8th Grade ELA Comprehension Questions

“Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave”

by Frederick Douglass (p. 143-147)

1. ANALYZE TEXT – AUTOBIOGRAPHY: An **autobiography** is an account of a writer’s own life. Frederick Douglass is writing about himself and about real people and actual events. Note the use of the pronouns *I*, *me*, and *my*. The pronouns used in a text can be clues to help us determine the author’s point of view. **Re-read lines 1-11 (p. 143).** **Locate the pronouns *I*, *me*, and *my* in the text. From what point of view is Douglass writing? How does this point of view help Douglass achieve his purpose?** (RI.2.6)
2. ANALYZE STRUCTURE- Writers of autobiography often tell events in order, but they may also show how events caused other events. Recognizing such causes and effects helps readers understand why and how events occur, and how those events are connected. **Re-read lines 26-29 (p. 144). Identify through text evidence changes slavery brought about in Douglass’s mistress.** (RI.1.1, RI.1.3)
3. ANALYZE TEXT – AUTOBIOGRAPHY: In this part of his autobiography, Douglass describes how he furthered his education after his mistress no longer chose to teach him. **Re-read lines 49-76 (p. 145). Cite evidence that shows the attitudes of white boys. How are these attitudes similar to or different from the attitudes of the master and mistress?** (RI.1.1, RI.1.3)
4. ANALYZE STRUCTURE – Douglass takes the time to describe a book that had a great influence on him. It included a dialogue between a master and a slave. **Re-read lines 84–92: What happens as a result of the dialogue? Why was the dialogue so interesting to Douglass? What effect may it have had on him?** (RI.2.5)
5. ANALYZE TEXT – AUTOBIOGRAPHY: Beginning in line 112 (p. 146), Douglass describes the result of his having learned to read. **Re-read lines 112-120 (p. 146-147). Explain what Douglass believed his ability to read had caused. Cite evidence showing why he felt that way.** (RI.1.1, RI.1.3)
6. ANALYZE TEXT – AUTOBIOGRAPHY: Douglass escaped to freedom at age 20 and wrote this autobiography about seven years later. **Re-read lines 120-134 (p. 147). Why does Douglass, as a free man writing his autobiography, include these troubling thoughts he had as a teenager?** (RI.1.3, RI.2.6)