

Frederick Douglass “What to the slave is the Fourth of July?” Speech. Pages 13-34.

The following terms are words that you may not know in the Douglass speech. They are listed in order of appearance. Use this sheet as you read to help you comprehend the speech.

Definitions taken from Dictionary.com.

abolitionist	a person who favors the abolition of any law or practice deemed harmful to society; (esp. prior to the Civil War) a person who advocated or supported the abolition of slavery in the U.S.
quailing	To shrink back in fear; cower.
Exordium	the beginning of anything. the introductory part of an oration, treatise, etc.
Passover	a Jewish festival (traditionally 8 days) celebrating the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt
portending	To serve as an omen or a warning of;
infallibility	the quality of never making an error
dastard	of or befitting a dastard; mean, sneaky, and cowardly.
flippantly	To act in a disrespectful, shallow, or frivolous manner
discant	To comment or discourse at great length; a melody or counterpoint
Pharaoh	A king of ancient Egypt; a tyrant
exactions	Something called for or demanded, sometimes excessive or unjust
restive	Uneasily impatient under restriction, opposition, criticism, or delay; difficult to control.
intimated	To make known subtly or indirectly
appellation	Name, title, or designation; the act of naming
euphonious	pleasant in sound; agreeable to the ear
vociferations	Noisy outcries, clamors
martial	inclined or disposed to war; warrior like; associated with war or the armed forces.
bespeak	To ask for in advance; make arrangements for; to speak to, address
jubilee	the completion of 50 years of existence, activity, or its celebration; any season or occasion of rejoicing or festivity; rejoicing or jubilation
indolence	Habitual laziness; inactivity resulting from a dislike for work
eulogize	To praise highly in a speech or writing particularly at a memorial or funeral
repudiated	To reject the validity of; to reject as untrue, unjust; to refuse to recognize or pay
sepulchers	A burial vault; a receptacle for sacred relics, especially in an altar
obdurate	hard, obstinate, callous, unbending, inflexible; stubbornly resistant to moral influence
hart	A male deer
equivocate	to use ambiguous or unclear expressions, usually to avoid commitment or in order to mislead; prevaricate or hedge
rebuke	to express sharp, stern disapproval of; reprove; reprimand
despotisms	Rule by or as if by a despot; absolute power or authority;
execrable	utterly detestable; abominable; abhorrent
extirpate	to remove or destroy totally; do away with; exterminate; to pull up by or as if by the roots
perambulate	to walk through, about, or over; travel through; traverse
doleful	sorrowful; mournful; melancholy
fettered	Shackled; To restrict the freedom of
infidels	people who do not accept a particular faith, theory or creed esp. Christianity or Islam
propagate	To multiply, reproduce, spread, cause an increase