

What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?

Frederick Douglass

Why does Douglass say that argument is no longer the right rhetorical tool at this point in the speech?

TOTAL TIME	TUMBLETA PASSAGE LOCATION
30 minutes	Rochester address - the turn to scorching irony

TEACHER SETUP

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

START	At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed.
END	The hypocrisy of the nation must be exposed; and its crimes against God and man must be proclaimed and denounced.
PASSAGE ID	sec-douglass-fourth-01

THE MOVE

Analyze how a speaker changes rhetorical strategy when he believes the audience already possesses enough evidence

WHY THIS PASSAGE

Douglass frames the problem not as a lack of information but as a failure of conscience. His sequence of fire, thunder, storm, whirlwind, and earthquake changes the task from proving a proposition to shocking an audience into confronting a contradiction it already knows.

MARK

Underline what Douglass says is not needed. Circle the escalating images of force. Box the verbs describing what must happen to the nation and its conscience.

NOTICE

- What does rejecting "convincing argument" imply about what the audience already knows?
- How does the imagery intensify from one sentence to the next?

- What response does Douglass want from listeners besides intellectual agreement?

THINK

Answer provisionally: Why does Douglass say that argument is no longer the right rhetorical tool at this point in the speech? 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

Douglass changes strategy because he treats the wrongness of slavery as already proven. The problem is moral evasion, so he replaces ordinary argument with escalating images of fire and storm meant to rouse, startle, expose, and denounce.

EVIDENCE

Use the rejection of convincing argument and at least one image from the sequence of fire, thunder, storm, whirlwind, or earthquake.

WATCH FOR

Do not summarize the entire speech. Explain why this particular moment changes the kind of persuasion Douglass uses.

SOLO

Read independently.

SUPPORTED

Narration + highlighting.

LISTENING

Listen; same evidence task.

STUDENT PAGE · GRADE 11 · LESSON 315

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WORK	What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?
TUMBLETA PASSAGE LOCATION	Rochester address - the turn to scorching irony
PASSAGE ID	sec-douglass-fourth-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

At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed.

END

The hypocrisy of the nation must be exposed; and its crimes against God and man must be proclaimed and denounced.

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 what Douglass says is not needed. Circle the escalating images of force. Box the verbs describing what must happen to the nation and its conscience.
2. NOTICE What does rejecting "convincing argument" imply about what the audience already knows? How does the imagery intensify from one sentence to the next? What response does Douglass want from listeners besides intellectual agreement?
3. THINK Answer provisionally: Why does Douglass say that argument is no longer the right rhetorical tool at this point in the speech?
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.