

# SUMMER 2021 READING ASSIGNMENT FOR RISING JUNIORS

## THE ASSIGNMENT

1. Read Frederick Douglass' *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, by Frederick Douglass
2. Complete your Commonplace Book entries: 10 entries, evenly spaced throughout the novel
3. Take a unit test over *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* during the first week of school in August

## COMMON-PLACE BOOK INSTRUCTIONS

Buy yourself a nice notebook for **Commonplace Book entries**\*\*.

A **Commonplace Book** is a collection of interesting passages that you find as you read. They may be sharp bits of dialogue, funny details, vivid imagery, interesting diction, unusual vocabulary, figurative language, or really anything you find interesting: stuff you like, stuff you hate - anything noteworthy about the author's style. So much of literature is not just about what happens in the story; it's about the **way** in which the author tells the story.

Each common-place entry should include the following:

1. **Number** (1-10 or more...)
2. **Brief context** (can just be a few words) including the page number of the selection.
3. **The passage copied out NEATLY in its entirety.** Can be as short as a few words or as long as a few sentences... as much as you need to demonstrate its language qualities. (Note: can be typed or hand-written, but must be LEGIBLE.)
4. **Some analysis of the style of the passage** - for its humor or tragedy or dialogue or vocabulary or similes or metaphors or insults or ... whatever. These should be **3-5 complete sentences**. Try to use as many literary terms as you can. See the list on the back of this sheet for some ideas of literary terms.

\*\* You may also do this assignment digitally if you wish, in Google Docs. If you do choose to write digitally, I expect all entries to be neatly formatted (see below for formatting).

## EXAMPLE OF EXCELLENT COMMONPLACE ENTRIES (FROM *NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS, AN AMERICAN SLAVE*)

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, Life of an American Slave Entry #1	<b>Context and page #</b> Douglass discusses the songs slaves sing when walking in the woods on the way to the "Great House" (25-26)
	<b>Passage</b> "While on their way, they would make the dense old woods, for miles around, reverberate with their wild songs, revealing at once the highest joy and the deepest sadness. [. . .] I have sometimes thought that the mere hearing of those songs would do more to impress some minds with the horrible character of slavery, than the reading of whole volumes of philosophy on the subject could do."
	<b>Commentary &amp; analysis</b> In this passage, Douglass' <u>diction</u> is very formal, as contrasted with the diction of the slave spirituals he describes. He points out the <u>oxymoron</u> of slave spirituals: that they sound pretty, but they also contain all the pain and suffering that slaves were experiencing every day.

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<p>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, Life of an American Slave, Entry #2</p>	<p><b>Context and page #</b> Douglass describes the change in Mrs. Hughes (43)</p>
	<p><b>Passage</b> “While I went there, she was a pious, warm, and tender-hearted woman. [. . .] Slavery soon proved its ability to divest her of these heavenly qualities. Under its influence, the tender heart became stone, and the lamb-like disposition gave way to one of tiger-like fierceness.” (43)</p>
	<p><b>Commentary &amp; analysis</b></p> <p>Here Douglass shows the change in Mrs. Hughes by using <u>Biblical imagery</u>. As someone who did not grow up with slaves/being a slave owner, Mrs. Hughes is more Christ-like (a “lamb,” which could definitely be a <u>simile</u> comparing her to Jesus, or the lamb of God). Once she gets used to slavery/‘owning’ another human, she becomes colder and harder and fiercer, more like a predator or tiger.</p>

## SOME TERMS TO USE AS YOU’RE WORKING ON YOUR COMMONPLACE BOOK:

- **Syntax**
  - Declarative, interrogative, exclamatory, imperative
  - Rhetorical questions
  - Punctuation –(colons, semicolons, dashes) and capitalization
  - Repetition of words
  - Parallel structure
- **Tone & Diction**
  - Diction – high, low, middle, specific, general. Try to use an adjective with each type.
  - Tone – sarcasm, praising, critical, ludicrous... try to select the best adjective to use with the tone.
- **Point of view**
  - 1<sup>st</sup> person, 2<sup>nd</sup> person, 3<sup>rd</sup> person?
  - Does it change? Who is the audience?
- What does the selection of detail reveal?
- Does the narrator use allusions effectively?
- **Figurative language**
  - Simile & metaphor
  - Personification
  - Imagery
  - Symbolism
- **Character**
  - Static/dynamic character
  - Direct/indirect characterization
- **Setting**
  - Time
  - Place
  - Social world
- **Plot**
  - Exposition, Rising action, climax, falling action, etc.