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Duration

4–5 class sessions total. Each lesson is intended to be completed in two or three class sessions of approximately 40 minutes each.

Resources

1. YouTube Video: Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a Woman?"



marcoap.co/truth

2. Free-Response Question



3. Teacher's Commentary



4. Student Activities



Objectives of Unit

- **Lesson One:** To introduce students to the concepts of "context," "audience," and "speaker," using Sojourner Truth's speech, "Ain't I a Woman?"
- **Lesson Two:** To introduce students to the concepts of "message," "purpose," and "exigence," using the same speech.

College Board Objectives from the 2019-20 CED

- **RHS-1:** "Individuals write within a particular situation and make strategic writing choices based on that situation."
- **Skill 1.A:** "Identify and describe components of the rhetorical situation: the exigence, audience, writer, purpose, context, and message."

Student Activities

- **Lesson One:** Annotated text, noting the context, audience, and speaker and/or analysis paragraph
- **Lesson Two:** Annotated text, noting message and primary points as well as analysis paragraph and/or student version of "Ain't I a ...?" speech

How to Use These Lessons

This Unit is designed for the first few weeks of an AP® English Language course. Your goal is to help create a common vocabulary of analysis (i.e., purpose, audience, exigence, etc.) for your students to use all year long. You can also use this text to help assess the analytical abilities of your students. While the text is easy enough for many new AP® students, it's rich and complex enough for even the most advanced students. Because this lesson plan also involves a video performance of the speech, it's a great way to engage students early in the school year and get the conversation going.

If you are used to teaching SOAPStone or some other mnemonic, this speech is an excellent way to introduce the students to that mnemonic. As always, adapt this Unit Plan to what works for you and your students.

The first "big idea" of the new 2019 *Course and Exam Description (CED)* is Rhetorical Situation. Sojourner Truth is a recommended source (she appears on p. 86 of the *CED*) because her speech is so carefully suited to her audience.

The first RHS skill is 1.A (see p. 91 of the *CED*), which packs a total of six ideas into this one concept. We have split the Unit into two parts to focus on the easier concepts in Lesson One and the more challenging concepts in Lesson Two. If your students aren't ready for the harder material of Lesson Two, you can move more slowly through Lesson One and help them develop confidence with those terms first.

Historical Background

Sojourner Truth was an important activist for African-American and Women's Rights in the nineteenth century. She was born around 1797 in Swartekill, New York and was sold off at least four separate times in her childhood and early adulthood. In her early childhood, she was owned by a Dutch family and spoke only Dutch. Her experience as a slave was filled with physical abuse, rape, and violence. Her fourth slavemaster beat her first husband to death. She adopted the name "Sojourner Truth" in 1843, claiming that God had called her to preach in the countryside. She supported the Union Army during the Civil War and challenged existing laws that treated African-Americans as property. Since her death in 1883, Sojourner Truth has been considered one of the most important voices for civil rights in American history.

It's worth noting that there are two versions of the "Ain't I a Woman?" speech. The version analyzed here is the more widely performed and taught version, but it's not the more historically accurate one. A shorter version was published much closer to the date of Truth's actual speech in 1851.

After reading the information above, choose what you wish to share with your students about Truth and her life. A brief discussion about her trials and accomplishments will help students analyze the speech and its effectiveness.



This historical background is for your purposes in preparing for class. Although Sojourner Truth is a fascinating historical figure, she is interesting for this lesson for her work as a rhetorician and speaker, not necessarily as a historical figure.

LESSON ONE: CONTEXT, AUDIENCE, SPEAKER

Introducing the Context

Also known as the "rhetorical occasion" or "rhetorical situation," the "context" of a text is a significant feature of the analytical vocabulary of the AP® English Language curriculum. The context of "Ain't I a Woman?" is a perfect example of the significance of this concept. Truth is speaking at a Women's Convention, so we can assume her audience is likely to be sympathetic to her message about Women's Rights and interested in her personal story. Crucially, the speech is situated in the North in the years leading up to the Civil War. Because many in the North supported the abolition of slavery, Truth was able to speak candidly about the hardships she encountered and her desire for equal rights for slaves and women.

Introducing the Video

Before showing the video, you could offer a brief context for the video and then allow the students to experience the emotional force of the speech. You could say something like this:

"We are going to watch a performance of one of the most famous speeches in American history. It was delivered by Sojourner Truth in 1851 to the Women's Convention of Akron, Ohio. It's a short, powerful speech. Let's watch it and then discuss together."

The speech lasts only a couple of minutes. Watch it through once without interruption, and then distribute the printed version of the speech to the students to reference as they re-read and discuss.

A word of caution: some teachers make the mistake of overloading their students with historical context before letting them read and analyze a text. Remember that students will receive only scant historical information when they take the real AP® exam. They are expected to jump into a text and begin reading and analyzing right away. We recommend spending time at the beginning of the year discussing the speaker in depth, but these discussions should dissipate as the school year progresses.

Starting the Discussion

This is such a powerful speech that you can probably begin by taking stock of the students' initial reactions to the video. Here are some different ways to get the discussion going without resorting to a bland "So, what did you think?" kind of question:

- What is Sojourner Truth saying in this speech?
- This is a very emotional speech, but what is it *about*?
- She keeps repeating the rhetorical question, "ain't I a woman?" Why do you think she's asking it?

Discussing the Audience

As you transition from a general discussion of the speech, focus on the concept of the "audience." An audience includes all the people who will listen to a speech or read a text (i.e., the primary audience) and the wider public who will read a copy of the speech in the future (i.e., the secondary audience). Most free-response questions on the real exam will explicitly identify the primary audience within the prompt. Remind students to read and re-read that information closely to help them get started in the process of thinking critically about audience.

It can be challenging to find out information about the audience from within a speech or text. You should re-watch the video together and focus only on this aspect of the speech. Ask the students to consider only one question while they watch: "What does this tell me about the audience?" Then, as you watch the video together, stop the video every time she reveals something about the audience (or about every 30 seconds or so). You could build a list on the board so that the students see just how much they can learn about this audience from Truth's words.

Discussing the Speaker

Like the notion of an "audience," the concept of a "speaker" is easy to grasp. Remind the students that *speaker* and *writer* and *author* are kind of interchangeable for the purposes of this discussion. The *speaker* is the person who is producing words for us to hear or read. Acknowledge that "speaker" seems like a very easy topic. A simple question like "Who is speaking?" could be answered in a word or a sentence.

But discussing the concept of a "speaker" could lead you to a much deeper discussion. The question "What does the speaker say about herself?" will require more than a sentence. In this speech, Sojourner Truth reveals an entire autobiography of her life as a slave, laborer, woman, mother, and activist. She also makes clever theological arguments. (Truth was an active preacher, so these kinds of arguments were part of her work.)

If you want to structure this as an introductory lesson that surveys "context," "audience," and "speaker" in a single class period, then it's perfectly fine at this point to leave the discussion at the level of description rather than analysis. If you want to stretch this source over several days, you could begin to discuss how Sojourner Truth uses her autobiography to develop her argument and even discuss *ethos*. We recommend keeping this part of the lesson simple and moving on.

Student Activities

For Lesson One, we have created two student activities: text annotations and an analysis paragraph. We recommend using the analysis paragraph as a homework assignment. As the new 2019 *CED* recommends, your early AP® English Language assignments should focus on paragraph-length exercises rather than full essays. See the activities handout for further direction, including directions for the annotations and a writing prompt.

A tip for new teachers:

Let the students speculate about what they've heard in an open-ended fashion. Don't rush the discussion to get to your teaching points about context, audience, and speaker. Try to get a few different reactions from a few different students and affirm their initial feedback. This helps create a welcoming discussion environment.

One of the "key questions" for RHS, Skill 1.A is "What perspectives on the subject might the audience have due to their shared and/or individual beliefs, values, needs, and backgrounds?" (see p. 91 of the new *CED*.) You can use this question to propel the discussion forward.

You could do the same exercise you did before and watch the video, looking only for information about the speaker. Instead of watching the video again, we recommend that you ask for volunteers to read the passage. This could help with engagement.

LESSON TWO: MESSAGE, PURPOSE, EXIGENCE

Discussing the Message

Before discussing the message, or main idea, students will first need to interact with the passage in a manner that prompts them to consider the primary points that Truth makes in the piece. See the Activities Handout for a detailed explanation of this process.

Once students have completed a second annotation activity for the entire passage, they are ready for a whole group discussion of Truth's message. You can begin this discussion by asking students to share their findings and ideas with a partner or small group and work together to create a single sentence that encapsulates Truth's message. Next, ask students to share their ideas with the class and keep a running list in order to highlight how each student or small group not only has their own "voice," but also the gist of the message should be the same. If not, stop and discuss how you determine the message of a passage.

Early on, students will benefit from this type of metacognition from you. Also, taking the process step-by-step will show them how to describe the message quickly under the time constraints of the real AP® exam.

Discussing the Purpose

Once students have a firm grasp of context, audience, speaker, and message, they can begin to understand how the speaker's words accomplish her overall purpose, which is often identified in the free-response prompts of the real exam. It is imperative that students review the prompt specifically searching for the message and/or the purpose. We suggest that students put brackets around this part of the prompt.

As stated in the prompt, Truth's purpose was to relay a message about women's rights to her audience. You could discuss this with students by asking them:

- What is Truth saying about women's rights? Do they need more or less? Who is going to give them these rights?
- When abolitionists spoke about slavery, who did they primarily speak for: slave *men* or slave *women*?
- When women's rights activists spoke out, who were they advocating for, *white* women or *African-American* women?

In this passage, Truth's purpose is quite clear: she is advocating for the rights of African-American women, a group that was often overlooked in discussions of civil rights.

Discussing the Exigence

"Exigence" is the motivation behind the speaker's purpose. It is often unsaid, which makes it challenging for students to discuss, but it is an important differentiator among essay scores because it allows for richer and deeper commentary. In order to analyze the exigence, the students must first understand how the context, audience, and purpose connect to the speaker.

Truth's motivation or exigence should be easy to identify through her message. Women are strong, capable, and deserving of the same rights as men. To prompt this discussion, ask the students:

- What have you learned about Truth through the lesson that would motivate her to persuade them to fight for equality?
- What assumptions do her and the audience have to agree on in order to accomplish her purpose?
- What universal truth is she discussing?

Remember, students may rely heavily on you here. "Exigence" is a new concept for most of them, so be patient and provide ample time for them to speak and understand this concept. We recommend that you give students time to write out their responses to the questions above. This will make them feel more comfortable when they share out and enrich the class discussion.

Student Activities

After the annotation and discussion, students should be ready to start writing. As the new *CED* suggests, this is a good time for students to construct a paragraph that analyzes the connection between the speaker, audience, and purpose. Students should develop a thesis statement that identifies the speaker, situation, and purpose, and then develop commentary about a primary point that Truth makes to her audience to support her overall purpose.

Another possible activity is asking students to create their own “Ain’t I a ...?” speech. This assignment requires students to consider their own rhetorical context, audience, purpose, and exigence. This opportunity to become a speaker should make students more aware of the rhetorical choices that speakers make in order to accomplish their purpose.



Question 2

Suggested time: 40 minutes

(This question counts for one-third of the total essay section score.)

In 1851, Sojourner Truth, an emancipated slave, abolitionist, and women's rights activist, delivered her famous "Ain't I a Woman?" speech at the Women's Convention in Akron, Ohio. Read the passage carefully. Then, write a well-developed essay in which you analyze the rhetorical choices that Truth makes to convey her message about women's rights to her audience.

Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix
Line 5 pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about?

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any
10 best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man—when I could get it—and bear the lash as well!
15 And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?

Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's
20 this they call it? [member of audience whispers, "intellect"] That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's rights or negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

25 Then that little man in black there, he says women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him.

30 If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them.

35 Obligated to you for hearing me, and now old Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say.

Passage

Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about?

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Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? [member of audience whispers, "intellect"] That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's rights or negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

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Obliged to you for hearing me, and now old Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say.

Commentary

- 1 She isn't condescending to her audience by calling them "children." She is actually using a term of affection and connecting to her audience on a personal level.
- 2 What she does here is both funny and ingenious. She is an African-American woman from the South, speaking to white women in the North, about denied rights for both groups of women. Despite their many differences, she draws the two groups together by a goal both can understand—all of us women are *talking about rights*. She points out their common opponent: white men, who, she predicts *will be in a fix pretty soon*—and it sounds like it'll be at the hands of these women who talk about their rights. By uniting her audience through a common enemy, she sets up a call to action.
- 3 From the text, we can't tell who the man is, but we can imagine her pointing at him or gesturing toward him. Whoever he was, she didn't bother to name him—he is only *that man over there*. We can guess he's the kind of white man she was just talking about. Additionally, like many slave owners who stripped away the slave's name as a form of identity, she has stripped away the white man's identity and power. Truth's use of imagery is effective here. She paints a picture of the "helpless" women, while in all reality her audience members were fully capable of accomplishing these tasks.
- 4 Truth accepts the man's argument but shows how it doesn't apply at all to her own experience. Women may deserve respect and may expect gentlemanly behavior, but these niceties are not extended to her personally. Not only does Truth highlight the "injustices" she is faced with, but she also again, sets up her main point—women can do hard things. She has done them.

Questions to Ask:

Passage

Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix
5 pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about?

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any
10 best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man—when I could get it—and bear the lash as well!
15 And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?

Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? [member of audience whispers, "intellect"] That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's rights or negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

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30 If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them.

35 Obligated to you for hearing me, and now old Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say.

Commentary

- 5 She asks an obvious and daring question: "Ain't I a woman?" Of course she is a woman. There is only one way to answer that question, and that's what makes it so effective. She is essentially forcing her audience to nod their heads along with hers.
- 6 Here she shifts to direct commands to her audience: *Look at me! Look at my arm!* She is presenting her body as physical evidence to her hard, toilsome labor.
- 7 Truth also appeals to her own credibility—her *ethos*—by citing her personal experience. She could also be extending her criticism towards *that man over there*. For all of his careful duty toward women, we can tell that he views them as fragile and in need of male help. But not Sojourner Truth: she doesn't *need* a man to open the door for her. She is not *that man's* stereotypical caricature of a woman. She's stronger than any man and yet she asks *Ain't I a Woman?* Shouldn't she get to enjoy those same acts of chivalry shown to her white peers?
- 8 She is not just comparing herself to men at this point, she is developing an autobiography of an African-American woman in bondage: her food came *when [she] could get it*. She had to *bear the lash*. She has suffered terribly as a slave.
- 9 This is the climax of her brief story and the most important of her credentials as a woman. She is a mother. She not only ensures her credibility here—her *ethos*—as a speaker, but also appeals to her audience on a deeply emotional level—an appeal to *pathos*. Her thirteen children. *Thirteen... and seen most all sold off to slavery*. Truth did all that a mother, an enslaved mother, could do.

Questions to Ask:

Passage

Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about?

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man—when I could get it—and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?

Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? [member of audience whispers, "intellect"] That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's rights or negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

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If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them.

Obliged to you for hearing me, and now old Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say.

Commentary

- 10 To the women in her audience—decent, upstanding members of society, the vast majority of whom were wives and mothers—this is the most personal and emotional appeal she could possibly make. She continues to connect with her audience. While some of her listeners may not be able to relate to or identify with her strength, they may be able to connect to her as mother.
- 11 The majority of the women in the audience would identify themselves as Christians, which explains why saying *none but Jesus heard me*, would leave such a powerful impact. Not only did she have thirteen children and have to watch them sold off into slavery one after another, only having the freedom to grieve bitterly for them, but she also had to do it *alone*. No would have the decency to come beside her and help her through each of her thirteen tragedies. Only Jesus, whom Sojourner and these women both worshipped, would hear both the cry of an enslaved woman and a free white woman and hold them in the same regard.
- 12 This is the fourth *And ain't I a woman?* Yes, she is a woman, and it seems as if she's more of a woman than anyone else. Her repetition of the question continues to draw her audience in, to remind these women of their own strength in the face of adversity.
- 13 Here again is one of her favorite rhetorical devices, the rhetorical question, being used to great effect. It gives her the chance to transition to her next argument and also inject another term of affection for an audience member—*honey*—on her way to enriching her case. This could also serve as a counter argument and refutation. She is a smart woman, and she is aware of the arguments that men make against women's rights.
- 14 Here she concedes that even though she has less formal education and less intellect than her audience, she is still deserving of rights. (Wouldn't it be mean, indeed.)

Questions to Ask:

Passage

Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North,
Line all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix
5 pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about?

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Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's
20 this they call it? [member of audience whispers, "intellect"] That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's rights or negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

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30 If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them. 17 18

35 Obliged to you for hearing me, and now old Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say. 19

Commentary

- 15 She moves on from *children* and *honey* towards *that little man in black there*, who has apparently made the mistake of arguing that *women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman!* The man is wearing black and it's relevant enough for her to mention, so we can safely guess that he is a priest or minister. Again, Truth does not give this man a name. She strips away the humanity that he may have in order to serve her purpose—keeping the audience focused on women's power and women's rights.
- 16 She opposes his theological argument by asking, *Where did your Christ come from?* (twice.) Truth makes her argument more powerful, more insistent by repeating herself. She calls this man's teaching out by referencing Christian belief: Jesus was born of a virgin and his father was God himself. No man necessary! Sojourner Truth doesn't just best men in physical challenges, she schools them in theology too! This appeal to reason gives her audience the justification they may need to fight for their own rights. If God thought a woman was strong enough to carry Christ, He certainly believes they are strong enough to think for themselves.
- 17 This is a clever, brilliant argument. She accepts the premise that Eve caused the downfall of mankind, but then uses that premise to reach the opposite conclusion of the *little man in black over there*. If women caused the fall, they must be the ones to fix it.
- 18 This assertive statement makes her purpose clear—men can no longer subjugate women. This call to action unites her audience once more through a common goal—to fight for the right to make the world a better place.
- 19 In spite of the force and power of her argument, Truth finishes the argument with a polite and gracious way of acknowledging and thanking her audience. She ends her message in a gracious manner to illustrate that a woman can be strong and assertive, while still being gracious to her audience.

Questions to Ask:

Student Activities: Sojourner Truth

For this Unit, we have provided four possible student activities. You can use all of them, a few of them, or none of them. Full explanations have been provided for each activity below. Additionally, the writing activities are appropriate for homework, but we suggest that the annotations occur in class.

LESSON ONE

- **Annotated Text:** It is important that students learn how to interact with a text. One of the best ways to teach this interaction is to give them explicit evidence to look for in a passage. This is often called “guided reading.” Since Lesson One of this Unit focuses on audience, speaker, and context, you will first want students to:
 - Highlight or underline any information within the prompt or passage that relates to the context.
 - Circle any evidence that reveals something about the audience.
 - Bracket any information that is revealed about the speaker.

Remember, the most important evidence can be found in the prompt itself. As students read the passage, they can learn more about the audience and speaker from Truth’s words.

- **Analysis Paragraph:** A paragraph that explains the connection between the context, speaker, and audience is an effective assignment for students to practice analysis writing. After explaining what “rhetorical choices” are, offer the students this prompt:
 - In a paragraph using textual evidence, justify two rhetorical choices Truth makes in order to connect to her audience.

LESSON TWO

- **Annotated Text:** Annotating texts can get pretty messy, and new AP® students sometimes overload their text with highlights and annotations. In this second annotation, you can give students a fresh copy of the passage, or simply ask them to add to their previous annotation. Since Lesson Two of this Unit focuses on message, purpose, and exigence, we recommend that students first:
 - Mark off each “part” of the text together by primary point. For example, the first “part” of Truth’s speech is paragraph one, where she wastes no time introducing the issue at hand: rights for ALL women and ALL ethnicities.
 - As the students chunk these primary points, they should also list the points in the margins. The list can be as simple as terms, phrases, or complete sentences, depending on what the student prefers.
 - You might recommend that students list WHAT the speaker is saying in the left margin and HOW the speaker is saying it in the right margin. We know that the format of the text is not always conducive for this, but the practice is worth their time.
- **Analysis Paragraph:** A paragraph that explains the connection between the message, purpose, and exigence is an effective assignment for students to practice analysis writing. Students can use this writing prompt:
 - In a paragraph using textual evidence, explain what provoked or inspired Truth to develop this speech? (This question is derived from p. 91 of the *CED*.)

- **“Ain’t I a ...” Student Version:** In order to help students “step into the speaker’s shoes,” asking them to create their own version of a speech is an effective method. For this assignment, after students have worked through all six ideas in RHS skill 1.A, ask them to pick a topic in which they can write a speech similar to Truth’s. For this activity, Truth’s speech becomes a “mentor text.”
 - They are going to need to pick a topic that illustrates a similar exigence. Some may choose “Ain’t I a Friend?” or “Ain’t I an Employee?” or a similar topic.
 - Students can use specific words, phrases, or lines from the original piece that apply to their topic to help them structure their own speech.
 - Give them specific guidelines, such as requiring them to use the “Ain’t I a ...?” rhetorical question as often as Truth used it or to use imagery in the same lines that Truth used it. Acknowledge an unnamed individual just as she did. Depending on the time you have allocated for this activity, you can require students to mirror the entire passage or choose one paragraph of the speech for the students to duplicate.

A final suggestion is to share a version of “Ain’t I a ...” with the students. You can use the sample below.

That man over there says that teachers need to work more, and do better, and to display higher standards than other professionals. Nobody ever pays me overtime, or reimburses me for classroom supplies, or gives me any lunch meetings paid for with the company card! And ain't I a professional? Look at me! Look at my degree! I have studied and sacrificed, and changed students' lives, and no critic could control my classroom! And ain't I a professional? I could work twice as much as another professional—sacrifice my family time—and endure the criticism as well! And ain't I a professional? I have worked for fifteen years, and dried student's tears, and when I cried on my way home, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a professional?