

Lesson 6: Mary Church Terrell and Frederick Douglass

Does hope triumph over despair?

Objective/Rationale	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Examine one of the historical documents to understand why Douglass Day was created. ● Evaluate the facts, conditions and character of a <i>hagiographic figure</i> to determine whether Douglass' hero status is appropriate ● Analyze and explain the reasons for national or regional celebrations of historic figures and or monuments 	
Materials	
Links and or printouts, paper & pencil for students to take notes and or screens--depending on the classroom structure-online, hybrid or in person.	
Resource Links	
<p>LOC holding of Terrell explaining Douglass Day https://crowd.loc.gov/campaigns/mary-church-terrell-advocate-for-african-americans-and-women/speeches-and-writings/mss425490606/mss425490606-3/</p> <p>Article which describes Frederick Douglass http://www.milwaukeeindependent.com/articles/frederick-douglass-day-february-14th-holiday-hallmark-makes-no-greeting-cards-celebrate/</p> <p>Press release from Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton re Mary Church Terrell Day https://norton.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/norton-reintroduces-mary-church-terrell-day-resolution-honoring-the-0</p>	
Essential Question:	
Is celebrating historical figures hopeful?	
Teacher/Facilitator	
<p>Introduction: Teacher please read and distribute the biography of Mary Church Terrell (use active reading strategies in accordance with your students levels and needs).</p> <p>Discuss that Terrell created Frederick Douglass Day two years after he died to keep alive the memory of his life and the incredible work he did as a statesman and Founding Father of America.</p>	

Do you know who Frederick Douglass was? **Read and distribute** Douglass' biography. Douglass was an activist and author who is famous for a number of sayings including, **“No man can put a chain about the ankle of his fellow man without at last finding the other end fastened about his own neck.”**

Do you think this quote is true? What do you think this quote means?

[Frederick Douglass Biography](#)

Mary Church Terrell & Frederick Douglass

After Douglass's death in 1895, Terrell wanted to make sure that no one would forget the contributions Douglass had made to the development of America as a land of freedom and opportunity for all. She decided that the best way to do this was to create a holiday which honored Douglass's life. In Washington DC, the first Frederick Douglass Day was held on February 14, 1897. School children in DC and eventually all across the eastern sea-board recited Douglass's speeches, learned about his activism and remembered him-singing happy birthday and eating birthday cake on his special day! Today we are joining Terrell and people all over the world to celebrate Douglas on his birthday and recognize Terrell's efforts to make sure we never forget Douglass or his passion for freedom.

Currently, Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton represents Washington, D.C. She is a powerful Black woman politician who understands Terrell's importance and is trying to get September 23rd recognized as Mary Church Terrell Day, to celebrate the day Terrell was born. Congresswoman Norton has said about Terrell, "Her education empowered her to speak against the flaws of segregation and voter suppression. Our history books are littered with the accomplishment of men, but not enough of women who, like Mary Church Terrell, have worked to change the world." Congresswoman Holmes Norton wants us to honor Mary Church Terrell. What do you think?

Suggested Activities:

Note: This is a suggested list of activities which students can complete to explore this issue.

1. **Interactive vocabulary** -To create shared language and basic understanding, students should work with the list of terms--read the definitions, use them in complete sentences, look up the definitions on their phones, learn them for spelling etc. the day before or right before the class starts.
2. **Watch/log** into the site---to learn the difference between a primary and secondary source.

(Primary Source Link Below)

<https://www.loc.gov/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/?&loclr=reclnk>

3. **Transcribe:** Students will transcribe primary documents from Terrell’s archives at the Library of Congress. Please walk students through the process of logging on to *We the People* and follow the directions to begin transcribing. After transcribing, discuss the experience. What did you learn about segregation in education? What do you believe and why? Explain.

After transcribing, discuss the experience. What do you think about Douglass Day? What have you learned about Douglass and Terrell, do you think their lives are important to remember? What are some of the issues today that you think they would get involved, why? Make sure to include specific references to the primary documents you looked at when you make your case.

INSTRUCTIONS: How to transcribe

<https://crowd.loc.gov/help-center/how-to-transcribe/>

Summative exercise/homework

Questions:

- How would create a celebration of the life of Mary Church Terrell?
- Why would this be important?
- What would you include?
- What day would you choose, September 23rd?
- What would you want people to know or learn about Terrell?
- How would you connect this celebration to Douglass?

Working individually or as a group, **write a rationale** of your argument. If you would, please share with us what you come up with for your celebration of the life of Mary Church Terrell.’

Email us at: douglasdayorg@gmail.com

Thanks!

Link to Post-Lesson Feedback Form

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1PBkoZrVOBAi2uSX7WjlNo7RxiOdZ8skhuNwJtLj0Gz8/edit>

Vocabulary Terms

1. **Activist**--person who works to effect political change
2. **Abolitionist**--person who wants to destroy an institution ex slavery
3. **Author**--person who writes a book/report/text
4. **Suffragist**--advocates that the right to vote be extended to everyone especially women
5. **Founding Father**--male who starts, contributes to or helps in the creation of an institution
6. **Statesman**--skilled respected political leader and or figure
7. **Honor**--high respect, great esteem or regard
8. **Memorial**--something established to remind people of a person, place or event
9. **Republican**--a person who advocates or supports republican form of government
10. **Orator**--person who is very eloquent, skilled at public speaking