

Student Handout 5

Background:

In 1859, Frederick Douglass began to doubt that peaceful means could end slavery. He met secretly with abolitionist John Brown and later wrote about the meeting.

Directions:

Read the selections from Frederick Douglass's autobiography. As a historian, recreate the dialogue that might have taken place at this meeting.

Based on the passage, write down the words you think each man said during their conversation. Numbers 1 and 5 have been done for you.

	<u>Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, 1881, pp. 323-25</u>	Dialogue
1.	The taking of Harpers Ferry was now [John Brown's] settled purpose, and he wanted to know what [Frederick Douglass] thought of it.	<u>John Brown:</u> "Brother Douglass, I would like to know if you are as confident as I am that we will take Harpers Ferry."
2.	It would be an attack upon the federal government... [Frederick Douglass] at once opposed the measure with all the arguments...	<u>Frederick Douglass:</u>
3.	[John Brown] did not at all object to rousing the nation; it seemed to him that something startling was just what the nation needed...the capture of Harper's Ferry would serve as notice to the slaves that their friends had come...	<u>John Brown:</u>
4.	[Frederick Douglass] told [John Brown] . . . all his descriptions of the place convinced me . . . that once in [John Brown] would never get out alive.	<u>Frederick Douglass:</u>
5.	In parting [John Brown] put his arms around [Frederick Douglass] in a manner more than friendly and said:	<u>John Brown:</u> "Come with me, Douglass, I will defend you with my life ."
6.	Here we separated; [John Brown] to go to Harper's Ferry, [Frederick Douglass] to Rochester (New York).	<u>Frederick Douglass:</u>