



Reading Informational Texts:

Nonfiction Passages and Exercises
Based on the Common Core
State Standards

III



PRESTWICK HOUSE, INC.

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stables never cleansed, and one hundred acres of land, **tillage**, mowing, pasture, and woodlot! The portionless, who struggle with no such unnecessary inherited **encumbrances**, find it labor enough to subdue and cultivate a few cubic feet of flesh.

But men labor under a mistake. The better part of the man is soon plowed into the soil for compost. By a seeming fate, commonly called necessity, they are employed, as it says in an old book, laying up treasures which moth and rust will corrupt and thieves break through and steal. It is a fool's life, as they will find when they get to the end of it, if not before. It is said that **Deucalion and Pyrrha** created men by throwing stones over their heads behind them:—

Inde genus durum sumus, experiensque laborum,
Et documenta damus qua simus origine nati.

Or, as Raleigh rhymes it in his **sonorous** way,—
“From thence our kind hard-hearted is, enduring
pain and care,

Approving that our bodies of a stony nature are.”

So much for a blind obedience to a blundering oracle, throwing the stones over their heads behind them, and not seeing where they fell.

Most men, even in this comparatively free country, through mere ignorance and mistake, are so occupied with the **factitious** cares and **superfluously** coarse labors of life that its **finer fruits** cannot be plucked by them. Their fingers, from excessive toil, are too clumsy and tremble too much for that. Actually, the laboring man has not leisure for a true integrity day by day; he cannot afford to sustain the manliest relations to men; his labor would be **depreciated** in the market. He has no time to be anything but a machine. How can he remember well his ignorance—which his growth requires—who has so often to use his knowledge? We should feed and clothe him gratuitously sometimes, and recruit him with our cordials, before we judge of him. The finest qualities of our nature, like the bloom on fruits, can be preserved only by the most delicate handling. Yet we do not treat ourselves nor one another thus tenderly.

Some of you, we all know, are poor, find it hard to live, are sometimes, as it were, gasping for breath. I

In Greek mythology, Deucalion and Pyrrha repopulated the earth after a great flood by throwing stones over their shoulders; the stones turned into people.

What does Thoreau mean by the metaphorical expression “finer fruits”?

What does Edwards accomplish by beginning his sermon with a verse from the Bible? What effect might it have had on his listeners?

Edwards is talking about the following verses, which precede Deuteronomy 32:35: "For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah; their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter. Their wine is the poison of serpents, and the cruel venom of asps."

Throughout points 1-4, Edwards uses an extended simile to describe the situation of those people who have turned away from God. To what does he compare such people?

Simile: a comparison between two different things using either *like* or *as*

Note how Edwards continues to use related biblical quotations to effectively support his points.

“Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”

“Their foot shall slide in due time.”
(Deuteronomy 32:35)

In this verse is threatened the **vengeance** of God on the wicked unbelieving Israelites, that were God’s visible people, and lived under means of grace; and that, **notwithstanding** all God’s wonderful works that he had **wrought** towards that people, yet remained, as is expressed, v. Deuteronomy 32:28, “void of counsel,” having no understanding in them; and that, **under all the cultivations** of heaven, brought forth bitter and poisonous fruit; as in the two verses next **preceding** the text.

The expression that I have chosen for my text, “Their foot shall slide in due time,” seems to imply the following things, relating to the punishment and destruction that these wicked Israelites were exposed to.

1. That they were *always* exposed to destruction, **as one that stands or walks in slippery places is always exposed to fall.** This is implied in the manner of their destruction’s coming upon them, being represented by their foot’s sliding. The same is expressed, Psalms 73:18, “Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction.”

2. It implies that they were always exposed to *sudden* unexpected destruction. As he that walks in slippery places is every moment liable to fall; he can’t foresee one moment whether he shall stand or fall the next; and when he does fall, he falls at once, without warning. **Which is also expressed in that, Psalms 73:18-19, “Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation as in a moment!”**

3. Another thing implied is that they are liable to fall of *themselves*, without being thrown down by the hand of another. As he that stands or walks on slippery ground, needs nothing but his own weight to throw him down.

4. That the reason why they are not fallen already, and do not fall now, is only that God’s **appointed** time is not come. For it is said, that when that due time, or appointed time comes, “their foot shall slide.” Then they shall be left to fall as they are inclined by their



VOCABULARY

Note: All definitions are based on the context in which the term is used in this reading selection.

- abate:** to lessen; to decrease
abhors: hates
abominable: repulsive; offensive; dreadful
adversaries: enemies
afore: [archaic] before
apace: quickly; rapidly
appease: to calm; to soothe
application: the act of putting something to use for a specific purpose
appointed: chosen; arranged; fixed
arbitrary: determined by whim or impulse
ascribed: credited; attributed
asunder: apart
avail: to help; to be of use
beget: to cause; to produce
bondage: slavery; oppression
boundless: unlimited; endless
brandished: waved or held in a threatening manner
brimstone: another word for sulphur, an element that is associated with Hell
carnal: of or relating to the flesh
chaff: the husks of wheat and other grains
condemnation: sentencing; conviction
contrivance: inventive skill; cleverness
corrupt: immoral; sinful
covenant: an agreement or contract
cultivations: acts of planting, tending, or harvesting crops
cumbreth: [archaic] to burden; to hinder; to be in the way
damnation: the condition of being doomed to everlasting punishment
deliverance: release; escape
desolation: misery; despair; anguish
discern: to observe; to detect
discourse: a sermon or speech
dispensation: the act of doling out or distributing
disproportioned: out of balance; unequal
doctrine: a set of principles or beliefs
dolorous: sorrowful; mournful

 **Essay Question**

Summarize the overarching theme of the sermon. Discuss at least three major concepts that Edwards uses to support this main theme. Use quotations from the sermon to support your answer.



INTRODUCTION

Annihilation Bomb—Friend or Foe? A Statement by the Editors of *Popular Science Monthly*

In August, 1945, the United States and its allies dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The explosions devastated the two cities. According to estimates, between 90,000 and 166,000 people died in Hiroshima, and approximately 60,000 to 80,000 were killed in Nagasaki. The majority of the victims were civilians. Despite the horrific number of casualties, however, many believe the use of the atomic bomb was necessary to conclude the war. Indeed, only a few days after the bombings, Japan surrendered to the Allied Forces, bringing an official end to World War II.

The article you are about to read was published by the American magazine *Popular Science Monthly* in September, 1945, less than one month after the bombings. In the article, the magazine's editors consider the atomic bomb and present their evaluation of this momentous new technology, focusing on both its military applications and the possibility that such technology may also be used for peaceful purposes. The article provides an invaluable glimpse into the scientific and political atmosphere surrounding the issue of nuclear development in the 1940s.

In this opening paragraph, the Court is referencing the fact that *Brown v. Board of Education* is not a single case with a single plaintiff, but a group of similar cases with numerous plaintiffs. At the heart of each case is the question of whether state-sponsored segregation should be legally permissible.

Who are the plaintiffs and what are they alleging?

In 1892, in New Orleans, Homer Plessy, a free man of African descent, was arrested for sitting in a “whites only” railway car and refusing to vacate the seat when ordered to do so. The case eventually made its way to the Supreme Court, where Plessy argued that such segregation was a violation of his constitutional rights. The Court rejected his claim, concluding that the practice of segregation in public places such as railway cars did not violate any part of the Constitution, providing that the separate facilities were equivalent to one another. This so-called “separate but equal” doctrine would be used as justification for state-sponsored segregation for decades to come.

Here, the Court summarizes the plaintiffs’ main argument in one concise sentence. Considering this argument, what must now be proven if the Court is to rule in favor of the plaintiffs?

US Supreme Court: Unanimous Opinion in the Case of *Brown v. Board of Education*

MR. CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN delivered the opinion of the Court.

▶ These cases come to us from the States of Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and Delaware. They are **premised** on different facts and different local conditions, but a common legal question justifies their consideration together in this **consolidated** opinion.

▶ In each of the cases, minors of the Negro race, through their legal representatives, seek the aid of the courts in obtaining admission to the public schools of their community on a **nonsegregated** basis. In each instance, they had been denied admission to schools attended by white children under laws requiring or permitting segregation according to race. This segregation was **alleged to deprive the plaintiffs** of the equal protection of the laws under the Fourteenth Amendment. In each of the cases other than the Delaware case, a three-judge federal district court denied relief to the plaintiffs on the so-called “separate but equal” **doctrine** announced by this Court in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Under that doctrine, equality of treatment is accorded when the races are provided **substantially** equal facilities, even though these facilities be separate. In the Delaware case, the Supreme Court of Delaware **adhered** to that doctrine, but ordered that the plaintiffs be admitted to the white schools because of their superiority to the Negro schools.

▶ The plaintiffs **contend** that segregated public schools are not “equal” and cannot be made “equal,” and that hence they are deprived of the equal protection of the laws. Because of the obvious importance of the question presented, the Court took **jurisdiction**. Argument was heard in the 1952 Term, and **reargument** was heard this Term on certain questions **propounded** by the Court.

Reargument was largely devoted to the circumstances surrounding the adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868. It covered **exhaustively** consideration of the Amendment in Congress, **ratification** by the states, then-existing practices in racial segregation, and the views of **proponents** and opponents of the Amendment.



Essay Question

Analyze the overall structure of the Court's reasoning in *Brown v. Board of Education*. How does the Court ultimately arrive at its landmark decision? For example, what main points do the justices establish throughout their deliberation and how are these points supported by evidence and/or logic? As you write your essay, be sure to address how each of the following plays a role in the Court's decision: constitutional law, legal precedent, logical considerations, and contemporary psychological/sociological research. Provide quotations and examples from the text to support your answer.