



Struggles for Liberty:  
African American Revolutionaries in the Atlantic World  
Questions for discussion

**The 'Story of The Slave'**

1. Look at the labour camp ledger from Maryland and the 'Sale of Sugar Plantation' poster to answer the following questions:
  - What is slavery?
  - Who is enslaved?
  - What are the difficulties with these sources in trying to understand slavery?
2. Look at the photographs of Harriet Ann Jacobs and Frederick Douglass and answer the following questions:
  - How would you describe the facial expression of Harriet Ann Jacobs and Frederick Douglass?
  - What can you say about the clothes they are wearing?
  - Does the background tell you anything about where or when the photograph was or might have been taken?
3. Read the extracts from books by Frederick Douglass, Harriet Ann Jacobs, Josiah Henson, Moses Roper, and Ellen Craft and William Craft to answer these questions:
  - What is slavery?
  - What happened to enslaved women, children, and men?



### Q.3 continued

- How would you talk about the lived experiences of enslaved women, children and men?
- How did it effect family and friends?
- Are there different forms of slavery?
- Does the experience of slavery change depending on gender?
- Does the experience of slavery change depending on age?
- What is it be an enslaved person in the house owned by white enslavers and at the centre of a labour camp?
- What is it to be an enslaved person working in the fields of a white enslaver's labour camp?
- What space is there for enslaved people to express their agency?
- How would you define enslaved people's strategies of resistance?
- How would you explain freedom as defined by these authors?
- What is a white female enslaver and what is a white male enslaver?
- Is slavery different depending on where you live?
- How important is the first-hand testimony by enslaved people to understanding the history of slavery? What does it tell us and what does it not tell us about the experiences of enslaved people?



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## The History of Black Abolition

1. Read the extracts by David Walker, Nathaniel Turner, Maria Stewart, Sojourner Truth and Frederick Douglass to find examples of the following types of argument in their analysis of slavery:
  - moral argument
  - religious argument
  - philosophical argument
  - human rights argument
  - existential argument
  - political argument
  - sectional argument
  - anti-racist argument
2. How is the argument different when made by a formerly enslaved person versus a person born into freedom?
3. How would you define resistance to slavery? In what ways did enslaved people fight for freedom? Can you say something about the following strategies:
  - Cultural resistance
  - Physical resistance



### Q.3 continued

- Military Warfare
  - Intellectual resistance
  - Moral resistance
  - Imaginative resistance
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- Using these sources, how did Black activists use their arguments to change white racist and white supremacist public opinions?
  - How did Black activists fight white apathy to the antislavery cause?
  - How did Black activists fight white racism?
  - How is violence – physical, sexual, psychological – represented?
  - How is language used as a tool of resistance by enslaved people?
4. Read the extract from 'Incidents in the Life of A Slave Girl by Harriet Ann Jacobs', what do you learn about the experiences of women during slavery?
5. Read the speech by Sojourner Truth on 'I am a Woman's Rights'. How would you summarise her arguments on enslaved and free Black women's rights?



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**The US Civil War**

1. Read Frederick Douglass's speeches, 'Men of Color to Arms,' and on 'Abraham Lincoln' and look at the photographs and letters of Lewis Henry Douglass and Charles Remond Douglass and answer the following questions:
  - What are Douglass's arguments in favour of Black men having the right to fight as armed combat soldiers in the Civil War?
  - How important was it to Black men, enslaved and free, to have the opportunity to fight in the US Civil War?
  - How did a white US racist government treat Black men who enlisted?
  - What do the letters of Lewis Henry and Charles Remond Douglass tell you about the struggles the men faced? Emotionally? Politically? Physically?
  - How important was the Black-led campaign for securing the Black men's right to fight in changing the opinion and practices of the US government in general and of President Abraham Lincoln in particular?
  - What view does Frederick Douglass have of Abraham Lincoln and the white supremacist mythology that he is the 'Great Emancipator'? How do these sources tell us a different story?
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### African American Activists in Scotland

Read Frederick Douglass's speech 'Send Back the Money,' the 'Free Kirk and Her Boy Tammy', and the extract of *My Bondage and My Freedom* to answer the following questions:

1. Read Frederick Douglass's speech 'Send Back the Money'. How is Douglass protesting against the actions of the Free Church of Scotland? What are his arguments? How would you talk about Douglass's power as a speaker and an orator? How does he use a language of protest?
2. Read the 'Free Kirk and her Boy Tammy'. What is it about and how important is Frederick Douglass in this song?
3. Read the extract of Frederick Douglass's 'My Bondage and My Freedom'. What does Douglass say about his life as an antislavery campaigner in the UK? What does he say about the negative and positive aspects of his experiences? What are his white audiences' responses?
4. Look at the interactive maps 'Frederick Douglass in Edinburgh' and 'Frederick Douglass in Scotland'. What do these maps tell us about Douglass' antislavery campaigns?
5. Look at the map 'Black Abolitionists in Edinburgh.' What does this map tell us about African American campaigners in Scotland?



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**The Anna Murray and Frederick Douglass Family**

1. Read Frederick Douglass's letter 'To My Old Master'. What does Douglass say about his family? What does he say about his life and the life of his family as lived in slavery? And what does he say about his new life in freedom?
2. Look at the photographs of Anna Murray Douglass, Rosetta Douglass Sprague, Lewis Henry Douglass, Frederick Douglass Jr and Charles Remond Douglass: what do you learn about their lives? What are their facial expressions like? What can you say about their clothing?
3. Read Charles Remond Douglass's 'Some Incidents in the Home Life of Frederick Douglass'. What does this speech tell us about the home life of the Anna Murray and Frederick Douglass family?