

Self-Made Men

Frederick Douglass

How does Douglass praise individual effort without pretending individuals act outside social conditions?

TOTAL TIME	TUMBLETA PASSAGE LOCATION
30 minutes	Speech - definition of the self-made man and conditions of effort

TEACHER SETUP

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

START	Self-made men are the men who, under peculiar difficulties and without the ordinary helps of favoring circumstances
END	They are in a peculiar sense, indebted to themselves for themselves.
PASSAGE ID	sec-douglass-selfmade-01

THE MOVE

Analyze how a speaker qualifies a popular ideal in order to make it more credible.

WHY THIS PASSAGE

Douglass celebrates work, persistence, and self-development, but he also recognizes barriers and unequal conditions. The qualification prevents “self-made” from becoming a myth of total independence.

MARK

Underline claims about effort. Circle references to obstacles or conditions. Box the point where Douglass limits the literal meaning of “self-made.”

NOTICE

- What does Douglass admire in the ideal?
- What does he refuse to erase from the story of success?
- How does qualification strengthen rather than weaken the praise?

THINK

Answer provisionally: How does Douglass praise individual effort without pretending individuals act outside social conditions? 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 preserves the moral force of effort while rejecting the fantasy that anyone creates himself alone. By naming conditions and obstacles, he makes achievement a story of agency within constraint.

EVIDENCE

Use one statement about effort and one qualification about conditions.

WATCH FOR

Do not turn the speech into a slogan about hard work. Explain the qualification.

SOLO

Read independently.

SUPPORTED

Narration + highlighting.

LISTENING

Listen; same evidence task.

STUDENT PAGE · GRADE 12 · LESSON 349

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WORK

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PASSAGE ID	sec-douglass-selfmade-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

Self-made men are the men who, under peculiar difficulties and without the ordinary helps of favoring circumstances

END

They are in a peculiar sense, indebted to themselves for themselves.

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 claims about effort. Circle references to obstacles or conditions. Box the point where Douglass limits the literal meaning of “self-made.”
2. NOTICE What does Douglass admire in the ideal? What does he refuse to erase from the story of success? How does qualification strengthen rather than weaken the praise?
3. THINK Answer provisionally: How does Douglass praise individual effort without pretending individuals act outside social conditions?
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.