

BECOMING  
*Frederick Douglass*

HARRIET TUBMAN  
VISIONS  
OF FREEDOM

## Facilitating Dialogue in Middle and High School Classrooms

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A Companion Guide for the Maryland Public Television Films

*Becoming Frederick Douglass*  
and  
*Harriet Tubman: Visions of Freedom*

Developed in collaboration with



International Coalition of  
**SITES of CONSCIENCE**

[tubmandouglassfilms.org](http://tubmandouglassfilms.org)

*Harriet Tubman: Visions of Freedom* and *Becoming Frederick Douglass* are co-productions of Firelight Films and Maryland Public Television with an appropriation from the State of Maryland. These programs are also made possible by Bowie State University and DIRECTV.



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## Introduction

### About this toolkit

This is created for teachers looking to build a more just future through dialogue about history. Specifically, it is a companion to the Maryland Public Television original documentaries, *Becoming Frederick Douglass* and *Harriet Tubman: Visions of Freedom*.

If you haven't yet seen the documentaries, we encourage you to watch them. They present powerful resources to use with students and are the basis for the model programs and examples in this toolkit. *Becoming Frederick Douglass* explores the inspiring story of how a man born into slavery transformed himself into one of the most prominent statesmen and influential voices for democracy in American history. *Harriet Tubman: Visions of Freedom* is a rich and nuanced portrait of the woman known as a conductor of the Underground Railroad, who repeatedly risked her own life and freedom to liberate others from slavery.

As these documentaries show, the past continues to shape our world every day in ways big and small. The continued impact of the past can make conversations about history exciting, pressing, and relevant. Sites of Conscience believes that the path to a more just future comes through understanding our past. This toolkit is an introduction to foundational tools of building these conversations.

The goals of this toolkit are:

- to help you name some of the challenges, opportunities and processes you encounter when having these conversations
- offer suggestions for how to build rich dialogue.
- and present models of what those dialogues might look like.



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This guide is sectioned into four parts:

1. **Setting the Context** examines what is happening inside of us and in our social environment that pushes us away from dialogue.
2. **Tools of Dialogue** looks at the tools of dialogue and how to build a microclimate that encourages productive exchange.
3. **Model Programs** shares model programs as starting points for your own conversations.
4. **What's Next** gives a checklist for preparing for and guiding a conversation as well as a short list of resources to learn more about dialogue.

As you read this toolkit, remember that it will only be successful if the tools and frameworks it shares are paired with all of the skills, knowledge, relationships, and life experience you've accumulated over the years. You likely intuitively or intentionally do many of the things in this toolkit already and we encourage you to match what is written here to your existing strategies. As you work with students, adjust what is in the toolkit for your context, add in your own perspectives and knowledge. What we can create together will be far richer than what we can create alone.

### About the Coalition

The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC) is a worldwide network of "Sites of Conscience" – historic sites, museums and memory initiatives – that activate the power of places of memory to engage the public with a deeper understanding of the past and inspire action to shape a just future. ICSC supports its members in many ways, including providing direct funding for civic engagement programs; introducing members to a global network of similarly minded sites, helping them establish best practices and new partnerships; organizing leadership and program development opportunities; offering dialogue training; and conducting strategic advocacy for individual members and the Sites of Conscience movement. Learn more at [www.Sitesofconscience.org](http://www.Sitesofconscience.org). Or if you have any questions or want a partner to think through your program, email us at [coalition@sitesofconscience.org](mailto:coalition@sitesofconscience.org).



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## Part 1: Setting the context

Building conversations that connect past and future means working at the intersection of three things: students, time, and place. The essence of this is that if we understand who we are talking with, where we are talking, and what we are talking about, we have a good chance of producing powerful experiences.

### Past, Present and Future

The past is a powerful tool that helps us understand the complex world around us. The systems we live in are not just accidental or random, our world is the product of its history. As we build more just and humane worlds, we need to understand why our world is unjust or inhumane now and what others have done to try to fix it. The past can be many things for us, a mirror to better understand our world, a library of strategies for building just change, and a guide to understanding our current experiences.

But while the past is immensely helpful, it is not the only time we need to think about. It is critical to remember that every conversation we have about the past will be taking place right now in the present. As teachers-facilitators we support students in the present to have productive conversations using the past. The present is a complicated place with all its emotions, pressures, and nuances. This toolkit is mostly a set of tools for managing experiences in the present. The present is where we are to have our most immediate impact.

Finally, there is the future. One thing we have learned in leading these conversations for years is that most public history conversations are really about the future, about the worlds we want to build and the worlds we fear will come to be. Making the future an active part of conversations helps us separate our dreams for the future from what is and what was. Thinking about the future is one way of fully using the power of the past to shape where we are going.

The concept of the four truths emerged from the truth and reconciliation process in South Africa. In particular, it came from the jurist Albie Sachs, who developed the idea as he listened to people talk about their different

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experiences of Apartheid. The idea of the Four Truths has evolved across the Sites of Conscience since and continues to grow as Sites use them every day. The four truths help us think about the multiple layers of understanding people carry into any conversation about history.

- **Forensic Truth** is the data of the past, the verifiable and the measurables. It is the truth that textbooks excel at and are most comfortable with. However, the meaning of events, while connect to forensic truths is not derived primarily from them. Examples of forensic truth might be the date of the Emancipation Proclamation, the route Tubman took on a trip, or the text of a Douglass speech.
- **Personal Truth** is about a person's experience of an event. What was it like to live through it? Or, if they did not experience an event firsthand, who told them and how did they learn about it? Meaning and interpretation of forensic truth often begins with personal truth. What facts someone seeks and how they interpret them can be rooted in a personal experience of an event or the story told by someone important to them. Examples of personal truths could be being a free person in Baltimore in the 1830s, learning about slavery from formerly enslaved parents in the 1880s, not learning about slavery because it was left out of textbooks in the 1920s, or visiting historic sites with family in the 2010s.
- **Social Truths** are the big narratives of an event that link meaning and action. They tell a story that explains what an event means and what should happen because of it. Not everyone will believe a social truth, but enough people do that the narrative holds power in society. There are usually several contested social truths at any one time. Examples of social truths might be that the Civil War was/wasn't fought about slavery, that slavery is far and the past and doesn't affect today, or that the United States is a work in progress that needs to continued work to grow.
- **Reconciliatory Truth** is how people come to terms with perceived injustices in the past. It is the way that individuals go about trying to set things right. These attempts can be positive and bring reconciliation to greater groups of people, or they can be harmful, injuring either the self or others. Examples of reconciliatory truth could be statues and monuments, collecting family history, violent behavior, or commemorative events.



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## People

People are the core thread that connects past, present, and future. History is made up of people's experiences, it is people who wrote the history taught in school and who do the teaching, people are the ones engaging in conversation now, and it is people who will continue to make history going forward. Our ability to build movements and shape the future is rooted in the people who will do those things. In the end, it all comes back to people.

But people, just like the world we've built, are complicated. We experience the world intellectually and emotionally, we are heavily impacted by the relations around us, and we are deeply protective of the stories and identities we hold. Unraveling some of this complexity means thinking about people, our society, and ourselves.

As you rely on your existing skills and life experiences, here are a few additional suggestions to keep in mind about people as you plan to facilitate a dialogue

- Know yourself. If you don't know who you are, your passions, your identities, your biases, it will be difficult to help others navigate the world.
- Emotions are real and influence almost everything we do. A key part of a teacher-facilitator's role is helping students in the present manage the emotions evoked by interacting with other people and the past while thinking about the future.
- Pay attention to relationships. Students aren't just individuals, their social relationships play a huge role in how they experience the world, what they feel brave enough to take on and what they are pressured into staying quiet about. Look at what's happening not just inside of students, but between them.
- Watch for when core identities are activated by a conversation. People act strongly to protect the people and beliefs that make up their identities. Identities matter deeply and can be slow to change. Helping them grow and expand takes time and collaborative work. The tools in this toolkit are often focused on how to help manage the emotions that come from protecting identities.





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- Pay attention to the power dynamics in the room that are always present and will always need to be mitigated. When things are labeled “hard history” that’s usually a place where power in the past hurt people and brought benefit to itself, and that power persists today and continues to hurt people and accrue benefit. Conversations connecting past, present, and future will always navigate power.

## Place

Place is the (usually) silent third actor in our experiences. Whether that’s the power of a historic site, an unmarked location that has had a parking lot built over it, a family gathering, or the digital space of a web conference call, where we are when we experience these conversations matters. In an increasingly digital world, it can be easy to lose connection between mind, body, and place. Reconnecting those through a grounding in place increases our ability to think about the past creatively and humanely and plan the future.



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## Part 2: Tools for dialogue

Creating dialogue is about building a space that resists the pressures in society that keep us from talking, enabling all of us to engage in individual and collective learning. Dialogue is an intentional process that accounts for the world around us and gives students alternate ways of engaging. This section looks at the foundational tools the Sites of Conscience uses when it plans and facilitates dialogue.

### About dialogue

Dialogue is a mode of communication which invites people with varied experiences and often differing perspectives to engage in an open-ended conversation toward the express goal of personal and collective learning. It requires students to move beyond surface assumptions that inform their beliefs and actions and keep an open mind, suspending their judgment of the opinions of others.

Dialogue acknowledges that there are different “ways of knowing” about any given subject. It grants equal value to the insights drawn from personal experience and the knowledge gained from study. Dialogue assumes that it is possible for two markedly different perspectives to coexist at the same time.

The process of dialogue requires students to establish and nurture a culture of mutual trust and openness. Facilitated dialogue refers to a process “led” by a neutral teacher-facilitator (we refer to them as “teacher-facilitators” to emphasize that this is only one mode of interacting with students teachers will be asked to do in a day). Teacher-facilitators use a combination of questions, activities, content, and container building to ensure that all students can communicate with safety and integrity.

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## The Arc of Dialogue

Developed by Tammy Bormann and David Campt, the Arc of Dialogue pairs a common experience shared by all students with a sequence of questions designed to build increasing trust and communication, allowing students to interact in relevant and personal ways. This structure gives teacher-facilitators a roadmap to follow and to help make choices about how to support a conversation. The arc is broken into four phases with each phase requiring more trust and taking on deeper conversations.

There are many ways to understand how a conversation should unfold. We encourage you to use your knowledge of your local context to modify or create your own structures. As you do so, know that the Arc of Dialogue may have some helpful pieces as it was designed specifically for people leading public conversations in time bound settings (like classrooms and museums).

### ❖ *Arc of Dialogue: Phase One, Building Trust*

Phase one encourages connectedness and relationship-building within the group. The work done here underpins the successful creation of a safe space where all students can engage. Phase one consists of four parts: introducing the role of the teacher-facilitator, explaining the intent of the dialogue, establishing guidelines, and hearing all the voices in the room.

Phase one questions are non-threatening and allow students to share information about themselves. They require only a participant's personal experience to answer.

Sample Phase One Questions:

- Who first taught you about Tubman or Douglass and what did you learn?
- What stood out to you about the film? What surprised you? What was exciting?
- What was new, different, or challenging about this documentary?
- What is something you have kept at, even when it has been hard?

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Getting all the voices in the room does not necessarily mean that every participant must speak out loud. Teacher-facilitators might also consider using small group introductions or asking students to write their responses.

❖ *Arc of Dialogue: Phase Two, Sharing Experiences*

Phase Two invites students to reflect on their own experiences related to the topic and share these experiences with the group. The teacher-facilitator helps students recognize how their experiences are alike and different, and why.

Questions in Phase Two welcome each person's experience equally and place minimal judgment on responses, gathering more information than questions in Phase One.

Sample Phase Two Questions:

- Douglass used his own words and photographs of himself to tell his story and influence his listeners. How do you try to show your true face to the world? How do you shape your image to convey a message to the world? What do you leave out?
- In the hardest of times, where do you find your hope?
- Where there is injustice there is always resistance. How did the documentaries help you think differently about resistance and persistence in the face of slavery?
- What remains confusing to you about slavery, what questions do you still have?

Questions in Phase Two encourage the group to share both similar and differing experiences. Teacher-facilitators should ask follow-up questions, encouraging students to compare and contrast.

Sample Phase Two Follow-up Questions:

- What is missing from our conversation so far?
- How was your personal experience different from others you heard in the group?
- To what do you attribute the similarities or differences in experience?

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❖ *Arc of Dialogue: Phase Three, Exploring Beyond Personal Belief*

Phase Three questions explore the topic beyond students' personal experiences to learn with and from one another. Until this point, students speak primarily from their own experience, about which they are the undeniable expert. Phase Three questions provoke students to dig deeper into their own assumptions and to actively probe underlying social conditions that inform the diversity of perspectives. Students are no longer talking about themselves but are instead talking about larger visions for society.

Many groups can quickly engage in the first two phases of dialogue, make the leap to the third is often very difficult. Multiple dialogues may be needed to reach this point. If conflict is to arise in dialogue, this is the most likely place for it. However, this is also the phase that allows critical conversations to occur, and though it may take time and be intimidating, it is important to have these conversations as it contributes to the violence prevention endeavors.

Sample Phase Three Questions:

- Slavery required the destruction of Black support networks such as families (nuclear and extended), churches, or the Underground Railroad. Where do you see systems of support being broken down now? Where can we grow them?
- Allies, particularly White allies, were critical and problematic for both Douglass and Tubman. Where do you see helpful and unhelpful allyship today? What are the limits of allyship? Where is there greater possibility for growth?
- Tubman and Douglass were not equally well known in their own time. Are all change makers valued equally today? Are all approaches to change making valued equally? What drives any differences?
- The loss of childhood came early for enslaved children. As we think about raising strong children today, what do they need to be protected from, and what do they need to know?
- What role do you think that gender played in the way Tubman and Douglass were perceived then, and how they are perceived today?

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In Phase Three, teacher-facilitators should be particularly focused on helping students surface the assumptions that they have made/are making about the topic and other participant experiences, encouraging them to examine why they feel as they do. When necessary, teacher-facilitators can help guide students toward deeper understanding, using probing questions that elicit more information/explanations from the speaker.

Sample Phase Three Probing Questions:

- Can you tell me more about that?
- How did you come to feel this way?
- What are the assumptions you make when you think about this topic?

❖ *Arc of Dialogue Phase Four, Synthesis and Moving Forward*

After conversations that reveal differences as well as similarities between students, it is important to end a dialogue by reinforcing a sense of community. Phase Four questions help students examine what they've learned about themselves and each other and to voice the impact that the dialogue has had on them. Phase Four is also the time for students to think about what they would like to do next and how they would like to carry this dialogue further into their lives and communities.

Sample Phase Four Questions:

- What stood out to you about today's conversation? What did you hear that was new? What do you want to think about more?
- Who do you want to share these films and conversations with?
- What is something you want to persist despite of? Who will you persist for?

Remember, the goal of dialogue is to further personal and collective learning, not necessarily to encourage compromise or accomplish a specific task.



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## Dialogic questions

Developing and asking the right questions is vital to the success of dialogue programs. Questions prompt students to examine their own life and thought process while hearing new stories and information from others. Dialogic questions promote learning and conversation and take practice to become adept at.

Dialogic questions have two common elements:

- Open ended, with no right or wrong answer
- Answerable by everyone because they ask for opinion, belief, or knowledge based on personal experience.

Being open ended and answerable makes dialogic questions generative. In answering the question and hearing them answered by others, students are likely to hear something they have never heard before.

A few tips for about dialogic questions:

- Ask questions you genuinely want to know the answers to.
- Push for more than “what does this mean to you?”
- Connect your questions to the content of the conversation (in this case, the documentaries).
- Let students play more than one role (ex. “When was a time you welcomed someone to your community? When have you been exclusive?”)
- Collaborate with others when building your questions in the planning phase.



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## Containers for dialogue

Put students in a good setting and they will respond positively. Put students in a challenging setting and it can make connections and conversation harder. The goal of a planned container is that everyone can meet on a comfortable, level plane with no added barriers to connection. Containers think about both the physical and social elements of a space:

Helpful physical containers:

- Make everyone feel safe and welcome
- Are accessible in a wide range of ways, from no physical barriers, to ease of transportation, to the ability to comfortably move through any security.
- Meet students' needs for physical comfort from temperature to seating
- Physically manifest the cultures of people present, through elements such as design, decoration, and arrangement.

Helpful social containers:

- Make everyone feel safe and welcome
- Provide clarity on the ground rules or the behavioral expectations in the space
- Flatten hierarchies
- Are inclusive



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## Activities for dialogue

Activities help groups better engage with each other and solve problems as they arise. Activities in a dialogue can be anything from asking students to write a poem, to taking and sharing photographs on a tour, to breaking into small groups for additional conversation. Activities help us change three things:

- how many students are talking to each other?
- how they are able to express themselves,
- how students are physically oriented towards each other.

We usually only plan one or two activities for a dialogue. If we plan an activity, it is usually to:

- help get all the voices in the room at the start.
- make the jump from phase two to three (switching from personal stories to social thinking).
- or in phase four, to help students synthesize and commit to what's next.

As teachers, you already know dozens of activities from pair share (or turn and talk) to a writing activity and more. Draw on your existing knowledge as you plan dialogues! As you make your plans, two of our favorite activities are:

- Small groups- They make almost everything better. The scale becomes more personal, safety goes up, anxiety goes down (typically), and more students can talk simultaneously. Small groups are probably our most common activity.
- Drawing - From asking students to draw how concepts fit together to creating pictures of our imagined futures, drawing (even stick figures!) helps us communicate in a way words can't always.

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## Using historical content

Some of the richest dialogue happens at the intersection of personal experiences and new information. Ask students to talk about what gives them strength and you will have a good conversation. Ask them that same question after learning about Harriet Tubman and you are likely to have a much richer exchange. Content gives us new perspectives while also grounding our conversations. Content can come from many sources (books, plays, exhibits, tours, etc.) and in this case it comes from the documentaries. Rooting questions in the history, pulling up clips from the documentary, having quotes to read are all great ways of bringing the history into your dialogue.

In public conversations about history, students will bring their own information, misconceptions, and beliefs about the past with them. As you listen to students talk about history (and as you think about what you want to share) it is helpful to recognize that disagreements about history are only sometimes disagreements about the facts. More often in our experience, they are disagreements about the framing of history. Framing disagreements often involve students sharing mostly correct information, but because of what they've chosen to include or exclude it has very different meanings. There are four key framing choices that we see come up in public history conversations regularly:

- Voice - Who tells the story and what perspective do we see it from?
- Scope - What are the boundaries of the story, where and when does it take place?
- Centrality - Within those boundaries, who is focused on?
- Agency - Who has the power to make choices and influence action?

For example, you may have a participant speak about what freedom in America means and has meant. In doing that, they will make choices about whose perspective freedom (or lack of freedom) is seen from, what places and times they choose to talk about, who they focus on (or leave in the shadows) and imply who has the power to strengthen or weaken freedom in any given moment. Hearing this narrative, not in terms of right and wrong, but with a framework of what is included and excluded can help you think about how to use history from the documentaries to broaden the perspective and enrich the conversation.



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Following an Arc and using these four tools mixed with your own years of experience, you can build positive public history conversations. Here are a final few tips on building effective dialogues:

- Be patient and let students get to know each other, Phase 1 matters.
- Be curious, ask questions you want to know. Your curiosity will rub off on others.
- Pay attention to the social dynamics and hierarchies of the space. If someone is dominating or someone else needs a break, remind students of ground rules or go to small groups. You have the tools to guide the experience.
- If possible, root the conversation in the uniqueness of your space and community. A conversation about the documentary should be different in Oregon than in Georgia.
- If you are newer to facilitation (or even if you aren't) don't be afraid to co-facilitate. ICSC cofacilitates all the time.

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## Part 3: Model dialogues

To help you design your dialogues, here are three models as starting points. You will need to modify them to fit your group, your personal approach, and the context you are in. Borrow freely from these in your planning, throw parts out, and add in your own components. You know your audience best. If you have any questions, feedback, or want to talk through how you are planning a conversation, always feel free to reach out to us ([coalition@sitesofconscience.org](mailto:coalition@sitesofconscience.org), [www.sitesofconscience.org](http://www.sitesofconscience.org)).

### Model group agreements:

There are many different ground rules that can be helpful for a dialogue. If you have classroom rules already established, they can be tremendously helpful here. A few agreements we like:

- Make space for all voices. We benefit most when we can hear from everyone.
- Be curious, if you hear something new or that you disagree with, ask questions rather than attacking.
- Treat each other with care.
- Be brave.

### Model 1: Persistence

- Trust Building (Phase 1)
  - Who first taught you about Tubman or Douglass and what did you learn?
  - What stood out to you about the film? What surprised you? What was exciting?
  - What was new, different, or challenging about this documentary?
  - What is something you have kept at, even when it has been hard?
- Sharing Experiences (Phase 2)
  - Both Tubman and Douglass drew on themselves and other people as they took on difficult tasks. Where do you draw your strength from?



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- Both Tubman and Douglass are often shown as heroic characters acting alone, but each deeply depended on other people and their community for support. Who has shaped and supported you in ways that resonate with the film?
- Douglass was always a man who was becoming. Who are you becoming, what have you left behind, who has helped you become who you are now?
- Douglass changed strategies when he needed to. When have you chosen to persist by switching tactics?
- In the hardest of times, where do you find your hope?
- Exploring Beyond Personal Belief (Phase Three)
  - Slavery required the destruction of Black networks of support such as families (nuclear and extended), churches, the underground railroad, etc. Where do you see systems of support being broken down now, where can we grow them?
  - Persistence is multi-generational. How does the past support you? How are you supporting future generations?
  - How is persistence misconstrued in the media and popular conversation?
  - How do we care for the harm received while persisting?
- Synthesis and Moving Forward (Phase Four)
  - What stood out to you about today's conversation? What did you hear that was new? What do you want to think about more?
  - Who do you want to share these films and conversations with?
  - What is something you want to persist despite of? Who will you persist for?

## Model 2: Activism

- Trust Building (Phase 1)
  - Who first taught you about Tubman or Douglass and what did you learn?
  - What stood out to you about the film? What surprised you? What was exciting?
  - What was new, different, or challenging about this documentary?

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- Harriet Tubman's knowledge of the water, forests, and how to survive outside were critical for her ability to fight for freedom. What are some skills not usually associated with change making that enable you to have an impact and help others?
- Find a picture of that conveys the essence of who you are? What is the image and what does it convey?
- Sharing Experiences (Phase 2)
  - Harriet Tubman saw visions that guided her purpose. Where does your vision for the future come from?
  - Before the Civil War, Douglass and Tubman challenged slavery in different ways, Tubman primarily through small scale direct action, and Douglass primarily through public education and advocacy. Where do you see these choices about approaches happening around you today? When have you chosen either of these strategies for change making? What, if anything, frustrates you about how you see these tactics used today?
  - Douglass used his own words and photographs of himself to tell his story and influence his listeners. How do you try to show your true face to the world? How do you shape your image to convey a message to the world? What do you leave out?
  - When you need to take on something difficult, who stands beside you?
- Exploring Beyond Personal Belief (Phase Three)
  - Allies, particularly White allies, were critical and problematic for both Douglass and Tubman. Where do you see helpful and unhelpful allyship today? What are the limits of allyship, where is there greater possibility for growth?
  - Tubman and Douglass were not equally well known in their own time. Are all change makers valued equally today? Are all approaches to change making valued equally? What drives any differences?
  - Both Tubman and Douglass had to constantly assess the risks of their work. How have you chosen to weigh the risks of challenging injustice?

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- Tubman and Douglass's experiences in the world were defined not just by race, but also by gender. How does gender influence the way people are treated in your school? What paths does it open for them, what does it close down?
- What role does media and social media play in how we understand or misunderstand change makers?
- Who tells the story of you or your community well? What is mistold about it?
- What do you think causes people to change their mind about injustice?
- Synthesis and Moving Forward (Phase Four)
  - What stood out to you about today's conversation? What did you hear that was new? What do you want to think about more?
  - Who do you want to share these films and conversations with?
  - Douglass told the country things it needed to hear, even if many people did not want to hear them. What will you share with the world?

### Model 3: Slavery

- Trust Building (Phase 1)
  - Who first taught you about slavery in the US and what did you learn?
  - What stood out to you about the film? What surprised you? What was exciting?
  - What was new, different, or challenging about this documentary?
- Sharing Experiences (Phase 2)
  - The films directly addressed several myths about slavery. What were you mistaught about slavery? What have you had to unlearn? What perspectives have helped your new learning?
  - Where there is injustice there is always resistance. How did the documentaries help you think differently about resistance and persistence in the face of slavery?
  - What remains confusing to you about slavery? What questions do you still have?
  - The scale and extent of slavery can be overwhelming, what strategies do you use to ground yourself when thinking about such extensive trauma? What would you like to be better at?

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- Exploring Beyond Personal Belief (Phase Three)
  - One of the myths of slavery is that gender made White women kinder to enslaved people than White men, but both Tubman and Douglass experienced a different reality. Where do you see gender confusing conversations about race, and when is it indispensable to those conversations?
  - Another myth of slavery is that the enslaved were passive and did not resist, though both Tubman and Douglass show us the counter. Over the course of their lives, each adopted different strategies for resistance and were sometimes more effective than others. Where do you see successful resistance around you now? What strategies do you see being counterproductive?
  - The loss of childhood came early for enslaved children. As we think about raising strong children today, what do they need to be protected from, and what do they need to know?
  - What connections do you see between Tubman and Douglass' world and ours today?
  - Slavery relied on power and "othering" people? Where does othering occur in the US now? Where does it occur in your school?
- Synthesis and Moving Forward (Phase Four)
  - What stood out to you about today's conversation? What did you hear that was new? What do you want to think about more?
  - Who do you want to share these films and conversations with?
  - What questions do you still have?
  - Harriet Tubman helped others reach freedom. Who can you be a conductor for?



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## Now What?

Now it is time to plan your dialogue. The framing questions for your planning session should address:

- Who is this for?
- What is the impact we hope to have?
- What are the big ideas/history at the core of this?

### Planning your program

Here is a checklist for thinking through the entire planning process:

#### *Pre-Dialogue*

- Preparing Yourself
  - Do the research, be informed about the issues central to the dialogue.
  - Evaluate yourself, what strong feelings do you have about these issues?
  - Find a co-facilitator, ideally someone with a different identity relevant to the dialogue.
- Preparing Students
  - Introduce the project
  - Explain dialogue
  - Introduce the process
    - Who, where, why, and how are we having dialogue.
  - Answer student questions
  - Prepare a space
  - Choose a safe and neutral space.
  - Make the space welcoming and comfortable.

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- Arrange the seating so that everyone can see each other and so that no one is more important than anyone else.
- Co-facilitators should be positioned so they can easily make eye contact as needed.

#### *During Dialogue*

- ❖ The Teacher-Facilitator
  - Models inquiry and curiosity for the class.
  - Uses questions to help students examine their own beliefs and hear about others' points of view.
  - Helps students navigate conflict and follow the guidelines.
- ❖ Guidelines
  - Ask the group to agree to guidelines for interaction. Either suggest rules or facilitate the class in creating their own.
  - Write down the rules and post them in a visible place during the dialogue.
- ❖ Build Trust (Phase One)
  - Get all of the voices in the room, even in small amounts
  - Use easy "I" questions to have students begin talking about their personal experience with the topic.
- ❖ Share Experiences (Phase Two)
  - Use harder "I" questions that ask students to examine their beliefs and share not just what they think, but why they think that way. Dialogue stays centered on personal experience.

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- ❖ Exploring Beyond Personal Belief (Phase Three)
  - Use harder “we” questions that ask students to move beyond their own experience and talk about society at large.
- ❖ Synthesis and Moving Forward (Phase Four)
  - Use medium “I” questions to ask students to reflect on what they have learned.
  - Use medium “I” question to ask students what action they will take now.
  - Teacher-facilitator synthesizes the big ideas of the dialogue. Not everyone has to be in agreement, but the teacher-facilitator frames the conversation so students can move forward positively.

#### *After Dialogue*

- Keep any promises made to students.
- Plan your next conversation, the more students are able to talk, the more trust they will build and the further they will go.

#### Additional learning resources

The Little Book of Dialogue for Difficult Subjects, by Lisa Schirch and David Camp.

Sites of Conscience [Webinars](#)

Sites of Conscience [Front Page Dialogues](#)

Visit [tubmandouglassfilms.org/classroom](http://tubmandouglassfilms.org/classroom) for more instructional resources.