization in two.

Douglass was not as interested in the complete moral rebirth of the nation as he was in simply ending slavery. He was willing to make compromises to achieve that goal. Yet also unlike Garrison, he was not totally opposed to using violence to end slavery, though he usually did not think it would work. He condemned the nation's founders for failing to live up to their words about freedom and equality, yet he also insisted that the Constitution was not hopelessly flawed. If properly understood, he said, it did not support slavery and

could be used as a tool to turn America into a fully equal society. Douglass was far more ready than Garrison to use political means to bring about change, even if this meant making compromises and using legal power to force otherwise sinful men to do what was right.

The differences that drove Garrison and Douglass apart were also at the heart of the entire reform spirit of the day. Should citizens work through a flawed yet democratic political system to achieve slow or partial changes to institutions and laws, or should they use moral persuasion to reform the people themselves, and in that way transform the nation totally? These questions still guide historians today as they seek to understand the abolitionist movement as a whole.

Points to Keep in Mind

Historians' Questions

Historians have interpreted the split between Garrison and Douglass in many ways. Some have viewed Garrison as a rigid fanatic who was more concerned about his and his movement's moral purity than about actually ending slavery. Others are less judgmental, but still see Garrison as limiting abolitionism as a movement. They say he put too much stress on what was called "moral suasion" (preaching to arouse a sense of shame and guilt over slavery) and gave up on more practical political action. These historians tend to see Douglass as more realistic and more focused on changing institutions and laws. They also see Douglass as giving voice to many black abolitionists, who often resented the patronizing attitudes of white abolitionists.

Other historians view Garrison more positively. They feel his moral outrage focused attention on society's deep-seated racism, not just the legal barriers facing black Americans. As for Douglass, they recognize his contributions. But they say he was too willing to accept a flawed Constitution and political system that thwarted all efforts to end slavery. In their view, this attitude led him to ignore the deeper causes of racial hatred that gave support to slavery and that would outlast it.

The Primary Source Evidence

For this lesson, you will study eight primary source documents on Garrison, Douglass and abolitionism. These will illustrate the different views of these two men and their importance to the history of abolitionism as a movement. Together, these sources will give you evidence to use make up your own mind about the Garrison–Douglass split. They will also enable you to make some informed judgments of your own about what two historians say about this same issue.

Secondary Source Interpretations

After studying and discussing the primary sources, you will read two short passages from two books about Garrison, Douglass, and other aspects of African American history. The two historians who wrote these passages agree about most of the facts, but they make quite different overall judgments about Garrison and Douglass. You will use your own background knowledge and your ideas about the primary sources as you think about and answer some questions about the views of these two historians.

Five Habits of Historical Thinking

History is not just a chronicle of one fact after another. It is a meaningful story, or an account of what happened and why. It is written to address questions or problems historians pose. This checklist describes key habits of thinking that historians adopt as they interpret primary sources and create their own accounts of the past.

History Is Not the Past Itself

When we learn history, we learn a story about the past, not the past itself. No matter how certain an account of the past seems, it is only one account, not the entire story. The “entire story” is gone. That is, the past itself no longer exists. Only some records of events remain, and they are never complete. Hence, it is important to see all judgments and conclusions about the past as tentative or uncertain. Avoid looking for hard-and-fast “lessons” from the past. The value of history is in a way the opposite of such a search for quick answers. That is, its value is in teaching us to live with uncertainty and see even our present as complex, unfinished, open-ended.

The Detective Model: Problem, Evidence, Interpretation

Historians can’t observe the past directly. They must use evidence, just as a detective tries to reconstruct a crime based on clues left behind. In the historian’s case, primary sources are the evidence—letters, official documents, maps, photos, newspaper articles, artifacts, and all other traces from past times. Like a detective, a historian defines a very specific problem to solve, one for which evidence does exist. Asking clear, meaningful questions is a key to writing good history. Evidence is always incomplete. It’s not always easy to separate fact from opinion in it, or to tell what is important from what is not. Historians try to do this, but they must stay cautious about their conclusions and open to other interpretations of the same evidence.

Time, Change, and Continuity

History is about the flow of events over time, yet it is not just one fact after another. It seeks to understand this flow of events as a pattern. In that pattern, some things change while others hold steady over time. You need to see history as a dynamic interplay of both change and continuity together. Only by doing this can you see how the past has evolved into the present—and why the present carries with it many traces or links to the past.

Cause and Effect

Along with seeing patterns of change and continuity over time, historians seek to explain that change. In doing this, they know that no single factor causes change. Many factors interact. Unique, remarkable and creative individual actions and plans are one factor, but individual plans have unintended outcomes, and these shape events in unexpected ways. Moreover, individuals do not always act rationally or with full knowledge of what they are doing. Finally, geography, technology, economics, cultural traditions, and ideas all affect what groups and individuals do.

As They Saw It: Grasping Past Points of View

Above all, thinking like a historian means trying hard to see how people in the past thought and felt. This is not easy. As one historian put it, the past is “another country” in which people felt and thought differently, often very differently from the way we do now. Avoiding “present-mindedness” is therefore a key task for historians. Also, since the past includes various groups in conflict, historians must learn to empathize with many diverse cultures and subgroups to see how they differ and what they share in common.

Part 2: Analyzing the Primary Sources

Note to the teacher: The next pages provide the primary sources for this lesson. It is suggested that you give these to students after they read the background essay, review the “Five Habits of Historical Thinking” handout, and watch and discuss the PowerPoint presentation for the lesson.

This section includes the following:

- **Handout: *Interpreting Primary Sources Checklist***

Give copies of this handout to students and ask them to refer to it when analyzing any primary source.

- **Eight Primary Source Documents**

The Documents are as follows:

- Document 1. David Walker’s *Appeal*
- Document 2. Garrison’s editorial on Walker’s *Appeal*
- Document 3. Garrison on the Constitution
- Document 4. A cartoon about Charles Sumner
- Document 5. Part of Garrison’s “Disunion”
- Document 6. A cartoon about the gag rule
- Document 7. Part of Douglass’s July 5th, 1852, speech
- Document 8. Douglass’s 1855 criticism of the “Garrisonians”

- **Eight “Source Analysis” Worksheets for Analyzing the Primary Sources**

Each worksheet asks students to take notes on one source. The prompts along the side match the five categories in the “Interpreting Primary Sources Checklist.” Not every category is used in each worksheet, only those that seem most relevant to a full analysis of that source.

You may want students to analyze all of the sources. However, if time does not allow this, use those that seem most useful for your own instructional purposes.

Students can use the notes on the “Source Analysis” worksheets in discussions, as help in analyzing the two secondary sources in the next part of this lesson, and in follow-up debates, DBQs, and other activities.

Interpreting Primary Sources Checklist

Primary sources are the evidence historians use to reach conclusions and write their accounts of the past. Sources rarely have one obvious, easily grasped meaning. To interpret them fully, historians use several strategies. This checklist describes some of the most important of those strategies. Read the checklist through and use it to guide you whenever you need to analyze and interpret a primary source.

Sourcing

Think about a primary source's author or creator, how and why the primary source document was created, and where it appeared. Also, think about the audience it was intended for and what its purpose was. You may not always find much information about these things, but whatever you can learn will help you better understand the source. In particular, it may suggest the source's point of view or bias, since the author's background and intended audience often shape his or her ideas and way of expressing them.

Contextualizing

"Context" refers to the time and place of which the primary source is a part. In history, facts do not exist separately from one another. They get their meaning from the way they fit into a broader pattern. The more you know about that broader pattern, or context, the more you will be able to understand about the source and its significance.

Interpreting Meanings

It is rare for a source's full meaning to be completely obvious. You must read a written source closely, paying attention to its language and tone as well as to what it implies or merely hints at. With a visual source, all kinds of meaning may be suggested by the way it is designed, and by such things as shading, camera angle, use of emotional symbols or scenes, etc. The more you pay attention to all the details, the more you can learn from a source.

Point of View

Every source is written or created by someone with a purpose, an intended audience, and a point of view or bias. Even a dry table of numbers was created for some reason, to stress some things and not others, to make a point of some sort. At times, you can tell a point of view simply by sourcing the document. Knowing an author was a Democrat or a Republican, for example, will alert you to a likely point of view. In the end, however, only a close reading of the text will make you aware of point of view. Keep in mind that even a heavily biased source can still give you useful evidence of what some people in a past time thought. However, you need to take the bias into account in judging how reliable the source's own claims really are.

Corroborating Sources

No one source tells the whole story. Moreover, no one source is completely reliable. To make reasonable judgments about an event in the past, you must compare sources to find points of agreement and disagreement. Even when there are big differences, both sources may be useful. However, the differences will also tell you something, and they may be important in helping you understand each source.

The Primary Sources for the Lesson

Document 1

Information on the source: David Walker was an African American abolitionist famous for his 1829 *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World*. Walker denounced slavery and defended the use of violence as a means to gain freedom. In Article 11 of Walker's *Appeal*, he describes an incident in which a large group of slaves freed themselves by attacking the three white men who were taking them to be sold. The slaves were later all recaptured in part because one female slave helped one of the white men get away. In this passage, Walker warns his people not to show such mercy to their masters.

If you commence, make sure work—do not trifle, for they will not trifle with you—they want us for their slaves, and think nothing of murdering us in order to subject us to that wretched condition—therefore, if there is an attempt made by us, kill or be killed. Now, I ask you had you not rather be killed than to be a slave to a tyrant, who takes the life of your mother, wife, and dear little children? Look upon your mother, wife and children, and answer God Almighty; and believe this, that it is no more harm for you to kill a man, who is trying to kill you, than it is for you to take a drink of water when thirsty; in fact, the man who will stand still and let another murder him, is worse than an infidel, and if he has common sense, ought not to be pitied. The actions of this deceitful and ignorant colored

woman, in saving the life of a desperate man, whose avaricious and cruel object was to drive her and her companions in miseries, through the country like cattle, to make his fortune on their carcasses, are but too much like that of thousands of our brethren in these states: if anything is whispered by one, which has any allusion to the melioration of their dreadful condition, they run and tell tyrants, that they may be enabled to keep them the longer in wretchedness and miseries. Oh! colored people of these United States, I ask you, in the name of that God who made us, have we, in consequence of oppression, nearly lost the spirit of man, and, in no very trifling degree, adopted that of brutes?

Document 2

Information on the source: William Lloyd Garrison wrote an editorial regarding Walker's *Appeal*. It appeared in a very early edition of the *The Liberator*, on January 8, 1831. This is part of what Garrison had to say:

Believing, as we do, that men should never do evil that good may come; that a good end does not justify wicked means in the accomplishment of it; and that we ought to suffer, as did our Lord and his apostles, unresistingly knowing that vengeance belongs to God, and he will certainly repay it where it is due; believing all this, and that the Almighty will deliver the oppressed in a way which they know not, we deprecate the spirit and tendency of this Appeal. Nevertheless, it is not for the American people, as a nation, to denounce it as bloody or monstrous. Mr. Walker but pays them in their own coin, but follows their own creed, but adopts their own language. We do not preach rebellion, no, but submission and peace. Our enemies may accuse us of striving to stir up the slaves to revenge but their accusations are false, and made only to excite the prejudices of the whites, and to destroy our influence.

We say, that the possibility of a bloody insurrection at the south fills us with dismay; and we avow, too, as plainly, that if any people were ever justified in throwing off the yoke of their tyrants, the slaves are that people. It is not we, but our guilty countrymen, who put arguments into the mouths, and swords into the hands of the slaves. Every sentence that they write, every word that they speak, every resistance that they make, against foreign oppression, is a call upon their slaves to destroy them. Every Fourth of July celebration must embitter and inflame the minds of the slaves. And the late dinners, and illuminations, and orations, and shoutings, at the south, over the downfall of the French tyrant, Charles the Tenth, furnish so many reasons to the slaves why they should obtain their own rights by violence.

Document 3

Information on the source: “On the Constitution and the Union,” by William Lloyd Garrison, in *The Liberator*, December 29, 1832. This passage is from that article.

There is much declamation about the sacredness of the compact which was formed between the free and slave states, on the adoption of the Constitution. A sacred compact, forsooth! We pronounce it the most bloody and heaven-daring arrangement ever made by men for the continuance and protection of a system of the most atrocious villany ever exhibited on earth. Yes—we recognize the compact, but with feelings of shame and indignation, and it will be held in everlasting infamy by the friends of justice and humanity throughout the world. It was a compact formed at the sacrifice of the bodies and souls of millions of our race, for the sake of achieving a political object—an unblushing and monstrous coalition to do evil that good might come. Such a compact was, in the nature of things and according to the law of God, null and void from the beginning . . . By the infamous bargain which they made between themselves, they virtually dethroned the Most High God, and trampled beneath their feet their own solemn and heaven-attested Declaration, that all men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights—among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. They had no lawful power to bind themselves, or their posterity, for one hour—for one moment—by such an unholy alliance. It was not valid then—it is not valid now.

Document 4

Information on the source: Massachusetts senator Charles Sumner is ridiculed in this 1862 cartoon. The artist questions his sincerity as a humanitarian by showing him giving away a few coins to a black child on the street, while ignoring the appeal of a ragged white child in need.



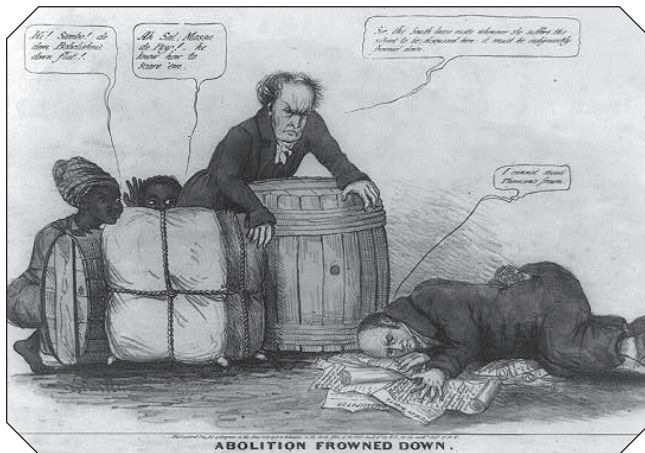
Document 5

Information on the source: This is part of “Disunion,” by William Lloyd Garrison, from *The Liberator*, June 15, 1855. It was the transcript of a speech he gave earlier to an abolitionist meeting.

. . . We are asked, “How is the dissolution of the Union to be effected? Give us your plan!” My answer is, whenever the people are ready for Disunion, they will easily find out a way to effect it. When this sentiment shall spread like a flame, as I trust in God it will, through the length and breadth of the free States, (cheers,) the people will come together in their primary assemblies, and elect such men to represent them in General Convention as they may deem best qualified

to devise ways and means for effecting a separation, and to frame a new government, free from the spirit of bondage . . . Our preliminary work is, not to construct a new government, but first of all to make every Northern man see and confess, that our boasted Union is a snare, a curse, and a degrading vassalage;—in strict verity, that there is no Union for freedom to be dissolved, but one to be created!

Document 6



Information on the source: In the 1830s, Congress passed “gag rules” forbidding Congress to read or debate any antislavery petition. In this 1839 cartoon by a New York artist, antislavery representative John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts lies on a pile of petitions and other abolitionist documents. South Carolina representative Waddy Thompson Jr. glowers at him from behind a sack, saying, “Sir the South loses caste whenever she suffers this subject to be discussed here; it must be indignantly frowned down.” Two blacks crouch behind Thompson in fear.

Document 7

Information on the source: These passages are from a famous speech Frederick Douglass gave on July 5th, 1852, in Rochester, NY, to the Rochester Ladies Anti-Slavery Society. The speech is titled “What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?”

Fellow Citizens, I am not wanting in respect for the fathers of this republic. The signers of the Declaration of Independence were brave men. They were great men too, great enough to give fame to a great age. It does not often happen to a nation to raise, at one time, such a number of truly great men. The point from which I am compelled to view them is not, certainly, the most favorable; and yet I cannot contemplate their great deeds with less than admiration. They were statesmen, patriots and heroes, and for the good they did, and the principles they contended for, I will unite with you to honor their memory . . .

[But] I say it with a sad sense of the disparity between us. I am not included within the pale of this glorious anniversary! Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us. The blessings in which you, this day, rejoice, are not enjoyed in common. The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity and independence, bequeathed by your fathers, is shared by you, not by me. The sunlight that brought life and healing to you, has brought stripes and death to me. This Fourth [of] July is yours, not mine. You may rejoice, I must mourn. To drag a man in fetters into the grand illuminated temple of liberty, and call upon him to join you in joyous anthems, were inhuman mockery and sacrilegious irony . . .

Fellow-citizens; above your national, tumultuous joy, I hear the mournful wail of millions! whose chains, heavy

and grievous yesterday, are, to-day, rendered more intolerable by the jubilee shouts that reach them. If I do forget, if I do not faithfully remember those bleeding children of sorrow this day, “may my right hand forget her cunning, and may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth!” To forget them, to pass lightly over their wrongs, and to chime in with the popular theme, would be treason most scandalous and shocking, and would make me a reproach before God and the world. My subject, then fellow-citizens, is AMERICAN SLAVERY. I shall see, this day and its popular characteristics from the slave’s point of view. Standing, there, identified with the American bondman, making his wrongs mine, I do not hesitate to declare, with all my soul, that the character and conduct of this nation never looked blacker to me than on this 4th of July! Whether we turn to the declarations of the past, or to the professions of the present, the conduct of the nation seems equally hideous and revolting. America is false to the past, false to the present, and solemnly binds herself to be false to the future. Standing with God and the crushed and bleeding slave on this occasion, I will, in the name of humanity which is outraged, in the name of liberty which is fettered, in the name of the constitution and the Bible, which are disregarded and trampled upon, dare to call in question and to denounce, with all the emphasis I can command, everything that serves to perpetuate slavery—the great sin and shame of America!

Document 8

Information on the source: These passages are from “The Anti-Slavery Movement,” an 1855 speech by Frederick Douglass to the Rochester Ladies’ Anti-Slavery Society. In this part of the speech, Douglass describes his disagreements with what he calls “the Garrisonians, or the American Anti-Slavery Society.” The American Anti-Slavery society was the one Garrison had helped to found in 1833.

Its doctrine, of “no union with slaveholders,” carried out, dissolves the Union, and leaves the slaves and their masters to fight their own battles, in their own way. This I hold to be an abandonment of the great idea with which that Society started. It started to free the slave. It ends by leaving the slave to free himself. It started with the purpose to imbue the heart of the nation with sentiments favorable to the abolition of slavery, and ends by seeking to free the North from all responsibility of slavery . . . The nation, as such, is given up as beyond the power of salvation by the foolishness of preaching; and hence, the aim is now to save the North; so that the American Anti-Slavery Society, which was inaugurated to convert the nation, after ten years’ struggle, parts with its faith, and aims now to save the North. One of the most eloquent of all the members of that Society, and the man who is only second to Mr. Garrison himself, defines the Garrisonian doctrine thus:

“All the slave asks of us, is to stand out of his way, withdraw our pledge to keep the peace on the plantation; withdraw our pledge to return him; withdraw that representation which the Constitution gives in proportion to the number of slaves, and without any agitation here, without any

individual virtue, which the times have eaten out of us, God will vindicate the oppressed, by the laws of justice which he has founded. Trample under foot your own unjust pledges, break to pieces your compact with hell by which you become the abettors of oppression. Stand alone, and let no cement of the Union bind the slave, and he will right himself.”

That is it. “Stand alone”; the slave is to “right himself.” I dissent entirely from this reasoning. It assumes to be true what is plainly absurd, and that is, that a population of slaves, without arms, without means of concert, and without leisure, is more than a match for double its number, educated, accustomed to rule, and in every way prepared for warfare, offensive or defensive. This Society, therefore, consents to leave the slave’s freedom to a most uncertain and improbable, if not an impossible, contingency.

But, “no union with slaveholders.” As a mere expression of abhorrence of slavery, the sentiment is a good one; but it expresses no intelligible principle of action, and throws no light on the pathway of duty. Defined, as its authors define it, it leads to false doctrines, and mischievous results.

Source Analysis: Primary Source Document 1

Part of David Walker's 1829 *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World*

Sourcing

Why is the information given here about David Walker so important in helping you understand his views and feelings?

Contextualizing

Walker's views were attacked in both the North and the South. From what you know about the two regions in 1829, why do you think that was so? What overall differences in reaction do you think you would find among Southerners as compared with Northerners?

Interpreting meanings

Walker is not only angry at the white slave drivers in the incident he describes. He is also angry at one "deceitful and ignorant colored woman." Why was he so angry at her?

Further on he asks in general, "have we, in consequence of oppression, nearly lost the spirit of man, and, in no very trifling degree, adopted that of brutes?" Why do you think a black abolitionist would speak so harshly about his own people in this way?

Source Analysis: Primary Source Document 2

Part of William Lloyd Garrison's editorial regarding Walker's *Appeal*. It appeared in *The Liberator*, on January 8, 1831.

Sourcing

Garrison made this response to Walker's *Appeal* in only the second week of *The Liberator's* existence. Why do you think Garrison felt a need to publish his response so early in his own magazine's history?

Interpreting meanings

Garrison disapproves the "spirit and tendency" of Walker's *Appeal*, but he also says, "it is not for the American people, as a nation, to denounce it as bloody or monstrous." What do you think he means?

Garrison says he is against a bloody slave insurrection in the South, yet "if any people were ever justified in throwing off the yoke of their tyrants, the slaves are that people." Was Garrison being inconsistent in expressing both of these views? Why or why not?

Corroborating sources

Considering Garrison's views here, and Walker's in Document 1, what do these two sources together help you to understand about the abolitionist movement in the 1830s?

Source Analysis: Primary Source Document 3

A passage from “On the Constitution and the Union,” by William Lloyd Garrison, in *The Liberator*, December 29, 1832

Contextualizing

Garrison calls the Constitution a “compact formed at the sacrifice of the bodies and souls of millions.” In making this charge, what specific clauses in the Constitution do you think he had most in mind?

Interpreting meanings

Garrison calls the Constitutional Convention a “monstrous coalition to do evil that good might come.” What do you think he meant by that?

He describes the Declaration of Independence as “solemn and heaven-attested.” Does this mean he did not include the declaration in his overall condemnation of American society and government? Why or why not?

Point of view

Garrison mixes emotional language, deeply religious phrases, and legal concepts throughout this passage. What are some examples of this? How does this help him express his point of view about the Constitution?

Source Analysis: Primary Source Document 4

An 1862 cartoon ridiculing Massachusetts senator Charles Sumner

Contextualizing

This cartoon is about Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner. What do you know about him, and why might an artist have used him to make a comment about the abolitionist movement?

Sourcing

The cartoon is from 1862. Does this make it less useful as evidence of attitudes toward abolitionism?

Point of view

The cartoon makes a harsh judgment about the supposedly humanitarian feelings of some abolitionists. In the cartoon's caption, the girl on the left says, "I'm not to blame for being white, sir!" How does this make clear what the cartoon's main point is?

Interpreting meanings

Notice how Sumner is dressed, his facial expression, his posture, etc. How do these features add to the point the cartoon makes?

Source Analysis: Primary Source Document 5

A passage from “Disunion,” by William Lloyd Garrison, in *The Liberator*, June 15, 1855

Contextualizing

Notice the date for this source, 1855.

What recent events might help explain the frustration Garrison expresses here?

Interpreting meanings

Garrison calls on the North to dissolve the Union, saying it is a “snare, a curse, and a degrading vassalage.” Explain what he means by this.

Garrison says once the North disunites, it will “frame a new government, free from the spirit of bondage.” Why do you think this goal was so important to him? What do you think might have happened in both North and South over time had the North done what Garrison wished for here?

Point of view

Compare Garrison’s point of view here with the one he expressed about the Constitution in 1832 (Document 3). Did he change his views in any way between 1832 and 1855? Explain your answer.

Source Analysis: Primary Source Document 6

An 1839 cartoon showing John Quincy Adams and making a point about the gag rule in Congress

Contextualizing

This cartoon comments on the 1839 gag rule in the U.S. House of Representatives. Explain what the gag rules were and why the South supported them so strongly.

In the cartoon, antislavery lawmaker John Quincy Adams is seen cowering on the floor on a pile of abolitionist petitions. Why would Adams be a logical figure for a cartoon about abolitionism and the gag rule in Congress?

Point of view

In the cartoon, Adams cowers on some antislavery petitions and other documents and says, “I cannot stand Thomson’s frown,” referring to South Carolina lawmaker Waddy Thompson, who glowers at him. Thompson tells him that all abolitionist petitions “must be indignantly frowned down.” From the way the various figures are drawn, do you think this cartoon expresses an abolitionist point of view, or is it making fun of the abolitionists? Explain your answer.

Corroborating sources

Compare this cartoon with the other one for the lesson (Document 4). Do the two cartoons’ views of abolitionists have anything in common? In what ways do their views differ from each other?

Source Analysis: Primary Source Document 7

Passages from Frederick Douglass's famous speech, "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" delivered on July 5th, 1852, to the Rochester Ladies Anti-Slavery Society

Sourcing

How does it help you better understand Douglass's purpose in this speech to know that he gave it to a female abolitionist society a day after the Fourth of July?

Interpreting meanings

In these three paragraphs, Douglass works hard to describe his position in relation to the founders, his audience, the Fourth of July, the society at large, and slaves. He also describes the relationships of all of these to one another. Look for phrases or sentences that do this "positioning" work. Why do you think Douglass organized his talk this way?

Point of view

Douglass first praises the Declaration of Independence and the nation's founders. He then describes in detail why "this nation never looked blacker to me than on this 4th of July!" Do you think he meant the praise in the first paragraph, or do you think he only said this to be polite? What vivid phrases seem to express his point of view most effectively?

Source Analysis: Primary Source Document 8

Passages from “The Anti-Slavery Movement,” an 1855 speech by Frederick Douglass to the Rochester Ladies’ Anti-Slavery Society

Interpreting meanings

Toward the end of this passage, Douglass mentions the Garrisonians’ cry of “no union with slaveholders.” He then says about this cry, “As a mere expression of abhorrence of slavery, the sentiment is a good one; but it expresses no intelligible principle of action, and throws no light on the pathway of duty.” What do you think he means by “principle of action,” or “pathway of duty”? Do you agree with this criticism of the Garrisonians and their call for “no union with slaveholders”? Why or why not?

Sourcing

Notice the date for this speech. Why might events by 1855 have led Douglass to criticize the Garrisonians as strongly as he does here?

Corroborating sources

Douglass says about Garrison’s American Anti-Slavery Society, “It started with the purpose to imbue the heart of the nation with sentiments favorable to the abolition of slavery, and ends by seeking to free the North from all responsibility of slavery.” What might Garrison have said in his defense here? Find parts of his views as expressed in other sources for this lesson to back up what you say.

Part 3: Analyzing the Secondary Sources

Note to the teacher: This next section includes passages from two secondary source accounts of the disputes between William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass, along with two activities on these sources. We suggest you first discuss the brief comment “Analyzing Secondary Sources” just above the first of the two secondary sources. Discuss the four criteria the first activity asks students to use in analyzing each secondary source. These criteria focus students on the nature of historical accounts as 1) problem-centered, 2) based on evidence, 3) influenced by point of view and not purely neutral, and 4) tentative or aware of alternative explanations.

Specifically, this section includes the following:

- **Two secondary source passages**

Give copies of these passages to students to read, either in class or as homework. The two passages are from *A Tolerable Anarchy: Rebels, Reactionaries, and the Making of American Freedom*, by Jedediah Purdy (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009), and *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America*, by Vincent Harding (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1981).

- **Two student activities**

Activity 1

Students analyze the two passage taking notes on the following questions:

- How clearly does the account focus on a problem or question?
- Does it reveal a position or express a point of view?
- How well does it base its case on primary source evidence?
- How aware is it of alternative explanations or points of view?

Activity 2

In pairs, students select two of the primary sources for the lesson that best support each author’s claims in the secondary source passages. Students discuss their choices with the class.

The Secondary Sources for the Lesson

Analyzing Secondary Sources

Historians write secondary source accounts of the past after studying primary source documents like the ones you have studied on William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass. However, they normally select documents from among a great many others, and they stress some aspects of the story but not others. In doing this, historians are guided by the questions they ask about the topic. Their selection of sources and their focus are also influenced by their own aims, bias, or point of view. No account of the past is perfectly neutral. In reading a secondary source, you should pay to what it includes, what it leaves out, what conclusions it reaches, and how aware it is of alternative interpretations.

* * * *

Secondary Source 1

Information on the source: The passage in the box below is an excerpt from *A Tolerable Anarchy: Rebels, Reactionaries, and the Making of American Freedom*, by Jedediah Purdy (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009), pp. 27–28. Purdy here compares William Lloyd Garrison’s views about the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution with remarks by Frederick Douglass in his 1852 speech about the Fourth of July in Rochester, New York.

When other Americans praised the Declaration, Garrison declared, “I am ashamed of my country. I am sick of our unmeaning declamation in praise of liberty and equality; of our hypocritical cant about the unalienable rights of man.” Garrison saw the American constitutional order as complicit in a crime against humanity, famously denouncing the Constitution as “a covenant with death and an agreement with hell.” He urged his followers not even to vote, the better to protect their consciences from a corrupt system. Douglass’s attacks on hypocrisy were in this tradition.

Douglass’s July Fourth speech, however, took a turn that would have been heresy to his mentor, the purist Garrison. Hypocrisy could be damning, or it could be hopeful proof that the country had not yet taken its final shape. Alongside his conventional denunciations, Douglass praised

the Declaration, calling it “the ring-bolt,” the anchor, of “your yet undeveloped destiny.” Its sweeping claims for liberty, equality, and rebellion “are all saving principles” that the country could still live up to. On this basis, Douglass made an outrageous claim: the Constitution “interpreted as it ought to be interpreted . . . is a glorious liberty document” with no space for slavery . . .

Douglass had every reason to reject the past, throw out the Constitution along with all its compromises with slavery; call for a new birth of freedom based on the natural rights of men. That path was clear: Garrison and others had laid it out. Douglass was certainly angry enough to take it. Instead, with his anger and intelligence, he reinterpreted the past in a way that made it not just the prelude to the present but a prophecy of a different future.

The Secondary Sources for the Lesson

Secondary Source 2

Information on the source: The passage in the box below is an excerpt from *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America*, by Vincent Harding (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1981), pp. 166–167. In this passage, Harding suggests Douglass may have ignored key dangers in adopting his more hopeful views about the Constitution and political action as compared with Garrison's views.

By [1951, Douglass] had come to the conclusion that the Constitution was not meant to protect slavery. He wrote in the *North Star*: "We hold [slavery] to be a system of lawless violence; that it never was lawful and never can be made so; and that it is the first duty of every American citizen, whose conscience permits so to do to use his political as well as his moral power for its overthrow." While this statement has been most often interpreted in the context of Douglass's break with William Lloyd Garrison, it is possible that something more was at work. Douglass, who tended at times to back away from the grim political realities, seemed to suggest that black men and women could oppose slavery and the Fugitive Slave Law without really challenging the federal government and the power of the American state.

Tactically, Douglass may have seen this as a way to encourage even greater participation in the mounting resistance movement in the North, or to justify significant actions already being taken, but the position entailed profound strategic pitfalls. His views flew in the face of the reality represented by the Compromise of 1850, by the determined federal prosecution of the vigilance groups, and the Constitution-makers themselves. Douglass tended dangerously to dissociate the institution of slavery to its roots in the racist, exploitative American society. Such a point of view could well leave him unprepared for the time when the institution might be destroyed without the roots having been seriously affected, There was another, younger Douglass in those days who was not so sanguine, who for a time saw America and its Constitution far more clearly, and therefore made a more significant contribution to black radical thought at that point in history.

The Secondary Sources: Activity 1

In this exercise, you read two short passages from much longer books about Garrison and Douglass. For each secondary source, take notes on the following four questions (you may want to underline phrases or sentences in the passages that you think back up your notes):

1. How clearly does this account focus on a problem or question? What do you think that problem or question is? Sum it up in your own words here.

A Tolerable Anarchy, Purdy

There Is a River, Harding

2. Does the secondary source take a position or express a point of view about Douglass and Garrison? If so, briefly state that point of view or quote an example of it.

A Tolerable Anarchy, Purdy

There Is a River, Harding

3. How well does the secondary source seem to base its case on primary source evidence? Take notes about any specific examples, if you can identify them.

A Tolerable Anarchy, Purdy

There Is a River, Harding

4. Does the secondary source seem aware of alternative explanations or points of view about this topic? Underline points in the passage where you see this.

A Tolerable Anarchy, Purdy

There Is a River, Harding

In pairs, discuss your notes for this activity.

The Secondary Sources: Activity 2

This activity is based on the passages from *A Tolerable Anarchy: Rebels, Reactionaries, and the Making of American Freedom*, by Jedediah Purdy, and *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America*, by Vincent Harding. From the primary sources for this lesson, choose two that you think best support each author's point of view about the clash between Garrison and Douglass. With the rest of the class, discuss the two secondary source passages and defend the choice of sources you have made.

1. From this lesson, choose two primary sources that best back up Purdy's interpretation of the Garrison–Douglass conflict. List those sources here and briefly explain why you chose them.
2. From this lesson, choose two primary sources that best back up Harding's interpretation of the Garrison–Douglass conflict. List those sources here and briefly explain why you chose them.
3. Does your textbook include passages on Garrison and Douglass? If so, with which of the two secondary sources (Purdy or Harding) do they seem to agree most? What one or two primary sources from this lesson would you add to these textbook passages to improve them?

Discuss your choices with the rest of the class.

Part 4: Follow-Up Options

Note to the teacher: At this point, students have completed the key tasks of *The Historian's Apprentice* program. They have examined their own prior understandings and acquired background knowledge on the topic. They have analyzed and debated a set of primary sources. They have considered secondary source accounts of the topic. This section includes two suggested follow-up activities. Neither of these is a required part of the lesson. They do not have to be undertaken right away. However, we do strongly recommend that you find some way to do what these options provide for. They give students a way to write or debate in order to express their ideas and arrive at their own interpretations of the topic.

Two suggested follow-up activities are included here:

- **Document-Based Questions**

Four document-based questions are provided. Choose one and follow the guidelines provided for writing a typical DBQ essay.

- **A Structured Debate**

The aim of this debate format is not so much to teach students to win a debate, but to learn to listen and learn, as well as speak up and defend a position. The goal is a more interactive and more civil debating process.

Document-Based Questions

Document-based questions (DBQs) are essay questions you must answer by using your own background knowledge and a set of primary sources on that topic. Below are four DBQs on Garrison, Douglass, and the abolitionist movement. Use the sources for this lesson and everything you have learned from it to write a short essay answer to one of these questions.

Suggested DBQs

Describe the differences between Douglass and Garrison, and explain why you do or do not think race was the most important factor in causing the two men to differ as they did.

“Douglass made a questionable claim in saying the Constitution was an antislavery document, but it was a shrewd political move on his part anyway.” Assess the validity of this statement (that is, explain why you do or do not agree with it).

“Douglass was wrong about the Constitution, and Garrison was actually more practical in facing up to the way it made abolitionism’s task impossible.” Assess the validity of this statement (that is, explain why you do or do not agree with it).

Compare and contrast the philosophies of Garrison and Douglass, and explain what these reveal about the spirit of early 19th-century reform in America.

Suggested Guidelines for Writing a DBQ Essay

- Planning and thinking through the essay**
 Consider the question carefully. Think about how to answer it so as to address each part of it. Do not ignore any detail in the question. Pay attention to the question’s form (cause-and-effect, compare-and-contrast, assess the validity, etc.). This form will often give you clues as to how best to organize each part of your essay.
- Thesis statement and introductory paragraph**
 The thesis statement is a clear statement of what you hope to prove in your essay. It must address *all* parts of the DBQ, it must make a claim you can back up with the sources, and it should be specific enough to help you organize the rest of your essay.
- Using evidence effectively**
 Use the notes on your “Source Analysis” activity sheets to organize your thoughts about these primary sources. In citing a source, use it to support key points or illustrate major themes. Do not simply list a source in order to get it into the essay somehow. If any sources do *not* support your thesis, you should still try to use them. Your essay may be more convincing if you qualify your thesis so as to account for these other sources.
- Linking ideas explicitly**
 After your introduction, your internal paragraphs should make your argument in a logical or clear way. Each paragraph should be built around one key supporting idea and details that back up that idea. Use transition phrase such as “before,” “next,” “then,” or “on the one hand . . . but on the other hand,” to help readers follow the thread of your argument.
- Wrapping it up**
 Don’t add new details about sources in your final paragraph. State a conclusion that refers back to your thesis statement by showing how the evidence has backed it up. If possible, look for nice turns of phrase to end on a dramatic note.

A Structured Debate

Small-group activity: Using a version of the Structured Academic Controversy model, debate alternate interpretations of this lesson's topic. The goal of this method is not so much to win a debate as to learn to collaborate in clarifying your interpretations to one another. In doing this, your goal should be to see that it is possible for reasonable people to hold differing views, even when finding the "one right answer" is not possible.

Use all their notes from previous activities in this lesson. Here are the rules for this debate:

1. Organize a team of four or six students. Choose a debate topic based on the lesson *Garrison and Douglass: Abolitionism in Black and White*.

(You may wish to use one of the DBQs suggested for the Document-Based Questions activity for this lesson. Or you may want to define the debate topic in a different way.)

2. Split your team into two sub-groups. Each sub-group should study the materials for this lesson and rehearse its case. One sub-group then presents its case to the other. That other sub-group must repeat the case back to the first sub-group's satisfaction.
3. The two sub-groups then switch roles and repeat step 2
4. Your team either reaches a consensus which it explains to the entire class, or it explains where the key differences between the sub-groups lie

Answers to “Source Analysis” Activities

Source Analysis: Document 1

Sourcing: His being a free African American and an abolitionist would explain the strong emotions and frustration he expresses about what slavery has done to his people.

Contextualizing: Slavery was spreading in the South, and both the North and the South mainly wanted to avoid dealing with the issue. The South in particular feared any protests about it, and especially any appeals to the slaves themselves to do anything.

Interpreting meanings: In his view, her act of mercy only resulted in her own people getting recaptured. Perhaps he felt that too many blacks just accepted their status as normal, etc.

Source Analysis: Document 2

Sourcing: Perhaps he feared his own strong views would be mistaken as advocating violence, whereas he was a pacifist.

Interpreting meanings: Probably he felt that the nation is also “bloody and violent” in that slavery in his view was itself a form of extreme violence.

Answers will vary and should be discussed.

Corroborating sources: Answers will vary, but they should focus on possible differences between white and African American abolitionists over the issues of violence and of slaves taking action against slavery in general.

Source Analysis: Document 3

Contextualizing: The “three-fifths” clause, the clause on returning fugitive slaves, etc. As a class, read and discuss at least these two clauses.

Interpreting meanings: Perhaps many anti-slavery delegates compromised on slavery because they thought the Constitution a greater good, or the best hope for ending slavery later, etc.

Answers will vary and should be discussed.

Point of view: Many examples can be found, such as “sacred compact,” “everlasting infamy,” “null and void,” etc. All these and their significance should be discussed.

Source Analysis: Document 4

Contextualizing: Sumner was a fierce and very forceful opponent of slavery who often antagonized people he disagreed with.

Sourcing: Answers may vary. The Civil War was already under way, and so the context differs from that for other sources here, yet the abolitionist movement was still actively pushing Lincoln to end slavery, etc.

Point of view: The caption calls attention to a supposed hypocrisy—concern about African Americans who are suffering, but indifference to any whites who are also suffering.

Interpreting meanings: Answers will vary. Overall, the features add to a sense of Sumner as a well-off, rather haughty and cold, etc.

Source Analysis: Document 5

Contextualizing: The Compromise of 1850, the Kansas–Nebraska Act, violence in Kansas over slavery, etc.

Interpreting meanings: Answers will vary. The language is religious, echoing Garrison’s views about sin and slavery, and it also suggests the North was now under the control of the South and the supporters of slavery.

Answers will vary and should be discussed.

Point of view: Answers will vary. In a sense, supporting disunion does fit with condemning the Constitution, though some may see this as carrying the idea a step further.

Source Analysis: Document 6

Contextualizing: Antislavery forces flooded Congress with abolition petitions, believing the right to petition the government would force Congress to discuss slavery. Proslavery forces passed gag rules in the 1830s and ‘40s that set aside such petitions and kept them from being read or discussed.

Adams had been president (1825–1829) and served the rest of his life in the House of Representatives, where he was a tireless antislavery spokesman.

Point of view: The cartoon appears to be ridiculing the gag rule and the South’s fear of debate, but it is also not exactly kind to Adams either.

Corroborating sources: Answers will vary and should be discussed.

Source Analysis: Document 7

Sourcing: He would realize the audience would be open to his strong, critical remarks. He would feel more secure that he would be listened to.

Interpreting meanings: Answers will vary. Douglass seems to use this method to dramatize the very different points of view African Americans had regarding the American story and its most admired moments.

Point of view: Answers may vary. Some may see Douglass as simply flattering his audience first so he could make them more receptive to his message about slavery. Others will see his praise in the first paragraph as equally sincerely held as the rest of his remarks. It all depends on how they interpret his overall views.

Source Analysis: Document 8

Interpreting meanings: Douglass is concerned mainly with effective political action to end slavery. He seems to suggest a sense of duty is not enough. A “pathway” also must be found to enforce that duty.

Sourcing: By 1855, abolitionists were engaged in political pressure tactics, and were taking part in violent confrontations in Kansas. Meanwhile, other antislavery forces were organizing the Republican Party, and some abolitionists were working with them, even though this meant compromising.

Corroborating sources: Answers will vary and should be discussed, along with passages from Garrison’s comments.

Evaluating Secondary Sources: Activity 1

These are not definitive answers to the questions. They are suggested points to look for in student responses.

1. How clearly does this account focus on a problem or question? What do you think that problem or question is? Sum it up in your own words here.

Purdy focuses specifically on the differences between Garrison and Douglass on the meaning of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution and their relevance to the goals of the abolitionists.

Harding also focuses on the Constitution and its meaning for abolitionism. He has Garrison in mind as well, but is mainly interested in Douglass's thoughts on this and whether he was wise in his judgments.

2. Does the secondary source take a position or express a point of view about the Garrison–Douglass dispute? If so, briefly state that point of view or quote an example of it.

Purdy believes Douglass was right to say that the Declaration and the Constitution did not give sanction to slavery. He sees Douglass as wise and practical in looking at these documents for their potential, for what they implied about the future, rather than for the way they had been used in the past.

Harding believes Douglass was foolish and naive to accept the Constitution as he did. He thinks that by doing this, Douglass failed to challenge core American beliefs about race and slavery strongly enough, as Garrison had.

3. How well does the secondary source seem to base its case on primary source evidence? Take notes about any specific examples, if you can identify them.

Purdy quotes Garrison and Douglass extensively. Harding quotes Douglass, but he is not as focused on Garrison in any case. Both make general comments in these passages about events that could be confirmed or checked against source material.

4. Does the secondary source seem aware of alternative explanations or points of view about this topic? Underline points in the passage where you see this.

Purdy does not refer directly to alternative views in the passage quoted here, though he does elsewhere in his book.

Harding makes specific reference to the way Douglass's break with Garrison is "most often interpreted," and his interpretation is meant to challenge to some degree what he considers the standard way of looking at this issue.

