

## CAPTIVITY NARRATIVE

*A Narrative of the Captivity* p. 40

**Allusion** – a reference to someone or something that is known from history, literature, religion, or some other branch of culture

Mary Rowlandson uses Biblical allusion to present her story as a repetition of the Biblical pattern of enslavement and liberation from sin through the intervention of God. (Moses and the Israelites)

1. There are two allusions on p. 41. Identify those allusions and explain their effect.
2. Why do you think her captors allow her to have and read a Bible?
3. What does Rowlandson do to earn her food?
4. What do you think was Rowlandson's purpose in writing this narrative?
5. What are some of the conflicting feelings that Rowlandson has about her captors?
6. When does she write her narrative?
7. After favoring Rowlandson by giving her a lighter load, her captor refuses to give her a spoonful of meal. How do you explain this paradoxical behavior?
8. When she wants comfort, Rowlandson turns to the Bible. The Indians try to comfort her with food. Why do you think they do this?
9. Describe Rowlandson's changing relationship with her captors.
10. Why do you think she makes a point of the fact that the Indians do not harm her?
11. Give a least three examples during the story where she sees Divine Providence at work.
12. Read "Captivity Narratives" on p. 42 – 43.

## SLAVE NARRATIVE

*The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano p. 57*

**Autobiography** – a firsthand account of an author's life

1. From the first three lines of the narrative, what do you think the author's attitude toward slavery will be?
2. What was Equiano's life like before he was taken captive?
3. How is the kidnapping of Equiano similar to and different from the kidnapping of Mary Rowlandson?
4. How is Equiano treated by his captors and owners while he is still enslaved in West Africa?
5. Why do you think the people that he was sold to carried him?
6. How would you characterize the treatment he received from the merchant? (p. 60)
7. Irony occurs when there is a discrepancy between appearance and reality. Explain the irony of Equiano's situation as he describes it. (p. 60)
8. In "The Slave Ship," find the irony in Equiano's view of the slave traders.
9. How do some of the Africans on the ship try to escape their bondage?
10. Why are some of the captives flogged?
11. What is the worst aspect of his suffering on his trip?
12. Why do you think he is beaten for not eating on the ship?
13. The last four lines of the autobiography reveal Equiano's purpose in writing the narrative. Explain.
14. How would you describe the contradiction between the crew's main goal (making a profit) and the treatment of the captives?