

Documents: William Lloyd Garrison

Name: _____

Time: _____

Date: _____

Directions: Analyze the document and answer the questions.

Background: William Lloyd Garrison became one of the leading founding members of a national abolitionist organization: The American Anti-Slavery Society. The Society called for immediate emancipation and the enfranchisement of all African Americans using non-violent means. In December 1833, a convention was held in Philadelphia to present the Society's founding documents. Garrison wrote the Declaration of the Anti-Slavery Convention (excerpts below) that set forth the principles of the Society.

More than fifty-seven years have elapsed since a band of patriots convened in this place, to devise measures for the deliverance of this country from a foreign yoke. The corner-stone upon which they founded the TEMPLE OF FREEDOM was broadly this—"that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, LIBERTY, and the pursuit of happiness. . . ."

But those, for whose emancipation we are striving, —constituting at the present time at least one-sixth part of our countrymen,—are recognised by the laws, and treated by their fellow beings, as marketable commodities—as goods and chattels—as brute beasts; —are plundered daily of the fruits of their toil without redress; —really enjoy no constitutional nor legal protection from licentious and murderous outrages upon their persons; —are ruthlessly torn asunder—the tender babe from the arms of its frantic mother—the heart-broken wife from her weeping husband—at the caprice or pleasure of irresponsible tyrants; —and, for the crime of having a dark complexion, suffer the pangs of hunger, the infliction of stripes, and the ignominy of brutal servitude. They are kept in heathenish darkness by laws expressly enacted to make their instruction a criminal offence. These are the prominent circumstances in the condition of more than TWO MILLIONS of our people, the proof of which may be found in thousands of indisputable facts, and in the laws of the slaveholding States. . . .

We further maintain—

That no man has a right to enslave or imbrute his brother—to hold or acknowledge him, for one moment, as a piece of merchandise—to keep back his hire by fraud—or to brutalize his mind by denying him the means of intellectual, social and moral improvement. The right to enjoy liberty is inalienable. To invade it, is to usurp the prerogative of Jehovah. Every man has a right to his own body—to the products of his own labor—to the protection of law—and to the common advantages of society. . . .

Therefore we believe and affirm—

That there is no difference, *in principle*, between the African slave trade and American slavery; That every American citizen, who retains a human being in involuntary bondage, is [according to Scripture] a MAN-STEALER; That the slaves ought instantly to be set free, and brought under the protection of law. . . .

Submitting this DECLARATION to the candid examination of the people of this country, and of the friends of liberty all over the world, we hereby affix our signatures to it;—pledging ourselves that, under the guidance and by the help of Almighty God, we will do all that in us lies, consistently with this Declaration of our principles, to overthrow the most execrable system of slavery that has ever been witnessed upon . . . and to secure to the colored population of the United States all the rights and privileges which belong to them as men and as Americans. . . .

Central Ideas. A central idea is the overall topic of the entire piece. Main ideas are important topics that support the central idea.

1. What is the central idea that William Lloyd Garrison is trying to communicate in this document?
 - E. Philadelphia is the birth place of American democracy.
 - H. African Americans are entitled to the same rights and privileges that all Americans have.
 - O. Over two million people are enslaved in the United States.
 - Y. Slavery is nothing more than man-stealing.

2. What is the main idea of the last paragraph?
- D. The American Anti-Slavery Society vows to end slavery.
 - I. A statement of natural rights: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.
 - R. Slavery has existed all over the world.
 - W The Declaration is to gain support from people in the South.

Words in Context. Define words based upon how they are used in the writing.

“But those, for whose emancipation we are striving, —constituting at the present time at least one-sixth part of our countrymen,—are recognised by the laws, and treated by their fellow beings, as marketable commodities....”

3. What does the word “emancipation” mean as it is used in the quote above?
- E. support for a person or group
 - H. confinement to a particular place
 - O. to set free
 - Y. to sell or exchange

Facts vs. Opinions.

Fact: A conclusion that can be proven true and/or is absolutely accurate to all people involved.

Opinion: Belief or preference about something that cannot be proven or accepted by all people.

No one has a right to enslave another human being despite what the law may state.

4. Identify the statement above as fact or opinion.
- A. fact
 - N. opinion

Textual Evidence.

5. What LEGAL examples does William Lloyd Garrison give that show the brutality of slavery?
- E. Enslaved people have no Constitutional protections.
 - H. The 14th Amendment fails to grant citizenship to all people.
 - O. It is illegal to educate enslaved people.
 - Y. According to Jehovah, everyone should enjoy liberty.