

## Week 8: Frederick Douglass and Commas

**Weekly Focus:** Analysis  
**Weekly Skill:** Point of View,  
Commas

**Lesson Summary:** Today's lesson will focus on introducing students to "point of view" within writing. Students will also learn about how to correctly punctuate introductory elements of a sentence.

**Materials Needed:** Projector and Computer or Document Camera, Douglass Reading, Group Work, Individual Writing Assignment, Comma Rules, Introductory Elements Exercise, Group Roles, Fishbowl Discussion Rules, Whiteboard and markers, Index Cards, internet access to look up facts/statistics for writing assignment (advanced level)

**Objectives:** Students will be able to...

- define and recognize point of view within a text
- demonstrate comprehension of p.o.v. by answering comprehension questions
- analyze a text and identify a "deep quote" that adds to understanding of p.o.v.
- respond to the text using evidence from the passage and their own lives
- identify when a comma is needed after introductory elements in a sentence
- demonstrate comprehension of comma rules by correctly punctuating sentences

**Common Core Standards Addressed:** [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.6](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.9](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1](#), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.1](#)

### Notes:

This week will focus on the Analysis step of the CARE model. Remind students of this. Explain that it is sometimes useful to break writing down into its smaller elements in order to better understand its less obvious elements.

The grammar will be tricky for some students. Remind them that this is an ongoing learning process and that we will be working with commas again next week.

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### Activities:

#### Warm-Up/Review: Homonyms

Time: 20 mins.

Homonyms Quiz. Know, no, it's, its. Come up with seven sentences using these homonyms. Have the students number their papers from 1-7. Read the sentences out-loud. Have students write what they believe the correct homonym is (not the whole sentence) by the number. Go over the answers.

#### Activity 1: Reading and Point of View

Time: 60 mins.

- Begin by briefly introducing Frederick Douglass and the time-period during which he is speaking. Frederick Douglass Information (reference for teacher only).
- Read through the excerpt out-loud, asking students to follow along and listen carefully.
- Introduce the term "point of view" (reference for teacher only). Ask students why point of view might be important in writing, especially in writing an argument. Explain that although Douglass is writing non-fiction, point of view also exists within fiction.
- Together as a class, come up with a point of view definition. Have students write this in their notebooks. Create a point of view chart explaining 1<sup>st</sup> person, 2<sup>nd</sup> person, 3<sup>rd</sup> person that students can copy in their notebooks.
- Read through Douglass again, asking students to pay close attention to point of view. Break students into groups. Assign group roles and have students complete the questions together.
- Have groups present their "deep quote" to the class.

#### Activity 2: Writing

Time: 30 mins.

- Remind students of the important elements of a paragraph. A **topic sentence**, which tells what the paragraph will be about; **supporting details**, which provide evidence that helps explain, illustrate, and support the topic sentence; and a **concluding sentence**, which sums up the main idea of the paragraph.
- Introduce students to the Individual Writing Assignment on Douglass.
- As a class, model answering the question together (not doing the RLA challenge), projecting the class-constructed paragraph on the board.
- Have students write a response to the question on their own, using the CLOZE structure provided or a similar structure of their own. If there is not time for them to do this in class, they may complete it as homework.
- Students who finish should do the RLA challenge, and incorporate the information they find into their responses. They can re-write or type up their answers.

**Break: 10 minutes**

#### Grammar Activity: Introductory Elements and Commas

Time: 60 minutes

**Review:** Review the difference between Dependent and Independent Clauses. Have students work in pairs.

- Review the rules for a complete sentence (independent clause): Must have a subject, must have a verb, and must have a complete thought.
- Model several independent and dependent clauses on the white board, asking for student input in creating them. As a class, label the main subject and verb of each sentence and ask

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if it is a complete thought.

- Have students work in pairs. Hand out 8 notecards to each pair (one for the period). Ask pairs to write a simple sentence/independent clause with seven or fewer words about what they read today. Model this first with your own group of notecards on the document camera or whiteboard.
- Ask students to transfer their sentences to notecards. They may write only one word on each notecard. On the back of the cards, they should write SUBJECT for the card that represents the subject and VERB for the card that represents the verb. Check each group. Have groups mix their cards up and switch cards with a group next to them. Have this group put the cards in the correct order. Check. Now, take one notecard away from each group. Ask students to discuss whether or not the cards left make an independent clause or a dependent clause (fragment). Have them discuss why this is true. Check answers with each group.

**Introduction:** Hand out comma rules sheet to students who were absent last week. Tell students that while last week we discussed when commas in a series were used, this week we are moving on to a new rule. What is an Introductory element? Go over this rule together. Hand out Introductory Element worksheet. Complete the first few exercises together and then ask students to complete the rest on their own. Go over answers as a class.

**Practice:**

- Redistribute notecards (groups should get their original sentence). Hand out extra blank notecards to the group. Ask them to put a comma on one of the notecards. Then, ask groups to think of some "introductory information" that they might choose to put at the beginning of the sentence. Model this with your own notecards first.
- Hand out Douglass grammar sheet and have students complete in pairs. Go through the answers as a class, inviting students to write the correct answers on the board.

**Wrap-Up or Extension Activity: Fishbowl Discussion**

**Time: 30 min.**

Return to the Individual Writing Question for today: "Do you believe that there are some people today in American who are still less independent than others?" Hold a Fishbowl Discussion as a class. Tell students that they should bring in information from today's discussions, reading, and their own writing to the Fishbowl.

**Extra Work/Homework:**

Have students expand today's writing into an extended response (RLA challenge). For grammar have students come up with ten sentences on their own in which they correctly use commas after introductory elements.

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<b>Differentiated Instruction/ELL Accommodation Suggestions</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Have Advanced help to create a word bank of challenging words for class.	<b>Reading</b>
Pair Advanced students with Beginning students to help explain the exercises.	<b>Grammar</b>
Have Beginning students fill out only the personal experience portion of the evidence for the paragraph	<b>Writing Assignment</b>

### **Online Resources:**

- 1) [Bedford/ St. Martin Elements of Fiction](#)
- 2) [PBS Frederick Douglass profile](#)

### **Suggested Teacher Readings: TBA**

**Excerpt from “What to a Slave is the Fourth of July” given by Frederick Douglass**

Fellow-citizens, pardon me to ask, why am I called upon to speak here to-day? 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?

But, such is not the state of the case. I say it with a sad sense of the 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 to-day?

Fellow-citizens; above your national, tumultuous joy, I hear the mournful wail of millions! whose chains, heavy and grievous yesterday, are, to-day, rendered more intolerable by the jubilee shouts that reach them.... 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, there, 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 4th 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.

I will, in the name of humanity which is outraged, in the name of liberty which is fettered, in the name of the constitution...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!

## Group Work

- 1) On what date does Douglass give his speech? Why is this date important?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) On what topic does Douglass speak?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) What is the difference between the Fourth of July for Douglass and the Fourth of July for the white government officials to whom he speaks?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4) What claim is Douglass making?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 5) In your group choose one important sentence or, "deep quote" from Douglass' speech that you believe is especially important in helping us to understand his point of view. Write this sentence on an index card. Then, in your groups, discuss why you believe this sentence is important. Write your notes about the quote here.

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**Writing Assignment**

- 1) Do you believe that there are some people today in American who are still less independent than others? Why or why not. Use examples from Douglass' speech, your own life, or both as evidence to help support your response to this question. Use the format below, or something similar to it, to answer this question.

I believe that \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

When Frederick Douglass spoke about independence, he said \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

I agree/disagree with this quote because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

An example from my own life that supports this opinion is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

In conclusion, I believe that \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

**RLA Challenge:** Look up a statistic and/or fact that will provide evidence to support your argument about whether or not there are people who are less independent than others.

For example, if you know that there still remains inequality between men and women's salaries in the United States, and you believe this affects independence, you may choose to look up the exact statistic (number) that proves this is true.

OR

Perhaps you believe racial inequality still exists. Find a fact or statistic to support your argument that there is still work to be done and explain how it affects independence. On the other hand, maybe you believe we have achieved better racial equality in today's society. Find a fact or statistic to support your argument that progress has been made, and has, therefore, affected independence.

## Introductory Elements and Commas Exercise

**Directions:** With each sentence, do the following: **First**, underline the independent clause. Write an "I" above it. **Next**, circle the introductory clause or phrase. **Finally**, add a comma where needed. If no correction is needed, write **Correct**.

- 1) Fellow citizens why am I called here to speak today?
  
- 2) In spite of your celebrations I am here to speak about a terrible injustice.
  
- 3) As we look towards the future we must consider the wrongs being done today.
  
- 4) In the name of humanity that is outraged I will call into question and denounce everything that serves to perpetuate slavery.
  
- 5) Above your tumultuous joy I hear the wail of millions.
  
- 6) Even while you rejoice I must mourn.
  
- 7) I shall see this day from the slave's point of view.

## Comma Use: Three Rules

### 1. Use commas after introductory a) clauses, b) phrases, or c) words that come before the main clause.

a. Common starter words for introductory clauses that should be followed by a comma include **after, although, as, because, if, since, when, while**.

While I was eating, the cat scratched at the door.

Because her alarm clock was broken, she was late for class.

If you are ill, you ought to see a doctor.

When the snow stops falling, we'll shovel the driveway.

However, don't put a comma after the main clause when a dependent (subordinate) clause follows it (except for cases of extreme contrast).

**Incorrect:** She was late for class, because her alarm clock was broken.

**Incorrect:** The cat scratched at the door, while I was eating.

**Correct:** She was still quite upset, although she had won the Oscar. (This comma use is correct because it is an example of extreme contrast)

b. Common introductory phrases that should be followed by a comma include participial and infinitive phrases, absolute phrases, nonessential appositive phrases, and long prepositional phrases (over four words).

Having finished the test, he left the room.

To get a seat, you'd better come early.

After the test but before lunch, I went jogging.

The sun radiating intense heat, we sought shelter in the cafe.

c. Common introductory words that should be followed by a comma include **yes, however, well**.

Well, perhaps he meant no harm.

**2. Use a pair of commas in the middle of a sentence to set off clauses, phrases, and words that are not essential to the meaning of the sentence. Use one comma before to indicate the beginning of the pause and one at the end to indicate the end of the pause.**

Here are some clues to help you decide whether the sentence element is essential:

- If you leave out the clause, phrase, or word, does the sentence still make sense?
- Does the clause, phrase, or word interrupt the flow of words in the original sentence?
- If you move the element to a different position in the sentence, does the sentence still make sense?

If you answer "yes" to one or more of these questions, then the element in question is nonessential and should be set off with commas. Here are some example sentences with nonessential elements:

**Clause:** That Tuesday, ***which happens to be my birthday***, is the only day when I am available to meet.

**Phrase:** This restaurant has an exciting atmosphere. The food, ***on the other hand***, is rather bland.

**Word:** I appreciate your hard work. In this case, ***however***, you seem to have over-exerted yourself.

**3. Use commas to separate three or more words, phrases, or clauses written in a series.**

The Constitution establishes the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government.

The candidate promised to lower taxes, protect the environment, reduce crime, and end unemployment.

The prosecutor argued that the defendant, who was at the scene of the crime, who had a strong revenge motive, and who had access to the murder weapon, was guilty of homicide.

This worksheet excerpted from The Purdue OWL's "Extended Rules for Using Commas," which can be found at:  
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/607/02/>

## Exercise: Commas after Introductions

A. If the following sentences are correctly punctuated with introductory commas, mark a C on the line to the left of the sentence. If there is an error, put an X on the line and circle the error. Do you know why each sentence is correct or incorrect?

\_\_\_ 1. As the boat turned about a dozen dolphins began to follow it.

\_\_\_ 2. Since we moved into town, our fuel bill has tripled.

\_\_\_ 3. Having chosen nursing as a career Susan enrolled in many science courses.

\_\_\_ 4. Usually, I have time to eat breakfast.

\_\_\_ 5. From outside the twelve-mile fishing limits off the coast of Maine, a strange phenomenon has been reported.

\_\_\_ 6. When he was in high school he was known only as an athlete.

\_\_\_ 7. Before you decide what courses to take, you should consider the amount of work you are willing to do.

\_\_\_ 8. Nevertheless I do not want to meet him.

Taken from the Purdue Online Writing Lab: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/exercises/print/3/5/53/>

## Group Work Roles

### LEADER

- Makes sure that every voice is heard
- Focuses work around the learning task; guide group from exercise to exercise

**Sound bites: Let's hear from \_\_\_\_ next." "That's interesting, but let's get back to our task."**

### RECORDER

- Compiles group members' ideas:
  - Make a star on the sections/numbers we need to go over
  - Write specific questions

**Sound bites: "I think I heard you say \_\_\_\_\_; is that right?" "How would you like me to write this?"**

### TIME KEEPER

- Encourages the group to stay on task
- Announces when time is halfway through and when time is nearly up

**Sound bite: "We only have five minutes left. Let's see if we can wrap up by then."**

### PRESENTER

- Presents the group's finished work to the class

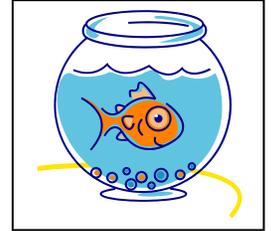
**Sound bite: "Which questions do we need to go over in this section?" "What else do we need to ask?"**

Created by Jen Ouellette for the Minnesota Literacy Council

## Fishbowl Discussion Rules

**About:** The Fishbowl discussion model is a great way to allow your students control of their classroom. It also encourages active listening and student leadership.

**Guidelines:** The instructor should fall to the background for this discussion model. He or she should be available to step in if necessary, but as much as possible, should remain as an observer and not a participant in the conversation.



### Rules for Discussion:

1. Before the discussion begins, have students prepare two questions or thoughts about the day's reading or topic and then write them on a note-card.
2. Have students form two circles with their chairs, one in the middle, one on the outside. Students should bring their note-cards with them to the circles.
3. Choose a student facilitator. This person's role is to keep the discussion going and to make sure all student voices are heard.
4. Before the discussion begins, remind students of the fishbowl discussion rules: students will be responsible for keeping the discussion alive for a full ten minutes, only students in the inner circle may talk, and students on the outside of the circle can't talk but should take notes about discussion points that spark their interest, raise questions, etc. These students will have a chance to join the discussion very shortly.
5. Have the student facilitator begin the discussion by sharing his or her note-card question or comment with the group.
6. **Discuss for ten minutes. At the end of ten minutes, "open the circle" to allow the outside group to comment. Switch the groups, having the inner-circle move to the outside and the outside-circle move to the inner one. Repeat the process.**
7. As a wrap-up, divide students into groups of three or four (try to mix circles). Ask them what one thing they will take away from the day's discussion. Have students share their answer with their group.