

Learning to Read

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper

How does learning to read become an act of independence rather than simply a school skill?

TOTAL TIME	TUMBLETA PASSAGE LOCATION
30 minutes	Poem - complete poem

TEACHER SETUP

Open the work in the Enhanced Reader and cue the span using the START and END anchors below.

START	Very soon the Yankee teachers
END	As the queen upon her throne.
PASSAGE ID	sec-learningread-01

THE MOVE

Trace how a repeated goal changes meaning across historical conditions

WHY THIS PASSAGE

Reading first appears as knowledge enslavers deliberately suppress because it threatens control. After emancipation, Chloe still faces discouragement, but she chooses literacy for herself and links it to a home she can call her own. The poem makes reading part of self-possession.

MARK

Underline reasons enslavers opposed literacy. Circle examples of people learning secretly. Box Chloe’s decision to continue despite her age. Star the final comparison describing independence.

NOTICE

- Why is book learning dangerous to slavery?
- How do people learn when formal access is denied?
- Why does the final cabin image belong in a poem about reading?

THINK

Answer provisionally: How does learning to read become an act of independence rather than simply a school skill? Choose the strongest interpretation you can defend from this passage alone.

WRITE

Write a short evidence-based response. Use at least two details from the assigned passage and explain how they support your interpretation.

CLOSE

Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and say why.

STRONG ANSWER

Learning to read becomes independence because literacy represents control over knowledge that slavery tried to deny. Chloe's persistence lets her choose what to read and parallels her final possession of a home of her own.

EVIDENCE

Use one stanza about suppressed literacy and one detail from Chloe's late-life decision or the final cabin image.

WATCH FOR

Do not reduce the poem to perseverance in school. Its stakes are freedom, control of knowledge, and self-determination.

SOLO

Read independently.

SUPPORTED

Narration + highlighting.

LISTENING

Listen; same evidence task.

STUDENT PAGE · GRADE 8 · LESSON 284

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WORK	Learning to Read
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TUMBLETA PASSAGE LOCATION	Poem - complete poem
PASSAGE ID	sec-learningread-01

Your teacher will open or cue the work in the Enhanced Reader. Use the location and verbatim anchors below to confirm the assigned span.

START

Very soon the Yankee teachers

END

As the queen upon her throne.

READ / LISTEN TO THE ASSIGNED PASSAGE SOLO: read independently. SUPPORTED: use narration and highlighting. LISTENING: listen to the assigned passage. The question and evidence task stay the same.

1. MARK Underline reasons enslavers opposed literacy. Circle examples of people learning secretly. Box Chloe's decision to continue despite her age. Star the final comparison describing independence.
2. NOTICE Why is book learning dangerous to slavery? How do people learn when formal access is denied? Why does the final cabin image belong in a poem about reading?
3. THINK Answer provisionally: How does learning to read become an act of independence rather than simply a school skill?
4. WRITE Write a short response using at least two pieces of evidence from this passage.
5. CLOSE Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and say why.