



Wings Of Literacy

Directions: Read the author's background and the passage that follows. Think about how the author's life, experiences, or historical context may have shaped the ideas in the passage. Then, answer the questions in complete sentences, providing evidence from both the author's background and the passage.

Author Background

Frederick Douglass was born into slavery in Maryland in 1818. He escaped in 1838 and became a leading voice in the abolitionist movement. Douglass wrote and spoke widely about the injustices of slavery, the importance of education, and the need for equality. His personal experiences as an enslaved man heavily influenced his writings and speeches.

The Power of Learning

I once watched a group of boys reading aloud from a book, their faces glowing with curiosity and confidence. At that moment, I realized the secret that had long been kept from me: education was the pathway to freedom. My master once said that teaching a slave to read would "spoil" him forever. He was right, though not in the way he intended. To learn is to open a door that can never be shut. Words, once gained, cannot be taken away. They become wings that carry the mind beyond chains, beyond cruelty, and beyond silence.

1. How does Frederick Douglass's background as an enslaved person connect to the ideas expressed in the passage?
2. Why does the author describe education as "wings that carry the mind beyond chains"?
3. What does the master's warning reveal about the power of literacy in the context of slavery?
4. How might Douglass's life experiences make his message about education more powerful for his audience?