



MADISON EAST HIGH SCHOOL

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Mary Kelley, *Principal**Assistant Principals:*

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Dear Honors US History 9 student,

Welcome to Honors U.S. History 9! I look forward to pursuing US History from Reconstruction through World War II with you in the next school year.

In order to help prepare for the class, and as your first major assignment, please read *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs (pseudonym Linda Brent) and/or the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* by Frederick Douglass. Jacobs and Douglass wrote their stories with the hope that others would come to better understand the specific and grim realities of slavery. While you read, pay special attention to what the writer(s) had to say about family, power, education, religion, and rebellion. Also, please think about the way in which the writer coped with slavery, reacted to places, historical events, and who they feel slavery hurt. None of these are simple issues. Jacobs and Douglass each have distinct backgrounds, experiences and opinions and sometimes different thoughts. What I would like you to do is to summarize the ideas you feel that Jacobs and/or Douglass most want people to take with them from their writing. Please type your summary (12 point font, 1.5 spacing) or write it out in ink by September 8th, 2011. Be as precise in your writing as possible and use specific examples and ideas to support your views. I will be looking for a thoughtful and thorough understanding of the text(s) you choose so that we can better discuss the texts and the very complex nature of slavery in class when this assignment is due.

Both of *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* and *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* are available in several editions and forms and can be easily located in libraries and bookstores. The *Classic Slave Narratives* edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. is a nice edition and includes both the story of Harriet Jacobs and Frederick Douglass. However, both slave narratives are also available in full text online at the following addresses. Links to these sites will also be available on my website, www.mshotz.net.

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl by Harriet Jacobs

- <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/menu.html>
- <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~Hyper/JACOBS/hjhome.htm>

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass by Frederick Douglass

- <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Literature/Douglass/Autobiography/>
- <http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/DouNarr.html>

Again, welcome to Honors U.S. History 9. I look forward to seeing you when school begins.

Sincerely,

Jessica Hotz

U.S. History Teacher

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