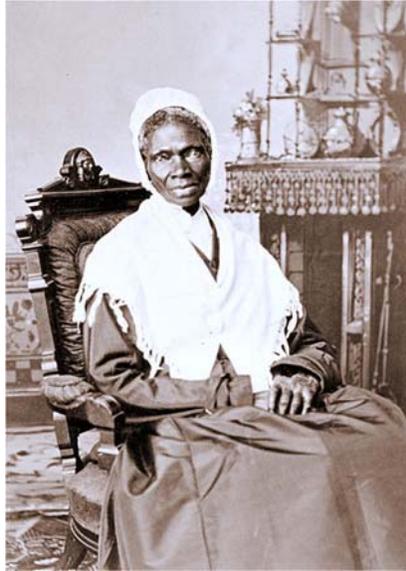


Famous African Americans – Sojourner Truth



In the Broadway musical *The Civil War*, actress Cheryl Freeman gave a powerful **monologue**.¹ The speech shocked the audience. It left them in tears. This monologue was taken from the words of Sojourner Truth. Sojourner Truth was an African-American female abolitionist. She became one of the most famous abolitionists of her time.

Sojourner Truth traveled across the country and gave important speeches. She worked towards the freeing of slaves in the United States.

Sojourner Truth was born a slave in upstate New York. However, she escaped to freedom in 1826. She had to leave some of her own children behind.

After her freedom, Sojourner Truth worked hard to fight against slavery. She inspired thousands, including President Abraham Lincoln. She even met with him at the White House.

By 1850, Sojourner Truth also worked hard to fight for women's rights. At the 1851 Women's Rights Convention, she gave a speech in support of abolition and women's rights. Here's a part of Sojourner's speech:

¹ **monologue:** long uninterrupted speech delivered by one person

*That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages,
and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody
ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best
place! And ain't I a woman?*

*Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered
into barns, and no man could best me! And ain't I a woman?*

*I could work as much and eat as much as a man--when I could get it--and
bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman?*

*I have **borne**¹ thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and
when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And
ain't I a woman?*

¹ **borne**: given birth to

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. According to the text, what did Sojourner Truth work towards?
 - A getting to meet Abraham Lincoln
 - B writing a Broadway play about her life
 - C freeing slaves in the United States
 - D rescuing her children from slavery

2. What does the author describe in the beginning of the passage?
 - A how Sojourner Truth escaped from slavery
 - B Sojourner Truth's travels across the United States
 - C how Sojourner Truth inspired Abraham Lincoln
 - D a monologue that shocked Broadway audiences

3. Sojourner Truth's speeches were moving and inspirational. What evidence from the passage supports this conclusion?
 - A During a play Cheryl Freeman gave a monologue based on Sojourner Truth's words.
 - B A speech based on Sojourner Truth's words moved an audience to tears.
 - C Sojourner Truth traveled across the country to speak to African Americans.
 - D Sojourner Truth left her children behind when she escaped from slavery.

4. Based on the passage, why did President Lincoln probably meet with Sojourner Truth?
 - A because they were both from the same town
 - B because he wanted to learn how she escaped slavery
 - C because she had important things to say about slavery
 - D because he needed her help with strategy for the Civil War

5. What is this passage mostly about?
 - A Broadway shows based on political history
 - B how Sojourner Truth and Abraham Lincoln became friends
 - C why Sojourner Truth was good at public speaking
 - D Sojourner Truth's work to fight slavery

6. Why does the author begin the passage by talking about a modern Broadway show?
- A because the author enjoys attending Broadway shows
 - B to link Sojourner Truth’s work to the present day
 - C to tell the reader about a great play called *The Civil War*
 - D to emphasize the importance of plays in the abolitionist movement

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Sojourner Truth was born a slave in upstate New York, _____ she escaped in 1826.

- A after
- B because
- C instead of
- D but

8. Based on the passage, explain why escaping slavery may have been difficult for Sojourner Truth.

9. By 1850, what did Sojourner Truth work hard to do?

10. The text includes a part of a speech given by Sojourner Truth at the 1851 Women’s Rights Convention. She gave this speech in support of abolition and women’s rights. Explain how Sojourner Truth’s words in this part of the speech show her support of abolition and women’s rights.

Teacher Guide & Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 630

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8. Based on the passage, explain why escaping slavery may have been difficult for Sojourner Truth.

Suggested answer: Escaping slavery may have been difficult for Sojourner Truth because she had to leave some of her children behind.

9. By 1850, what did Sojourner Truth work hard to do?

Suggested answer: By 1850, Sojourner Truth worked hard to fight against slavery and fight for women's rights.

10. The text includes a part of a speech given by Sojourner Truth at the 1851 Women's Rights Convention. She gave this speech in support of abolition and women's rights. Explain how Sojourner Truth's words in this part of the speech show her support of abolition and women's rights.

Suggested answer: Answers may vary but should be supported by the text. Students should indicate that Sojourner Truth shows her support of abolition by alluding to the grief and suffering slavery causes, referencing the lashes she's received and the pain of having seen most of her children sold off into slavery. Thus, Sojourner Truth is using these powerful examples to advocate for the end of slavery. As for her support of women's rights, Sojourner Truth emphasizes her ability to do the same things men can do. For example, she states, "I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could best me!" Sojourner Truth's implicit argument is that women and men are equal, so they should both have rights.