

Agency and Family

October 19 | Name: _____ | Section: _____

Work together: read the excerpt aloud, then annotate with a partner. Underline an action and circle a limit. Respond below or in your notebook.

Jacobs: a father's attempt to purchase his children

I was born a slave; but I never knew it till six years of happy childhood had passed away. My father was a carpenter, and considered so intelligent and skilful in his trade, that, when buildings out of the common line were to be erected, he was sent for from long distances, to be head workman. On condition of paying his mistress two hundred dollars a year, and supporting himself, he was allowed to work at his trade, and manage his own affairs. His strongest wish was to purchase his children; but, though he several times offered his hard earnings for that purpose, he never succeeded. [...]

[Jacobs, Incidents \(1861\), Chapter I](#)

Discuss and write

1. What did Jacobs's father want? What did he do to pursue it?
2. Who controlled the result? Identify the words that support your answer.
3. Write 3–4 sentences: why can an unsuccessful attempt still demonstrate agency?

Goal: _____

Action: _____

Limit or cost: _____

Interpretation: _____

An example of the analytical move

“He tried” names an action. Explaining how earnings created a possibility while the enslaver retained the power to refuse connects action with constraint. Use your own words and evidence.

Agency means purposeful action under constraints. It is not the same as legal freedom or consent to enslavement. Bring your print Dover Jacobs copy; these excerpts support class discussion and do not replace the assigned reading.

Douglass and Learning

October 27 (Sections 2-3) / October 29 (Section 1) | Name: _____ | Section: _____

First 10 minutes: read these two excerpts with a partner. Mark a resource, a collaborator, and a risk. Then compare with the Covey passage on the next page.

Douglass: exchanging bread for lessons

The plan which I adopted, and the one by which I was most successful, was that of making friends of all the little white boys whom I met in the street. As many of these as I could, I converted into teachers. With their kindly aid, obtained at different times and in different places, I finally succeeded in learning to read. When I was sent of errands, I always took my book with me, and by going one part of my errand quickly, I found time to get a lesson before my return. I used also to carry bread with me, enough of which was always in the house, and to which I was always welcome; for I was much better off in this regard than many of the poor white children in our neighborhood. This bread I used to bestow upon the hungry little urchins, who, in return, would give me that more valuable bread of knowledge. [...]

[Douglass, Narrative \(1845\), Chapter VII](#)

Douglass: collective learning

[...] These dear souls came not to Sabbath school because it was popular to do so, nor did I teach them because it was reputable to be thus engaged. Every moment they spent in that school, they were liable to be taken up, and given thirty-nine lashes. They came because they wished to learn. Their minds had been starved by their cruel masters. They had been shut up in mental darkness. I taught them, because it was the delight of my soul to be doing something that looked like bettering the condition of my race. [...]

[Douglass, Narrative \(1845\), Chapter X](#)

Partner questions

1. How did Douglass create opportunities for learning?
 2. What changed when he became a teacher?
 3. What does the danger of punishment reveal about enslavers' efforts to control knowledge?
- Explain using the supplied words.

Original wording is retained; [...] marks omissions. Read historical racist language critically and do not repeat slurs aloud.

Douglass and Physical Resistance

October 27 / 29 continued | Name: _____ | Section: _____

Context: Douglass describes resisting Edward Covey's violence. Read both paragraphs, then discuss for 5 minutes. Finish the short comparison in class; preserve the final 15 minutes for Jacobs reading.

Douglass: resistance and its limits

This battle with Mr. Covey was the turning-point in my career as a slave. It rekindled the few expiring embers of freedom, and revived within me a sense of my own manhood. It recalled the departed self-confidence, and inspired me again with a determination to be free. The gratification afforded by the triumph was a full compensation for whatever else might follow, even death itself. He only can understand the deep satisfaction which I experienced, who has himself repelled by force the bloody arm of slavery. I felt as I never felt before. It was a glorious resurrection, from the tomb of slavery, to the heaven of freedom. My long-crushed spirit rose, cowardice departed, bold defiance took its place; and I now resolved that, however long I might remain a slave in form, the day had passed forever when I could be a slave in fact. I did not hesitate to let it be known of me, that the white man who expected to succeed in whipping, must also succeed in killing me.

From this time I was never again what might be called fairly whipped, though I remained a slave four years afterwards. I had several fights, but was never whipped.

[Douglass, Narrative \(1845\), Chapter X](#)

Discuss the limit

1. Which words distinguish psychological change from legal freedom?
2. Why might physical confrontation carry different risks for Jacobs?
3. Write 3-4 sentences comparing two strategies on these handout pages. Explain one possibility and one limit. You are not ranking courage.

My comparison: _____

The Wright Family: Claiming Freedom

Hudgins v. Wrights (Virginia, 1806) | Background and primary evidence

Your task: Read these two pages in class. Answer the three numbered questions in your notebook, using **2-3 sentences per answer**. Keep the answers for discussion and essay reference. All required reading is in this PDF.

October 21: Read page 1 together and start Question 1.

October 23: Read page 2, finish Questions 2-3, and discuss.

October 26: Opening catch-up time; finish the answers during class. Separately, submit your shared Word essay link by **3:25 p.m.** No advance reading or additional Wright-family homework is assigned.

1. What happened?

The Wright family lived under enslavement in Virginia. In 1806, the state's highest appeals court considered their claim to freedom. The published report described three generations of women: a grandmother, a mother, and a granddaughter. They argued that they descended through women from a free Indigenous ancestor called **Butterwood Nan**. Witnesses also identified Nan's daughter, **Hannah**. [1]

Their enslaver, Hudgins, intended to send them out of Virginia. The family pursued a **freedom suit**, a legal action challenging their enslavement, and obtained an order preventing their removal. Their argument depended on the **maternal line**: ancestry traced through mothers. [1]

This is an example of **agency**: purposeful action under conditions a person did not fully control. Bringing a legal claim challenged Hudgins's authority. The court still controlled the outcome. Judge George Wythe ruled in the family's favor; the appeals court upheld their freedom while limiting the reasoning behind that result. [1-2]

Source A | The family pursued a legal claim

"The appellant being about to send them out of the state, a writ of *ne exeat* was obtained from the chancellor, on the ground that they were entitled to freedom. - In their bill, they asserted this right as having been descended, in the maternal line, from a free Indian woman"

Original court report, printed p. 134. This excerpt ends before the sentence continues. **Appellant:** Hudgins, who appealed the earlier ruling. **Ne exeat:** here, an order preventing removal from the state. **Bill:** the family's formal legal claim. [1]

Question 1. What did the family want, and what did they do to pursue it? Use one detail from Source A to explain how their action showed agency. Cite **(court report, p. 134)**.

A Victory with Limits

2. Why did the ruling matter?

The appeals court left the Wright family free, but it rejected the idea that the same broad reasoning should free enslaved Africans and their descendants. The judges relied on racial classifications, ancestry, and physical appearance when deciding who could claim a presumption of freedom. Their reasoning helped preserve a system that treated some people as property. A victory for this family did not abolish slavery. [2-3]

Source B | The final decree

"This court, not approving of the chancellor's principles and reasoning in his decree made in this cause, except so far as the same relates to white persons and native American Indians, but entirely disapproving thereof, so far as the same relates to native Africans and their descendants, who have been and are now held as slaves by the citizens of this state, and discovering no other error in the said decree, affirms the same."

Original court report, printed p. 144. Decree: a court's decision. **Affirms:** upholds. In plain language: the court upheld this family's freedom while rejecting a broader argument that could threaten the enslavement of Africans and their descendants. [2]

Question 2. What did the family win, and what important limit did the court place on its ruling? Use Source B and cite **(court report, p. 144)**.

3. Connect the case to Harriet Jacobs

In *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Jacobs described people trying to protect themselves and their families under slavery. Compare a specific action from a chapter you have already read with the Wright family's legal claim. An action can show agency even when it fails to achieve freedom.

Question 3. Identify one action in Jacobs and compare it with the Wright family's action. Explain **one similarity or difference** in their strategies or the constraints they faced. Cite the Jacobs chapter. If you need a starting point, use her father's attempts to purchase his children in **Chapter I, "Childhood."** [4]

Remember: This 1806 case is an earlier comparison for our 1830-1860 unit. The report does not establish a specific tribal affiliation or preserve the women's full personal accounts. Treat the judges' racial categories as evidence of power and prejudice, not valid biological tests of identity.

Sources and optional verification

[1-2] *Hudgins v. Wrights*, 11 Va. (1 Hen. & Mun.) 134 (1806), in William W. Hening and William Munford, *Reports of Cases...*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Smith and Maxwell, 1808), [p. 134](#) and [p. 144](#). [3] [William & Mary, Wythepedia: case overview and further sources](#). [4] Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents* (1861), [Chapter I](#).

Background and explanations are a modern educational summary prepared for this unit, not the plaintiffs' own testimony. Source A and Source B reproduce the public-domain court report; line breaks and typography are normalized. Source links are for checking evidence, not extra assigned reading.

California Law and Coercive Power

October 26 · Part 1 of 2 | Name: _____ | Section: _____

After the 10-minute Wright catch-up, read these two provisions together. Work with a partner to label who makes a decision, whose choices are restricted, and what the statute calls “protection.”

California: control over Indigenous minors

Any person having or hereafter obtaining a minor Indian, male or female, from the parents or relations of such Indian minor, and wishing to keep it, such person shall go before a Justice of the Peace in his Township, with the parents or friends of the child, and if the Justice of the Peace becomes satisfied that no compulsory means have been used to obtain the child from its parents or friends, shall enter on record, in a book kept for that purpose, the sex and probable age of the child, and shall give to such person a certificate, authorizing him or her to have the care, custody, control, and earnings of such minor, until he or she obtain the age of majority. Every male Indian shall be deemed to have attained his majority at eighteen, and the female at fifteen years.

[California, Act for the Government and Protection of Indians \(1850\), chapter 133, §3, printed p. 408](#)

Pause and discuss

What powers does the certificate grant? Who decides whether compulsory means were used? Identify the difference between the law’s claim about consent and proof of a child’s actual experience.

Decision maker: _____

Power granted: _____

Question the law cannot answer: _____

Vocabulary: “majority” means legal adulthood. This is California in 1850, not the Wright family’s Virginia case in 1806. The statute describes powers authorized by government; it is not an Indigenous person’s firsthand account.

Arrest and Forced Hiring

October 26 · Part 2 of 2 | Name: _____ | Section: _____

Read the opening of §20. Circle the grounds for arrest and underline what could happen after arrest.

California: arrest and coerced hiring

Any Indian able to work and support himself in some honest calling, not having wherewithal to maintain himself, who shall be found loitering and strolling about, or frequenting public places where liquors are sold, begging, or leading an immoral or profligate course of life, shall be liable to be arrested on the complaint of any resident citizen of the county, and brought before any Justice of the Peace of the proper county, Mayor or Recorder of any incorporated town, who shall examine said accused Indian, and hear the testimony in relation thereto, and if said Justice, Mayor, or Recorder shall be satisfied that he is a vagrant, as above set forth, he shall make out a warrant under his hand and seal, authorizing and requiring the officer having him in charge or custody, to hire out such vagrant within twenty-four hours to the best bidder, by public notice given as he shall direct, for the highest price that can be had, for any term not exceeding four months; [...]

[California, Act \(1850\), chapter 133, §20, printed p. 410 \(opening excerpt\)](#)

Whole-class discussion

How could broad definitions of “vagrancy” increase officials’ control over labor? California entered the Union as a free state in September 1850. How does this statute complicate the meaning of “free state”?

Write two sentences

1. Identify one power the law authorized, citing §3 or §20.
2. Identify one question it cannot answer about an individual’s resistance.

“Wherewithal” means resources. The quoted text preserves the statute’s racial terminology; it is evidence of the law’s categories, not a description to adopt as your own. No online quiz or separate upload is required. Keep this page for class reference; California is optional essay context.

Northup and the Risk of a Letter

November 2 class reading · Selections A-D. Read these supplied passages. No whole chapter is assigned. Northup, a free Black New Yorker kidnapped in 1841, was enslaved in Louisiana. Epps was his enslaver. Armsby was a prospective messenger.

Original wording is retained; [...] marks omissions. Page references refer to the 1853 book, not this packet. The narrative was prepared with David Wilson and published retrospectively; reported dialogue is not a contemporaneous transcript.

A · Barriers to communication

My great object always was to invent means of getting a letter secretly into the post-office, directed to some of my friends or family at the North. The difficulty of such an achievement cannot be comprehended by one unacquainted with the severe restrictions imposed upon me. In the first place, I was deprived of pen, ink, and paper. In the second place, a slave cannot leave his plantation without a pass, nor will a post-master mail a letter for one without written instructions from his owner. I was in slavery nine years, and always watchful and on the alert, before I met with the good fortune of obtaining a sheet of paper. While Epps was in New-Orleans, one winter, disposing of his cotton, the mistress sent me to Holmesville, with an order for several articles, and among the rest a quantity of foolscap. I appropriated a sheet, concealing it in the cabin, under the board on which I slept.

[Northup, Twelve Years a Slave \(1853\), Chapter XVI, p. 230](#)

B · Making a letter and seeking a messenger

After various experiments I succeeded in making ink, by boiling white maple bark, and with a feather plucked from the wing of a duck, manufactured a pen. When all were asleep in the cabin, by the light of the coals, lying upon my plank couch, I managed to complete a somewhat lengthy epistle. It was directed to an old acquaintance at Sandy Hill, stating my condition, and urging him to take measures to restore me to liberty. This letter I kept a long time, contriving measures by which it could be safely deposited in the post-office. [...]

[Northup, Twelve Years a Slave \(1853\), Chapter XVI, pp. 230-231](#)

C · Testing Armsby's promise

Carefully deliberating on the most proper manner of approaching him on the subject, I concluded finally to ask him simply if he would deposit a letter for me in the Marksville post-office the next time he visited that place, without disclosing to him that the letter was written, or any of the particulars it contained; for I had fears that he might betray me, and knew that some inducement must be held out to him of a pecuniary nature, before it would be safe to confide in him. As late as one o'clock one night I stole noiselessly from my cabin, and, crossing the field to Shaw's, found him sleeping on the piazza. I had but a few picayunes—the proceeds of my fiddling performances, but all I had in the world I promised him if he would do me the favor required. I begged him not to expose me if he could not grant the request. He assured me, upon his honor, he would deposit it in the Marksville post-office, and that he would keep it an inviolable secret forever. [...]

[Northup, Twelve Years a Slave \(1853\), Chapter XVI, pp. 231-232](#)

Between C and D: Northup reports that Armsby told Epps about the proposed letter. Northup denied the accusation; after Epps left, he destroyed it.

D · Destroying the evidence

[...] As soon as he was gone I threw the letter in the fire, and, with a desponding and despairing heart, beheld the epistle which had cost me so much anxiety and thought, and which I fondly hoped would have been my forerunner to the land of freedom, writhe and shrivel on its bed of coals, and dissolve into smoke and ashes. [...]

[Northup, Twelve Years a Slave \(1853\), Chapter XVI, p. 235](#)

Northup Tries Again

Selections E-G. Bass, a Canadian carpenter, agreed to help. Parker and Perry were Northup's contacts in Saratoga Springs. Notice what Northup contributed to the plan as well as what Bass did.

E • Trying again with Bass

After further assurances on his part that I should not be betrayed, I began a relation of the history of my life and misfortunes. He was deeply interested, asking numerous questions in reference to localities and events. Having ended my story I besought him to write to some of my friends at the North, acquainting them with my situation, and begging them to forward free papers, or take such steps as they might consider proper to secure my release. He promised to do so, but dwelt upon the danger of such an act in case of detection, and now impressed upon me the great necessity of strict silence and secrecy. Before we parted our plan of operation was arranged.

We agreed to meet the next night at a specified place among the high weeds on the bank of the bayou, some distance from master's dwelling. There he was to write down on paper the names and address of several persons, old friends in the North, to whom he would direct letters during his next visit to Marksville. It was not deemed prudent to meet in the new house, inasmuch as the light it would be necessary to use might possibly be discovered. In the course of the day I managed to obtain a few matches and a piece of candle, unperceived, from the kitchen, during a temporary absence of Aunt Phebe. Bass had pencil and paper in his tool chest.

[Northup, Twelve Years a Slave \(1853\), Chapter XIX, pp. 271-272](#)

F • The letter that reached the North

The Saturday night subsequent to our interview at the water's edge, Bass went home to Marksville. The next day, being Sunday, he employed himself in his own room writing letters. One he directed to the Collector of Customs at New-York, another to Judge Marvin, and another to Messrs. Parker and Perry jointly. The latter was the one which led to my recovery. He subscribed my true name, but in the postscript intimated I was not the writer. The letter itself shows that he considered himself engaged in a dangerous undertaking—no less than running "the risk of his life, if detected." I did not see the letter before it was mailed, but have since obtained a copy, which is here inserted:

[Northup, Twelve Years a Slave \(1853\), Chapter XIX, pp. 273-274](#)

G • Northup's request, written with Bass's help

"Having been born free, just across the river from you, I am certain you must know me, and I am here now a slave. I wish you to obtain free papers for me, and forward them to me at Marksville, Louisiana, Parish of Avoyelles, and oblige

"Yours, SOLOMON NORTHUP.

[Northup, Twelve Years a Slave \(1853\), Chapter XIX, p. 274](#)

Pause and compare

Identify one action Northup took, one resource he needed, and one risk. Why does Bass's help not erase Northup's initiative? What changed after the failed Armsby attempt?

Discussion and Essay Guide

Class plan

Read A–G for 15–20 minutes, discuss with a partner for 10 minutes, then discuss the class findings and write your notebook response. Write 3–4 sentences answering Question 2 or 3 below; use two specific details and cite XVI or XIX. No separate upload.

Discuss the supplied evidence

1. In A–C, which restrictions made communication dangerous? Identify two actions Northup took himself.
2. Why does destroying the letter in D demonstrate a purposeful response, even though the attempt failed?
3. In E–G, distinguish Northup's contributions from Bass's. What depended on cooperation?
4. Compare this strategy with Jacobs's use of trusted people or misleading letters. Explain one similarity and one meaningful difference.

Keep Jacobs central in the essay

Jacobs was born enslaved; Northup sought restoration of a free status he had possessed before kidnapping. Compare a mechanism such as communication or trust while preserving that difference. Use one or two Northup details briefly to sharpen an argument centered on Jacobs. More reading is optional.

How to cite

First note: Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave* (Auburn, NY: Derby and Miller, 1853), chap. XVI, 230–232, https://www.gutenberg.org/files/45631/45631-h/45631-h.htm#CHAPTER_XVI.

Later note: Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave*, chap. XIX, 271–272.

Change the chapter and printed pages to match the selection you actually use. Footnote quotations and paraphrases.

Bibliography: Northup, Solomon. *Twelve Years a Slave*. Auburn, NY: Derby and Miller, 1853. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/45631/45631-h/45631-h.htm>.

Optional further reading

[Complete book online at Project Gutenberg](#) · [Online guide and Eliza excerpt \(VI, pp. 81–82\)](#).

For more on family separation, use the supplied Eliza passage in the online guide. Eliza's plea is Northup's account of her actions, not her own autobiography. For how news reached his family and legal help followed, explore Chapter XXI; this is optional.

New States and National Power

October 20 (Sections 2-3) / October 22 (Section 1) | Name: _____ | Section: _____

Teacher introduction: start with 11 free states and 11 slave states. Each state receives two senators. In pairs, calculate what changes when Maine and Missouri enter. This is a simplified model of representation, not a claim that all senators voted alike.

Before either admission: free-state senators ____ / slave-state senators ____

After Maine only: free ____ / slave ____

After both Maine and Missouri: free ____ / slave ____

Missouri restriction and the fugitive exception

That in all that territory ceded by France to the United States, under the name of Louisiana, which lies north of thirty-six degrees and thirty minutes north latitude, not included within the limits of the state, contemplated by this act, slavery and involuntary servitude, otherwise than in the punishment of crimes, whereof the parties shall have been duly convicted, shall be, and is hereby, forever prohibited: Provided always, That any person escaping into the same, from whom labour or service is lawfully claimed, in any state or territory of the United States, such fugitive may be lawfully reclaimed and conveyed to the person claiming his or her labour or service as aforesaid.

[Missouri enabling act \(1820\), §8; National Archives transcript](#)

Talk it through

1. What territory did the restriction cover? What exception did it make?
2. What did the fugitive clause permit even within the restricted territory?
3. Why would control of future Senate seats matter to slavery's defenders and opponents?

Class connection: cotton cultivation, Indigenous dispossession, and the domestic slave trade linked land, labor, and political power. Next read the supplied Eliza passage on page 2. No online model is required.

Expansion and Family Separation

October 20 / 22 · revisit October 28 | Name: _____ | Section: _____

Northup reports this sale in New Orleans in 1841. Eliza is Randall and Emily's mother; Freeman is the trader. Read in pairs. Underline Eliza's efforts to prevent separation and circle the purchaser's or trader's power.

Northup: Eliza pleads to keep her family together

The same man also purchased Randall. The little fellow was made to jump, and run across the floor, and perform many other feats, exhibiting his activity and condition. All the time the trade was going on, Eliza was crying aloud, and wringing her hands. She besought the man not to buy him, unless he also bought herself and Emily. She promised, in that case, to be the most faithful slave that ever lived. The man answered that he could not afford it, and then Eliza burst into a paroxysm of grief, weeping plaintively. Freeman turned round to her, savagely, with his whip in his uplifted hand, ordering her to stop her noise, or he would flog her. He would not have such work—such snivelling; and unless she ceased that minute, he would take her to the yard and give her a hundred lashes. Yes, he would take the nonsense out of her pretty quick—if he didn't, might he be d—d. Eliza shrunk before him, and tried to wipe away her tears, but it was all in vain. She wanted to be with her children, she said, the little time she had to live. All the frowns and threats of Freeman, could not wholly silence the afflicted mother. She kept on begging and beseeching them, most piteously, not to separate the three. Over and over again she told them how she loved her boy. A great many times she repeated her former promises—how very faithful and obedient she would be; how hard she would labor day and night, to the last moment of her life, if he would only buy them all together. But it was of no avail; the man could not afford it. The bargain was agreed upon, and Randall must go alone. Then Eliza ran to him; embraced him passionately; kissed him again and again; told him to remember her—all the while her tears falling in the boy's face like rain.

[Northup, Twelve Years a Slave \(1853\), Chapter VI, pp. 81–82](#)

Discuss together

What was Eliza trying to preserve? Why is a promise of hard work under threat not the same as consent to slavery? What does this account reveal that a map of new slaveholding states cannot?

The passage comes from Northup's recollections, not Eliza's own autobiography. Its threats of violence are part of the evidence. Do not reenact the sale or adopt the roles of purchasers and enslaved people.

New Territory and Unsettled Rules

October 28 | Name: _____ | Section: _____

Begin with a brief review of Eliza's passage. Read the treaty excerpt together. Then discuss competing proposals for slavery in western territories.

A new international boundary

The boundary line between the two Republics shall commence in the Gulf of Mexico, three leagues from land, opposite the mouth of the Rio Grande, otherwise called Rio Bravo del Norte, [...] thence across the Rio Colorado, following the division line between Upper and Lower California, to the Pacific Ocean.

[Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo \(1848\), Article V, opening paragraph \(excerpt\)](#)

Teacher context

Texas joined the United States in 1845. The U.S.-Mexico War (1846–1848) ended in a major territorial transfer. The Wilmot Proviso (1846) proposed excluding slavery from territory acquired from Mexico but did not become law. Acquiring land did not resolve who could determine slavery's future there.

Three proposals for partner comparison

- A. Congress prohibits slavery in acquired territory.
- B. Territorial settlers decide through popular sovereignty.
- C. Government protects enslavers' claimed property rights in the territories.

For each: whose political power increases? Whose choices remain excluded? Which disagreements might persist even among people opposing expansion?

Write the causal link

In 3–4 sentences, explain: new territory → dispute over slavery's rules → conflict over future political power. Use one supplied source detail. Add one sentence about the human consequences shown by Northup.

The Compromise Reached the North

November 3 (Sections 2-3) / November 5 (Section 1) | Name: _____ | Section: _____

Read the overview and Jacobs preview together. In pairs, connect a national policy to an individual's choices. The rest of Chapter XL is not due until Seminar 4.

Teacher overview of the 1850 package

California entered as a free state. Utah and New Mexico territories were organized without a congressional prohibition of slavery. Other measures settled the Texas boundary, ended the slave trade in Washington, D.C. (not slavery there), and strengthened federal fugitive-slave enforcement.

[National Archives: documents and contextual introduction](#)

Jacobs: insecurity in New York

I was alone again. It was necessary for me to be earning money, and I preferred that it should be among those who knew me. On my return from Rochester, I called at the house of Mr. Bruce, to see Mary, the darling little babe that had thawed my heart, when it was freezing into a cheerless distrust of all my fellow-beings. She was growing a tall girl now, but I loved her always. Mr. Bruce had married again, and it was proposed that I should become nurse to a new infant. I had but one hesitation, and that was my feeling of insecurity in New York, now greatly increased by the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law. [...]

[Jacobs, Incidents \(1861\), Chapter XL](#)

Discuss and write

1. Identify one territorial concession and one measure that affected people living in free states.
2. Why did “free state” not guarantee security for Jacobs?
3. Together build a board diagram: western expansion → Compromise of 1850 → fugitive enforcement → insecurity and conflict in the North. Each pair explains one arrow.

Exit response (2-3 sentences): _____

Territorial Rules and the Courts

November 6 | Name: _____ | Section: _____

Read the two selections together. In pairs, annotate what each changes about federal power and who can claim rights.

Undoing the earlier territorial restriction

[...] except the eighth section of the act preparatory to the admission of Missouri into the Union approved March sixth, eighteen hundred and twenty, which, being inconsistent with the principle of non-intervention by Congress with slaves in the States and Territories, as recognized by the legislation of eighteen hundred and fifty, commonly called the Compromise Measures, is hereby declared inoperative and void; [...]

[Kansas-Nebraska Act \(1854\), §14 \(excerpt\)](#)

The Supreme Court's racial exclusion and territorial ruling

A free negro of the African race, whose ancestors were brought to this country and sold as slaves, is not a "citizen" within the meaning of the Constitution of the United States.

The Constitution of the United States recognises slaves as property, and pledges the Federal Government to protect it. And Congress cannot exercise any more authority over property of that description than it may constitutionally exercise over property of any other kind.

[Dred Scott v. Sandford \(1857\), report syllabus, I.4 and IV.4; National Archives transcript. These are separate summary provisions, not a continuous passage of Taney's opinion.](#)

Teacher context and discussion

The 1854 act reopened the question of slavery in Kansas and Nebraska. Rival settlement, contested elections, and violence followed; opposition helped build the Republican Party. The 1857 decision then challenged Congress's power to prohibit territorial slavery.

1. Explain how repealing a restriction could increase conflict over elections.
2. Separate the Scott citizenship ruling from the territorial-property ruling.
3. Compare the Scotts' use of litigation with the Wrights. Why does a lost case still show purposeful action?

The racist language is part of the historical record. The syllabus summarizes the decision; it is not the plaintiffs' voice or a continuous quotation from the majority opinion.

Family Goals and Political Crisis

November 16 · Part 1 | Name: _____ | Section: _____

Read the appeal together. Then read the platform and declaration excerpts. Identify each speaker's purpose before comparing claims.

Harriet Newby's appeal

Dear Husband, Master is in want of money ... he may sell me ... come this fall money or no money.

[Harriet Newby to Dangerfield Newby \(1859\), excerpt reproduced by the National Park Service; ellipses are in the NPS excerpt.](#)

Context: Dangerfield Newby joined John Brown's 1859 raid at Harpers Ferry and was killed. Harriet's short appeal records urgency and threatened sale; it does not establish her full opinion of Brown's plan.

Republican platform: states and territories

4. That the maintenance inviolate of the rights of the states, and especially the right of each state to order and control its own domestic institutions according to its own judgment exclusively, is essential to that balance of powers on which the perfection and endurance of our political fabric depends; [...]

[...] we deny the authority of Congress, of a territorial legislature, or of any individuals, to give legal existence to slavery in any territory of the United States.

[Republican Party platform \(1860\), §§4 and 8 \(excerpts\); American Presidency Project](#)

Secessionists' stated defense of slavery

Those States have assume the right of deciding upon the propriety of our domestic institutions; and have denied the rights of property established in fifteen of the States and recognized by the Constitution; they have denounced as sinful the institution of slavery; [...]

[South Carolina, Declaration of the Immediate Causes \(December 24, 1860\), paragraph beginning "Those States"; Yale Avalon transcription retains "have assume."](#)

1860 electoral votes: Lincoln 180; Breckinridge 72; Bell 39; Douglas 12. Total 303; majority 152. [National Archives results](#). Lincoln's election did not itself emancipate enslaved people. South Carolina seceded December 20 and issued its declaration December 24.

Explain the Road to Civil War

November 16 · Part 2 | Name: _____ | Section: _____

Work in small groups. Number the event cards in order (do not cut unless directed). Draw two arrows between events and explain the mechanism, not just “this happened next.” Then discuss whether “unavoidable” is justified.

Event cards in mixed order

[] **1857 • Dred Scott:** the majority denied citizenship to the category of people of African descent it described and rejected the territorial restriction.

[] **1820 • Missouri settlement:** state admissions and a territorial restriction managed a dispute over slavery’s expansion.

[] **1859 • Harpers Ferry:** Brown’s raid and its defeat intensified fears and disputes over antislavery action.

[] **1854 • Kansas-Nebraska:** repeal and popular sovereignty reopened a territorial contest.

[] **1860 • Election and secession:** an anti-expansion party won; secessionists chose withdrawal to defend slavery’s future.

[] **1850 • Compromise:** territorial arrangements came with stronger fugitive enforcement.

[] **1856 • Violence:** Bleeding Kansas and the caning of Senator Sumner deepened sectional hostility.

[] **1858 • Lincoln-Douglas debates:** disagreements exposed the tension between popular sovereignty and the Dred Scott decision.

Discussion and exit response

1. What difference does the Republican platform make between existing states and territories?
2. What did secessionists claim to be defending? Treat the declaration as advocacy, not a neutral legal judgment.
3. Write 4–5 sentences: identify a consequential turning point, link it to two other events, and use one supplied primary-source detail. Acknowledge one limit to a claim of inevitability.

Sources: National Archives document pages for Missouri, the 1850 compromise, Kansas-Nebraska, and Dred Scott; NPS [Lincoln-Douglas debates](#) and [Harpers Ferry](#). Source links for quoted documents are on the preceding pages.

Peer Review for the Jacobs Essay

Monday December 14 · 25 minutes | Name: _____ | Section: _____

Bring your complete December 11 draft in the same shared Word file. Share it with your assigned partner's school account. Use review/comment access if available; keep Mr. Cutler's editing access. Read and comment without rewriting your partner's sentences.

Read and respond

0-3 minutes: exchange links and share one question about your argument.

3-15 minutes: read the draft and leave three specific Word comments.

15-22 minutes: discuss a strength and a useful revision, pointing to exact paragraphs.

22-25 minutes: choose two revision priorities and begin revising. Finish your self-assessment by 3:25 p.m.

Your three comments

1. **Thesis and opening:** Does the claim explain Jacobs's strategies and limits? Where could it be more precise?

2. **Jacobs evidence and analysis:** Identify one passage whose meaning is explained well and one that needs more explanation.

3. **Comparison or citation:** Does a Wright, Northup, or Douglass comparison deepen the Jacobs argument? Or identify a footnote that needs a clearer locator.

A useful comment

"In paragraph 2, you quote Linda's letter strategy, but I need another sentence explaining what the deception changed and why she still needed help." Give the writer a next step instead of only "good job."

Writer chooses the revision

Priority 1: _____

Priority 2: _____

Why these will help: _____

These notes are for class use, not a work log or separate upload. Make revisions yourself in the shared file. Complete the four-category self-assessment after the bibliography by 3:25 p.m. If absent or unable to open the file, ask Mr. Cutler for a partner or teacher-feedback alternative.