



Education Department

**Title:** The Persuasive Language of Abolition

**Level:** 8<sup>th</sup> grade

**ENGLISH-HISTORY UNIT** (5 lessons)

### OVERVIEW

**Students will differentiate persuasive techniques used to abolish slavery. They will create their own speeches reflecting the voice of a prominent nineteenth-century abolitionist.**

#### **Common Core Reading Standards for Literature**

**Key Ideas and Details 8.1** Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

**Craft and Structure 8.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

**Craft and Structure 8.5** Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.

#### **Common Core Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies (Grades 6-8)**

**Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 8.8** Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

**Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 8.9** Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

#### **California State Standards**

History **Standard 8.7.1** Describe the development of the agrarian economy in the South, identify the locations of the cotton-producing states, and discuss the significance of cotton and the cotton gin.

History **Standard 8.7.2** Trace the origins and development of slavery; its effects on Black Americans and on the region's political, social, religious, economic, and cultural development; and identify the strategies that were tried to both overturn and preserve it (e.g., through the writings and historical documents on Nat Turner, Denmark Vesey).

History **Standard 8.9.1** Describe the leaders of the movement (e.g., John Quincy Adams and his proposed constitutional amendment, John Brown and the armed resistance, Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad, Benjamin Franklin, Theodore Weld, William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass).

### OBJECTIVES (SWBAT)

California African-American Museum: Education Department

August 2013

1. Identify persuasive techniques.
2. Learn about contemporary abolition efforts.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of nineteenth-century abolitionist rhetoric.
4. Create a paragraph that incorporates some of the persuasive techniques used by an abolitionist.

**MATERIALS:**

- Photos of First Lady Michelle Obama and Professor Angela Davis
- Summaries of the Let's Move Campaign and interview with Angela Davis on prison abolition
- Nineteenth century abolitionist biographies (Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, John Brown)
- Copies of nineteenth century abolitionist speeches (Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, John Brown)
- Markers
- Pen or pencil
- Paper
- Poster paper (12-15 sheets)
- Glossary of terms and references (see page 17)
- Handout: chart of persuasive techniques (see page 18)

**PROCEDURE: LESSON I**

1. Write the word and definitions of **abolitionist** and **advocate** on the board. In this lesson students will be exploring these different types of activism.
2. Introduce the topic of abolition with Angela Y. Davis and Michelle Obama. They are each strong opponents of a particular social condition but have different approaches to making change. Distribute handouts or display summaries of their causes to discuss.
3. To transition, get students to think about Michelle Obama and Angela Davis as modern-day abolitionists. Davis uses the language that activists used in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to demand the abolition of slavery. In the next lesson, students will learn about three nineteenth-century abolitionists.

**PROCEDURE : LESSON II**

1. Post sheets of poster paper each headlined with one of twelve persuasive techniques based on categories listed on the persuasive techniques handout.
2. Have students compose their own arguments in defense or against making recess shorter.

**PROCEDURE: LESSON III**

1. Review glossary and references handout before reading.
2. Read Frederick Douglass' speech, **The Hypocrisy of American Slavery** as a class. Discuss the historical context of Douglass' speech, including when and where it was delivered, and Douglass' role in the abolitionist movement.
3. Using examples from the text, students will identify 3 main persuasive techniques used in his speech.

### **PROCEDURE: LESSON IV**

1. Divide students into two groups. One half will read about John Brown, the other about Sojourner Truth. Distribute copies of biography and speech.
2. Students will identify at least 3 text-based, persuasive techniques used in their given abolitionist's speech.

### **EVALUATION**

- ✓ Students correctly identified at least three persuasive techniques in their abolitionist's speech
- ✓ Used at least three persuasive techniques in their speech drafts about the length of recess.

Extension of the lesson:

1. Watch commercials and/or examine advertisements to identify their type of appeal.
2. Abolitionists of the eighteenth and nineteenth century used a variety of media and platforms to push for abolition; from coins and plates to fiery pamphlets, speeches, to confrontations and rebellions. Compare and contrast the audiences and impact of those techniques.
3. Have students work in groups to do the following:
  - a. determine a social issue they believe can be addressed through abolition
  - b. decide on a type or types of appeal that would make their stance compelling and ultimately effective
  - c. devise a creative way to spread their message

**Additional Resources and suggestions for extended learning:**

1. Background information on white women's rights movement in North America  
[http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/First\\_Women%27s\\_Rights\\_Movement?rec=566](http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/First_Women%27s_Rights_Movement?rec=566)
2. John Brown's raid of Harper's Ferry <http://www.ushistory.org/us/32c.asp>
3. Additional short biography of Frederick Douglass  
[http://www.frederickdouglass.org/douglass\\_bio.html](http://www.frederickdouglass.org/douglass_bio.html)

4. Library of Congress on abolition <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/african/afam005.html> and <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aohtml/exhibit/aopart3b.html>

### **About *Let's Move!***

"In the end, as First Lady, this isn't just a policy issue for me. This is a passion. This is my mission. I am determined to work with folks across this country to change the way a generation of kids thinks about food and nutrition."

- First Lady Michelle Obama

*Let's Move!* is a comprehensive initiative, launched by the First Lady, dedicated to solving the problem of obesity within a generation, so that children born today will grow up healthier and able to pursue their dreams. Sure, this is an ambitious goal. But with your help, we can do it.



Combining comprehensive strategies with common sense, *Let's Move!* is about putting children on the path to a healthy future during their earliest months and years. Giving parents helpful information and fostering environments that support healthy choices. Providing healthier foods in our schools. Ensuring that every family has access to healthy, affordable food. And, helping children become more physically active.

At the launch of the initiative, President Barack Obama signed a Presidential Memorandum creating the first-ever Task Force on Childhood Obesity to conduct a review of every single programs and policies relating to child nutrition and physical activity and develop a national action plan to maximize federal resources and set concrete benchmarks toward the First Lady's national goal. The Task Force recommendations focus on the five pillars of the First Lady's *Let's Move!* initiative:

1. Creating a healthy start for children
2. Empowering parents and caregivers
3. Providing healthy food in schools
4. Improving access to healthy, affordable foods
5. Increasing physical activity

Everyone has a role to play in reducing childhood obesity, including parents and caregivers, elected officials from all levels of government, schools, health care professionals, faith-based and community-based organizations, and private sector companies. Your involvement is key to ensuring a healthy future for our children.

From the Let's Move campaign website <http://www.letsmove.gov/about>

**HARVARD GAZETTE ARCHIVES**

## **Abolish prisons, says Angela Davis:**

**Questions the efficacy, morality of incarceration**

**By Beth Potier**

Gazette Staff



In a lecture at the Kennedy School of Government's ARCO Forum Friday (March 7), activist and intellectual Angela Davis advocated for the abolition of prisons, casting the issue in human rights terms and urging a broader vision of justice.

"My question is, Why are people so quick to assume that locking away an increasingly large proportion of the U.S. population would help those who live in the free world feel safer and more secure?" she said.

Davis, an icon of the radical political activism of the late 1960s and early '70s, spoke of prisons not as a tourist but as a former resident. She spent more than a year in prison before she was acquitted, in 1972, of charges of murder and kidnapping related to the failed escape of a group of African-American prisoners known as the Soledad Brothers in California.

Now a professor in the history of consciousness department at the University of California, Santa Cruz, Davis may have tamed her trademark Afro but her ideas remain on the radical edge of the political spectrum. In this talk, the 2003 Maurine and Robert Rothschild Lecture co-sponsored by the Schlesinger Library at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for Afro-American Research, and the Institute of Politics, she dismissed prison reform - the most prominent form of prison activism - as not going far enough.

"We have to go beyond the amelioration of prison practice," she said, acknowledging that prison reforms are also necessary and many strides have been made internationally in that arena.

Within the prison reform movement, prison abolitionists, she said, are often viewed with mystery and skepticism and considered utopian.

"This is a measure of how difficult it is to envision a social order that does not rely on the threat of sequestering people in dreadful places designed to separate them from their communities and their families," said Davis. "The prison is considered so natural and so normal that it is extremely hard to imagine life without them."

Drawing comparisons to other abolitionist movements throughout history, Davis said that her hope is that the abolition of prisons might attract the same vigorous international debate the death penalty has. But prison remains a far more pervasive and durable idea in our imaginations.

"Prison is considered an inevitable and permanent feature of our social lives," she said.

### **The prison industrial complex**

Davis supported her argument with sobering facts about the proliferation of prisons and the disproportionate incarceration of minorities. In black, Latino, and Native-American communities, she said, people have a far greater chance of going to prison than of getting a decent education, and young people are choosing the military to avoid what they see as an inevitable trip to prison.

There may be twice as many people suffering from mental illness in jails than in mental hospitals.

And while the "tough on crime" initiatives of the 1980s did not produce safer communities or a significant drop in crime rates, she said, it led to a remarkable proliferation of prisons. Indeed, some have dubbed the economic sector that has arisen around prisons a "prison industrial complex."

Despite these facts - many of which are not unfamiliar - we take prisons for granted, Davis posed, because we are afraid of the realities they produce. What goes on within prison walls is a mystery to most of us, and our collective imagination has cast prisoners broadly as "evildoers" and, primarily, people of color. In addition, by perceiving all prisoners as murderers and rapists, we further distance ourselves from the more nuanced reality of prisons.

Such abstractions, said Davis, make prisoners vulnerable to human rights abuses and lets us turn a blind eye to the larger issues behind prisons and incarceration.

"It relieves us of the responsibility of seriously engaging with the problems of our society, especially those produced by racism," she said.

### **From punitive to restorative justice**

Shifting strategies from punitive to restorative justice involves not only changing the way our system addresses crime but also getting at some of the roots of crime. We must work, Davis said, to transform "the social and economic conditions that track so many children from poor communities, especially communities of color, into bad schools that look more like juvenile detention centers than they look like schools."

A woman from Boston's urban Roxbury neighborhood - "I live in the belly of the beast," she said - challenged Davis' vision for prison abolition with respectful curiosity. Young boys sell crack on her street, she said, and she wants them gone. If not to prison, where?

"You can't think myopically," said Davis. "There is no place else [for the boys], so the default solution is prison. Why don't we have other institutions?"

She argued that better schools, recreation centers, and other youth resources - and community activism that matches education activists with prison abolitionists - were some possible solutions for Roxbury and beyond.

"Our most difficult and urgent challenge to date," she said, "is that of creatively exploring new terrains of justice where the prison no longer serves as our major anchor."

Source: <http://www.biography.com/print/profile/sojourner-truth-9511284>

## Sojourner Truth's Biography

Born in New York circa 1797, Sojourner Truth was the self-given name, from 1843 onward, of Isabella Baumfree, an African-American abolitionist and women's rights activist. Truth was born into slavery in Swartekill, New York, but escaped with her infant daughter to freedom in 1826. Her best-known speech on racial inequalities, "Ain't I a Woman?", was delivered extemporaneously in 1851 at the Ohio Women's Rights Convention.



### Born Into Slavery

Born Isabella Baumfree circa 1797, Sojourner Truth was one of as many as 12 children born to James and Elizabeth Baumfree in the town of Swartekill, in Ulster County, New York. Truth's date of birth was not recorded, as was typical of children born into slavery. Historians estimate that she was likely born around 1787. Her father, James Baumfree, was a slave captured in modern-day Ghana; Elizabeth Baumfree, also known as Mau-Mau Bet, was the daughter of slaves from Guinea. The Baumfree family was owned by Colonel Hardenbergh, and lived at the colonel's estate in Esopus, New York, 95 miles north of New York City. The area had once been under Dutch control, and both the Baumfrees and the Hardenbaughs spoke Dutch in their daily lives.

After the colonel's death, ownership of the Baumfrees passed to his son, Charles. The Baumfrees were separated after the death of Charles Hardenbergh in 1806. The 9-year-old Truth, known as "Belle" at the time, was sold at an auction with a flock of sheep for \$100. Her new owner was a man named John Neely, whom Truth remembered as harsh and violent. She would be sold twice more over the following two years, finally coming to reside on the property of John Dumont at West Park, New York. It was during these years that Truth learned to speak English for the first time.

### Becoming a Wife and Mother

Around 1815, Truth fell in love with a slave named Robert from a neighboring farm. The two had a daughter, Diana. Robert's owner forbade the relationship, since Diana and any subsequent children produced by the union would be the property of John Dumont rather than himself. Robert and Sojourner Truth never saw each other again. In 1817, Dumont compelled Truth to marry an older slave named Thomas. Their marriage produced a son, Peter, and two daughters, Elizabeth and Sophia.

### Early Years of Freedom

The state of New York, which had begun to negotiate the abolition of slavery in 1799, emancipated all slaves on July 4, 1827. The shift did not come soon enough for Truth. After John Dumont renege on a promise to emancipate Truth in late 1826, she escaped to freedom with her infant daughter, Sophia. Her other daughter and son stayed behind. Shortly after her escape, Truth learned that her son Peter, then 5 years old, had been illegally sold to a man in Alabama.

She took the issue to court and eventually secured Peter's return from the South. The case was one of the first in which a black woman successfully challenged a white man in a United States court. Sojourner Truth's early years of freedom were marked by several strange hardships.

Having converted to Christianity, Truth she moved with her son Peter to New York City in 1829, where she worked as a housekeeper for Christian evangelist Elijah Pierson. She then moved on to the home of Robert Matthews, also known as Matthias Kingdom or Prophet Matthias, for whom she also worked as a domestic. Matthews had a growing reputation as a con man and a cult leader. Shortly after Truth changed households, Elijah Pierson died. Robert Matthews and Truth were immediately accused of poisoning Pierson in order to benefit from his personal fortune. Both were acquitted, and Robert Matthews, who had become a favorite subject of the penny press, moved west.

After her successful rescue of her son, Peter, from slavery in Alabama, the boy stayed with his mother until 1839. At that time, Peter took a job on a whaling ship called the *Zone of Nantucket*. Truth received three letters from her son between 1840 and 1841. When the ship returned to port in 1842, however, Peter was not on board. Truth never heard from him again.

### **Fighting for Abolition and Women's Rights**

On June 1, 1843, Isabella Baumfree changed her name to Sojourner Truth, devoting her life to Methodism and the abolition of slavery. In 1844, she joined the Northampton Association of Education and Industry in Northampton, Massachusetts. Founded by abolitionists, the organization supported a broad reform agenda including women's rights and pacifism. Members lived together on 500 acres as a self-sufficient community. Truth met a number of leading abolitionists at Northampton, including William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass and David Ruggles.

Although the Northampton community disbanded in 1846, Sojourner Truth's career as an activist and reformer was just beginning. William Lloyd Garrison published her memoirs in 1850 under the title *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth: A Northern Slave*. Truth dictated her recollections to a friend, since she could not read or write. That same year, Truth spoke at the first National Women's Rights Convention in Worcester, Massachusetts. She soon began touring regularly with abolitionist George Thompson, speaking to large crowds on the subjects of slavery and human rights. She was one of several escaped slaves, along with Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman, to rise to prominence as an abolitionist leader and a testament to the humanity of enslaved people.

In May of 1851, Truth delivered a speech at the Ohio Women's Rights Convention in Akron. The extemporaneous speech, recorded by several observers, would come to be known as "Ain't I a Woman?" The first version of the speech, published a month later by Ohio Anti-Slavery Bugle editor Marius Robinson, did not include the question "Ain't I a woman?" even once. Robinson had attended the convention and recorded Truth's words himself. The famous phrase would appear in print 12 years later, as the refrain of a Southern-tinged version of the speech. It is unlikely that Sojourner Truth, a native of New York whose first language was Dutch, would have spoken in this Southern idiom.

Truth continued to tour Ohio from 1851 to 1853, working closely with Marius Robinson to publicize the antislavery movement in the state. As Truth's reputation grew and the abolition movement gained momentum, she drew increasingly larger and more hospitable audiences. Even in abolitionist circles, some of Truth's opinions were considered radical. She sought political equality for all women, and chastised the abolitionist community for failing to seek civil rights for black women as well as men. She openly expressed concern that the movement would fizzle after achieving victories for black men, leaving both white and black women without suffrage and other key political rights.

### Advocacy During the Civil War

Sojourner Truth put her reputation to work during the Civil War, helping to recruit black troops for the Union Army. She encouraged her grandson, James Caldwell, to enlist in the 54th Massachusetts Regiment. In 1864, Truth was called to Washington, D.C., to contribute to the National Freedman's Relief Association. On at least one occasion, Truth met and spoke with President Abraham Lincoln about her beliefs and her experience.

True to her broad reform ideals, Truth continued to agitate for change even after Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. In 1865, Truth attempted to force the desegregation of streetcars in Washington by riding in cars designated for whites. A major project of her later life was the movement to secure land grants from the federal government for former slaves. She argued that ownership of private property, and particularly land, would give African Americans self-sufficiency and free them from a kind of indentured servitude to wealthy landowners. Although Truth pursued this goal forcefully for many years, she was unable to sway Congress.

### Death and Legacy

Sojourner Truth died at her home in Battle Creek, Michigan, on November 26, 1883. She is buried alongside her family at Battle Creek's Oak Hill Cemetery. Until old age intervened, Truth continued to speak passionately on the subjects of women's rights, universal suffrage and prison reform. She was also an outspoken opponent of capital punishment, testifying before the Michigan state legislature against the practice. She also championed prison reform in Michigan and across the country. While always controversial, Truth was embraced by a community of reformers including Amy Post, Wendell Phillips, William Lloyd Garrison, Lucretia Mott and Susan B. Anthony—friends with whom she collaborated until the end of her life.

Truth is remembered as one of the foremost leaders of the abolition movement and an early advocate of women's rights. Although she began her career as an abolitionist, the reform causes she sponsored were broad and varied, including prison reform, property rights and universal suffrage. Abolition was one of the few causes that Truth was able to see realized in her lifetime. Her fear that abolitionism would falter before achieving equality for women proved prophetic. The Constitutional Amendment barring suffrage discrimination based on sex was not ratified until 1920, nearly four decades after Sojourner Truth's death.

## **Sojourner Truth (1797-1883): Ain't I A Woman?**

Delivered December 1851

Women's Convention, Akron, Ohio

Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about?

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man - when I could get it - and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?

Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? [member of audience whispers, "intellect"] That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's rights or negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

Then that little man in black there, he says women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him.

If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them.

Obliged to you for hearing me, and now old Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say.

Frederick Douglass (1817-1895) was the best known and most influential African American leader of the 1800s. He was born a slave in Maryland but managed to escape to the North in 1838.

He traveled to Massachusetts and settled in New Bedford, working as a laborer to support himself. In 1841, he attended a convention of the Massachusetts Antislavery Society and quickly came to the attention of its members, eventually becoming a leading figure in the New England antislavery movement.

In 1845, Douglass published his autobiography, "The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: an American Slave." With the revelation that he was an escaped slave, Douglass became fearful of possible re-enslavement and fled to Great Britain and stayed there for two years, giving lectures in support of the antislavery movement in America. With the assistance of English Quakers, Douglass raised enough money to buy his own his freedom and in 1847 he returned to America as a free man.

He settled in Rochester, New York, where he published *The North Star*, an abolitionist newspaper. He directed the local underground railroad which smuggled escaped slaves into Canada and also worked to end racial segregation in Rochester's public schools.

In 1852, the leading citizens of Rochester asked Douglass to give a speech as part of their Fourth of July celebrations. Douglass accepted their invitation.

In his speech, however, Douglass delivered a scathing attack on the hypocrisy of a nation celebrating freedom and independence with speeches, parades and platitudes, while, within its borders, nearly four million humans were being kept as slaves.



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Abridged version of Frederick Douglass' Speech, "The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro"

Fellow citizens, pardon me, and allow me to ask, why am I called upon to speak here today? What have I or those I represent to do with your national independence? Are the great principles of political freedom and of natural justice, embodied in that Declaration of Independence, extended to us? And am I, therefore, called upon to bring our humble offering to the national altar, and to confess the benefits, and express devout gratitude for the blessings resulting from your independence to us?

Would to God, both for your sakes and ours, that an affirmative answer could be truthfully returned to these questions. Then would my task be light, and my burden easy and delightful. For who is there so cold that a nation's sympathy could not warm him? Who so obdurate and dead to the claims of gratitude, that would not thankfully acknowledge such priceless benefits? Who so stolid and selfish that would not give his voice to swell the hallelujahs of a nation's jubilee, when the chains of servitude had been torn from his limbs?

I am not that man. In a case like that, the dumb might eloquently speak, and the "lame man leap as an hart."

But such is not the state of the case. I say it with a sad sense of 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. Do you mean, citizens, to mock me, by asking me to speak today? If so, there is a parallel to your conduct. And let me warn you, that it is dangerous to copy the example of a nation (Babylon) whose crimes, towering up to heaven, were thrown down by the breath of the Almighty, burying that nation in irrecoverable ruin.

Fellow citizens, above your national, tumultuous joy, I hear the mournful wail of millions, whose chains, heavy and grievous yesterday, are today rendered more intolerable by the jubilant shouts that reach them. If I do forget, if I do not 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 here, 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 Fourth 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! "I will not equivocate - I will not excuse." I will use the severest language I can command, and yet not one word shall escape me that any man, whose judgment is not blinded by prejudice, or who is not at heart a slave-holder, shall not confess to be right and just.

But I fancy I hear some of my audience say it is just in this circumstance that you and your brother Abolitionists fail to make a favorable impression on the public mind. Would you argue more and denounce less, would you persuade more and rebuke less, your cause would be much more likely to succeed. But, I submit, where all is plain there is nothing to be argued. What point in the anti-slavery creed would you have me argue? On what branch of

the subject do the people of this country need light? Must I undertake to prove that the slave is a man? That point is conceded already. Nobody doubts it. The slave-holders themselves acknowledge it in the enactment of laws for their government. They acknowledge it when they punish disobedience on the part of the slave. There are seventy-two crimes in the State of Virginia, which, if committed by a black man (no matter how ignorant he be), subject him to the punishment of death; while only two of these same crimes will subject a white man to like punishment.

What is this but the acknowledgment that the slave is a moral, intellectual, and responsible being? The manhood of the slave is conceded. It is admitted in the fact that Southern statute books are covered with enactments, forbidding, under severe fines and penalties, the teaching of the slave to read and write. When you can point to any such laws in reference to the beasts of the field, then I may consent to argue the manhood of the slave. When the dogs in your streets, when the fowls of the air, when the cattle on your hills, when the fish of the sea, and the reptiles that crawl, shall be unable to distinguish the slave from a brute, then I will argue with you that the slave is a man!

For the present it is enough to affirm the equal manhood of the Negro race. Is it not astonishing that, while we are plowing, planting, and reaping, using all kinds of mechanical tools, erecting houses, constructing bridges, building ships, working in metals of brass, iron, copper, silver, and gold; that while we are reading, writing, and ciphering, acting as clerks, merchants, and secretaries, having among us lawyers, doctors, ministers, poets, authors, editors, orators, and teachers; that we are engaged in all the enterprises common to other men -- digging gold in California, capturing the whale in the Pacific, feeding sheep and cattle on the hillside, living, moving, acting, thinking, planning, living in families as husbands, wives, and children, and above all, confessing and worshipping the Christian God, and looking hopefully for life and immortality beyond the grave -- we are called upon to prove that we are men?

Would you have me argue that man is entitled to liberty? That he is the rightful owner of his own body? You have already declared it. Must I argue the wrongfulness of slavery? Is that a question for republicans? Is it to be settled by the rules of logic and argumentation, as a matter beset with great difficulty, involving a doubtful application of the principle of justice, hard to understand? How should I look today in the presence of Americans, dividing and subdividing a discourse, to show that men have a natural right to freedom, speaking of it relatively and positively, negatively and affirmatively? To do so would be to make myself ridiculous, and to offer an insult to your understanding. There is not a man beneath the canopy of heaven who does not know that slavery is wrong for him.

What! Am I to argue that it is wrong to make men brutes, to rob them of their liberty, to work them without wages, to keep them ignorant of their relations to their fellow men, to beat them with sticks, to flay their flesh with the lash, to load their limbs with irons, to hunt them with dogs, to sell them at auction, to sunder their families, to knock out their teeth, to burn their flesh, to starve them into obedience and submission to their masters? Must I argue that a system thus marked with blood and stained with pollution is wrong? No - I will not. I have better employment for my time and strength than such arguments would imply.

What, then, remains to be argued? Is it that slavery is not divine; that God did not establish it; that our doctors of divinity are mistaken? There is blasphemy in the thought. That which is inhuman cannot be divine. Who can reason on such a proposition? They that can, may - I cannot. The time for such argument is past.

At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh! had I the ability, and could I reach the nation's ear, I would today pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke. For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. The feeling of the nation must be quickened; the conscience of the nation must be roused; the propriety of the nation must be startled; the hypocrisy of the nation must be exposed; and its crimes against God and man must be denounced.

What to the American slave is your Fourth of July? I answer, a day that reveals to him more than all other days of the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mock; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade and solemnity, are to him mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy - a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation of the earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than are the people of these United States at this very hour.

Go search where you will, roam through all the monarchies and despotisms of the Old World, travel through South America, search out every abuse and when you have found the last, lay your facts by the side of the everyday practices of this nation, and you will say with me that, for revolting barbarity and shameless hypocrisy, America reigns without a rival.

Frederick Douglass - July 4, 1852

### **John Brown's Final Speech**

From <http://www.gilderlehrman.org/collections/ed95cc2b-c74b-4394-8646-657461155140>

#### **Broadside from December 1859**

MR. BROWN, upon inquiry whether he had anything to say why sentences should not be pronounced upon him, in a clear, distinct voice, replied:], , I have, may it please the Court, a few words to say. , In the first place, I deny every thing but what I have already admitted, of a design on my part to free Slaves. I intended, certainly, to have made a clean thing of that matter, as I did last winter, when I went into Missouri, and there took Slaves, without the snapping of a gun on either side, moving them through the country, and finally leaving them in Canada. I desired to have done the same thing again, on a much larger scale. That was all I intended. I never did intend murder, or treason, or the destruction of property, or to excite or incite Slaves to rebellion, or to make insurrection. , I have another objection, and that is, that it is unjust that I should suffer such a penalty. Had I interfered in the manner, and which I admit has been fairly proved, - for I admire the truthfulness and candor of the greater portion of the witnesses who have testified in this case, - had I so interfered in behalf of the Rich, the Powerful, the Intelligent, the so-called Great, or in behalf of any of their friends, either father, mother, brother, sister, wife, or children, or any of that class, and suffered and sacrificed what I have in this interference, it would have been all right. Every man in this Court would have deemed it an act worthy a reward, rather than a punishment. , This Court acknowledges too, as I suppose, the validity of the LAW OF GOD. I saw a book kissed, which I suppose to be the BIBLE, or at least the NEW TESTAMENT, which teaches me that, "All things whatsoever I would that men should do to me, I should do even so to them." It teaches me further, to "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them." I endeavored to act up to that instruction. I say I am yet too young to understand that GOD is any respecter of persons. I believe that to have interfered as I have done, as I have always freely admitted I have done, in behalf of his despised poor, I have done no wrong, but RIGHT. , Now, if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life, for

the furtherance of the ends of justice, and MINGLE MY BLOOD FURTHER WITH THE BLOOD OF MY CHILDREN, and with the blood of millions in this Slave country, whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments, - I say; LET IT BE DONE. , Let me say one word further: I feel entirely satisfied with the treatment I have received on my trial. Considering all the circumstances, it has been more generous than I expected; but I feel no consciousness of guilt. I have stated from the first what was my intention, and what was not. I never had any design against the liberty of any person, nor any disposition to commit treason, or excite Slaves to rebel, or make any general insurrection. I never encouraged any man to do so, but always discouraged any idea of that kind. , Let me say something, also, in regard to the statements made by some of those who were connected with me. I hear that it has been stated by some of them, that I have induced them to join me; but the contrary is true. I do not say this to injure them, but as regarding their weakness. Not one but joined me of his own accord, and the greater part at their own expense. A number of them I never saw and never had a word of conversation with, till the day they came to me, and that was for the purpose I have stated. Now I have done. –

### Glossary

(listed in order as they appear in the text)

**Embodied:** an expression of something

**Devout:** deeply religious

**Affirmative:** in agreement

**Obdurate:** stubborn, especially about changing an opinion

**Stolid:** calm

**Jubilee:** joyful celebration

**Immeasurable:** too large to measure

**Eloquent(ly):** good with words, well-said or spoken

**Bequeathed:** left behind for someone to inherit

**Fetter(s):** restraint, such as a chain or shackle

**Mockery:** to make a joke, to make fun of

**Sacrilegious:** disrespectful to one's religion

**Grievous:** very bad or serious

**Jubilant:** feelings of great joy or happiness

**Rejoice:** celebrate

**Irrecoverable :** unable to be recovered or restored

**Tumultuous:** loud

**Wail:** long, loud cry

**Grievous:** serious

**Intolerable:** difficult or impossible to stand/tolerate

**Treason:** betrayal

**Scandalous:** relating to a scandal or controversy

**Reproach:** expression of disappointment

**Stripes:** in the context of slavery, refers to scars and marks from whippings

**Profession:** an empty statement

**Revolting:** disgusting

**Disregard:** ignore

**Denounce:** strong disapproval or expression of opposition

**Perpetuate:** to allow something to continue

**Equivocate:** ambiguous, expressing mixed feelings

**Prejudice:** a negative feeling or attitude towards something or someone without a basis

**Favorable:** nice, harmonious, peaceful

**Rebuke:** strong disapproval of actions or behavior

**Concede:** give

**Statute:** a formal, written enactment

**Enactment:** passing legislation, acting something out

**Cipher:** write coded messages

**Beset:** covered with

**Discourse:** conversation, exchange of ideas

**Sunder:** tear apart

**Blasphemy:** lack of respect for God

**Imply:** suggest

**Roused:** awakened

**Propriety:** moral respectability

**Bombast:** loudness without meaning

**Impiety:** lack of respect for God

**Despotism:** a system of government that gives one ruler absolute power

**“lame man leap as an hart”** : a reference to a Bible passage that represents an unexpected change. The quote means a man who wasn't able to walk (“lame”) can suddenly not only walk, but leap like a hart (an archaic word for deer).

**Babylon:** reference to the place of exile for Jewish people of Judah during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE. A common parallel to other forms of forced captivity and enslavement, such as slavery, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

**“May my right hand forget her cunning, and may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth.”** : reference to the Bible, a pledge to remember suffering or to lose one's an important part of one's self, like a skilled hand or the ability to speak.

## PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUES

<p><b>ANECDOTES/TESTIMONY</b></p> <p>Uses short stories or personal accounts</p>	<p><b>RHETORICAL QUESTIONS</b></p> <p>Poses questions that answer themselves</p>	<p><b>BANDWAGON</b></p> <p>Appeals to audience to 'join the crowd'</p>	<p><b>FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE</b></p> <p>Uses metaphor, simile, idioms, imagery and/or exaggeration to make a point</p>
<p><b>EMOTIONAL</b></p> <p>Plays on guilt          Uses shock tactics          Uses forceful phrases          Uses sarcasm/humor          Uses flattery</p>	<p><b>SNOB APPEAL</b></p> <p>Focuses on the elite qualities of the audience that make them feel different or superior</p>	<p><b>COUNTER-ARGUMENT</b></p> <p>Emphasizes flaws or lack of logic in other arguments</p>	<p><b>FACTS/STATS</b></p> <p>Uses data to prove a point or to illustrate a trend</p>