

Voices Against Slavery

Trace how abolitionists exposed slavery's moral wrongs and changed public debate.

8.24.A "describe and evaluate the historical development of the abolition movement, including activities that focused attention on the moral ills of slavery; and"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each abolitionist activity in the passage, then circle the detail that shows how an activity focused attention on the moral ills of slavery. Number the two details that best show the movement's impact or limits.

Making Slavery Impossible to Ignore

- ① In the early 1800s, many Americans accepted slavery or hoped it would fade away slowly. Black activists, formerly enslaved people, and white allies built a more demanding abolition movement. In 1831, William Lloyd Garrison began publishing *The Liberator*, a newspaper calling for immediate emancipation. That same period, Black leaders such as Maria W. Stewart spoke publicly against slavery and racism. Their words challenged people to see enslaved people as human beings with rights, not as property.
- ② Abolitionists used many activities to make slavery's cruelty visible. They organized antislavery societies, collected petitions to Congress, and held public meetings. Writers such as Frederick Douglass described beatings, family separations, and denied education in narratives and speeches. Some activists displayed objects connected to slavery, including shackles, at meetings. These efforts gave audiences evidence and personal testimony. Supporters hoped that voters, church members, and lawmakers would judge slavery as a moral wrong rather than ignore suffering occurring far from their homes.
- ③ These campaigns changed the national debate, but they also met fierce resistance. Southern lawmakers tried to block antislavery mail, and mobs attacked some speakers and printing offices. The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 made helping freedom seekers more dangerous, yet networks often called the Underground Railroad continued to assist people escaping slavery. Abolitionists did not end slavery by persuasion alone. Still, their organizing, testimony, and pressure helped build antislavery public opinion and made the conflict over slavery harder for the nation to avoid.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did the goals of the abolition movement differ from the views held by many Americans in the early 1800s?

2 Choose one abolitionist activity from paragraph 2. Explain how it could lead people to view slavery as a moral wrong.

3 What are two examples of resistance that abolitionists faced, and what do these examples show about the movement?

4 Why does the passage conclude that abolitionists were important even though they did not end slavery through persuasion alone?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write four sentences evaluating one abolitionist activity from the passage. State a claim about its effectiveness, use two details from the passage as evidence, and explain one limit or challenge the activity faced.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each abolitionist activity in the passage, then circle the detail that shows how an activity focused attention on the moral ills of slavery. Number the two details that best show the movement's impact or limits. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the goals of the abolition movement differ from the views held by many Americans in the early 1800s?	Many Americans accepted slavery or hoped it would end slowly. Abolitionists called for immediate emancipation and argued that enslaved people had human rights.
2	Choose one abolitionist activity from paragraph 2. Explain how it could lead people to view slavery as a moral wrong.	Answers may name petitions, public meetings, narratives and speeches, or displaying shackles, and explain that these activities showed evidence or personal testimony about cruelty such as beatings, family separations, or denied education.
3	What are two examples of resistance that abolitionists faced, and what do these examples show about the movement?	Southern lawmakers blocked antislavery mail, mobs attacked speakers and printing offices, and the Fugitive Slave Act made helping freedom seekers more dangerous. These examples show that abolition faced strong, sometimes violent and legal resistance.
4	Why does the passage conclude that abolitionists were important even though they did not end slavery through persuasion alone?	Their organizing, testimony, and pressure built antislavery public opinion and forced the nation to confront the conflict over slavery.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Frederick Douglass's narratives and speeches were an effective abolitionist activity because they gave audiences personal evidence of slavery's harm. His accounts of beatings, family separations, and denied education could make listeners judge slavery as a moral wrong. Personal testimony may have reached people more strongly than a general claim. However, this activity could not end slavery by persuasion alone, especially when opponents used violence and laws to resist abolition.

Accept accurate claims that evaluate an activity using passage evidence and acknowledge a limit or challenge. Students may choose any activity named in the passage if their explanation connects it to exposing slavery's moral harms or building antislavery opinion.