

What is the meaning of the 4th of July?

Gather virtually to read Frederick Douglass's famous answer.



FREDERICK DOUGLASS In 1838, Frederick Douglass escaped slavery and began a new life in Massachusetts. By 1852, he had become one of the most celebrated writers and orators of his day. Throughout his life, he challenged slavery and racism. His words remind us of the gulf between our aspirations and our reality. They remain a call for equity today.



THE SPEECH Douglass delivered the Fourth of July speech on July 5, 1852, in Rochester, New York, to the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society. Written in the midst of abolitionist protests over laws making it a crime to assist people escaping slavery, it remains one of his most powerful statements. Versions of the speech in English, Spanish and Haitian Kreyol are available [here](#).

READING TODAY

Take turns reading the speech, a paragraph at a time, with friends, family, or community.

SHARE YOUR STORY

Share photos and reflections on social media: #RFDT20

VIRTUAL GATHERING TIPS

- Choose a virtual platform, learn the security features and how to manage participation.
- Make sure everyone knows the rules of the room and how to follow them.
- Read in an assigned order or with pre-assigned paragraphs.

RESOURCES

Discussion resources for talking about race:

<https://communitychangeinc.org/resource-center/>

Douglass discussion resources:

<https://masshumanities.org/programs/douglass/douglass-resources/>

