

Final Assessment Answer Sheet

- 1) These statements are true about Frances Ellen Watkins Harper's life.
 - 2) She wrote in many different literary genres.
 - 3) She was a famous public speaker.
 - 4) She was an advocate for black literacy.
- 2) Who were the "Yankee Teachers"?
 - 2) Predominantly white, but also some black women from the North who came to the South after the Civil War to teach former slaves to read and write.
- 3) Identify true statements about enslaved literacy:
 - 2) Slaves sometimes taught themselves how to read and write.
 - 3) It was against the law to teach slaves to read and write in the South.
 - 4) Slaves saw literacy as a major key to attaining freedom.
- 4) Why does Frances Ellen Watkins Harper use the character of Aunt Chloe in the poem, "Learning to Read." Identify all statements that are true.
 - 4) All of the above.
- 5) Enslaved people viewed literacy as a skill that could lead them to freedom and greater opportunities. Explain how one of your "literacies" benefits you now and how you think it will benefit you in the future? This includes traditional literacy (Reading and writing); technological literacy (skill with using computer hardware and software); Cross-Cultural literacy (knowledge of other cultures that aids communication and working effectively cross-culturally); and financial literacy (knowledge of how to manage money such as credit and investments).

Answer: The student address choose one way s/he is literate and address both how their literacy is beneficial now and in the future. For example, if the student chooses "Traditional Literacy" they may respond in this manner. Example Answer:

"Being able to read and write is very beneficial to me. It helps me with my homework assignments and I can get through these fairly quickly because of my reading at grade level or above. I also "Google" topics I don't know much about on my personal computer so I can find out about things I'm interested in. My strong reading skills help me learn a lot "on my own." I also write a blog about having an intellectually disabled brother; it helps me be an effective blogger about living with a family member who is special needs. Since I plan to go to college I believe being a good read and writer will help me a lot there because I know I'll have to read more and have to write more papers. I also believe my strong

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reading and writing skills will help me on the language part of the SAT which will help me to get into the college of my choice.

6) Refer to the full text of “Learning to Read” on the next page. In the right–hand column of the table below, explain in your own words what each verse means.

B. “Stealing” literacy during Slavery

Summarize the meanings both direct and implied.

B 3) Our masters always tried to hide Book learning from our eyes;	Looking back on the time when she was enslaved, Aunt Chloe remembers that Masters saw enslaved literacy as a threat to their authority. So they kept slaves away from learning to read and “book learning” i.e. education
4) Knowledge didn’t agree with slavery, T’would make us all too wise.	If slaves gained knowledge through reading they may know more than the Master and challenge his/her authority over them; under the system of slavery the master’s power over his/her slaves was absolute.
5) But some of us would try to steal A little from the book,	Despite laws prohibiting teaching slaves to read and write, many slaves resisted this law by teaching themselves, i.e., “stealing a little from the book”.
6) And put the words together, And learn by hook or crook.	Slaves taught themselves to read “by hook or crook;” which means by any means available.
7) I remember Uncle Caldwell Who took pot-liquor fat	In verses 7–12 below Aunt Chloe provides two vivid case studies of enslaved men she knew during slavery who taught themselves to read. “Uncle Caldwell” is a person Aunt Chloe knew; “pot liquor fat” is grease mixed with water left in in a pan after stewing something.
8) And greased the pages of his book, And hid it in his hat.	Using the grease from the pot as a “glue,” Uncle Caldwell hides the pages in his hat. In this manner he could “look at his hat” and disguise the fact that he was learning letters or words.
9) And had his Master ever seen The leaves upon his head,	Even if Uncle Caldwell were caught by his Master, it would not have occurred to him that Uncle Caldwell was learning to read from the “leaves upon his head”.
10) He’d have thought them greasy papers, But nothing to be read.	Master would not have been able to put 2 + 2 together to figure out that Uncle Caldwell was using the “greasy papers” to teach himself literacy.
11) And there was Mr. Turner’s Ben, Who heard the children spell,	This is another friend of Aunt Chloe. “Mr. Turner’s Ben” means Ben was the slave of Mr. Turner. Ben would listen to children studying their spelling lessons ...
12) And picked the words right up by heart, And learned to read ‘em well.	and memorized the words they were learning, and soon could read them as well as spell them.

After describing in your own words what each verse means, explain why you think Frances Ellen Watkins Harper uses the character of Aunt Chloe to discuss the issue of learning to read during slavery and in the period of Reconstruction, after slavery was abolished?

Answer: Harper uses the Character of Aunt Chloe to “personify” “the issue of African American literacy before and after slavery. Rather than speaking “in the abstract”, she presents specific examples of real people: “Uncle Caldwell” and “Mr. Turner’s Ben” and describes how they taught themselves

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letters and words at a time when it was against the law for slaves to read and write. By using “people” she brings the issue to life and shows the lengths slaves went to acquire literacy. She also uses herself as an example of how one can learn to read at any age (she is nearly 60 years old) and also as an example of availing herself of the services of the “Yankee teachers” who came to the South to teach former slaves to read and write. One reason for speaking about “learning to read” during slavery and after slavery, is to contrast how easy it is to learn to read now vs. how hard it was to “steal from a little from the book” during slavery. She also exemplifies two benefits of being able to read and write: she’s been able to buy a little cabin of her own and she’s able to read her Bible on her own, without someone to read it to her.

B 3) Our masters always tried to hide Book learning from our eyes;	Looking back on her Aunt Chloe remembers that Masters saw enslaved literacy as a threat to their authority so kept their slaves far removed from learning to read and “book learning” i.e. education
4) Knowledge didn’t agree with slavery, T’would make us all too wise.	If slaves gained knowledge through reading they could challenge the Master’s authority over them; under the system of slavery the master’s power over the slave was absolute.
5) But some of us would try to steal A little from the book,	Despite laws prohibiting teaching slaves to read and write, many slaves resisted this law by teaching themselves, i.e. “stealing a little from the book”.
6) And put the words together, And learn by hook or crook.	Slaves taught themselves to read “by hook or crook;” this is another way of saying by any means available.
7) I remember Uncle Caldwell Who took pot-liquor fat	In verses 7–12 below Aunt Chloe provides two vivid case studies of enslaved individuals she knew during slavery who taught themselves to read in ingenious ways.
8) And greased the pages of his book, And hid it in his hat.	
9) And had his Master ever seen The leaves upon his head,	
10) He’d have thought them greasy papers, But nothing to be read.	
11) And there was Mr. Turner’s Ben, Who heard the children spell,	
12) And picked the words right up by heart, And learned to read ‘em well.	Digging deeper into the text: Why does Harper have Aunt Chloe look back to her slavery days to provide two cases of enslaved men who taught themselves to read and write, despite its being illegal?