

You Decide: Antebellum America

The struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.

- Frederick Douglass, 1849*

ACTIVITIES

1

The debate on Henry Highland Garnet's "[Address to the Slaves of the United States](#)" lasted for four days before Garnet's call to arms was rejected by the 1843 Negro National Convention at Buffalo. Why did delegates such as Douglass oppose the address, even though they did not oppose armed resistance? Read Douglas response(<http://www.teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=1031>). Imagine that you are attending the convention. Prepare a brief speech stating your position on the views expressed in the debate.

2

Imagine you are an anti-slavery sympathizers in the 1850s. Write an autobiographical narrative in the tradition of historical characters that you have studied. The narratives will describe how you addressed the issue of slavery, and should include how old they are, what work they do, what skills they have, and where they live. Base your narrative on historical evidence, such as authentic narratives, letters, and period newspaper articles.

Resource Bank: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/index.html>

Consider these questions:

- What will you need to know and to do? How will you find this information and decide what action to take?
- Whom will you need to trust?
- What obstacles or challenges will you face? How might you overcome them?
- How will you persuade others to support anti-slavery?
- What are the risks if you are discovered?

*quoted in Timothy J. Paulsen, *Days of Sorrow, Years of Glory 1831-1850*. (New York: Chelsea House, 1994), 106.