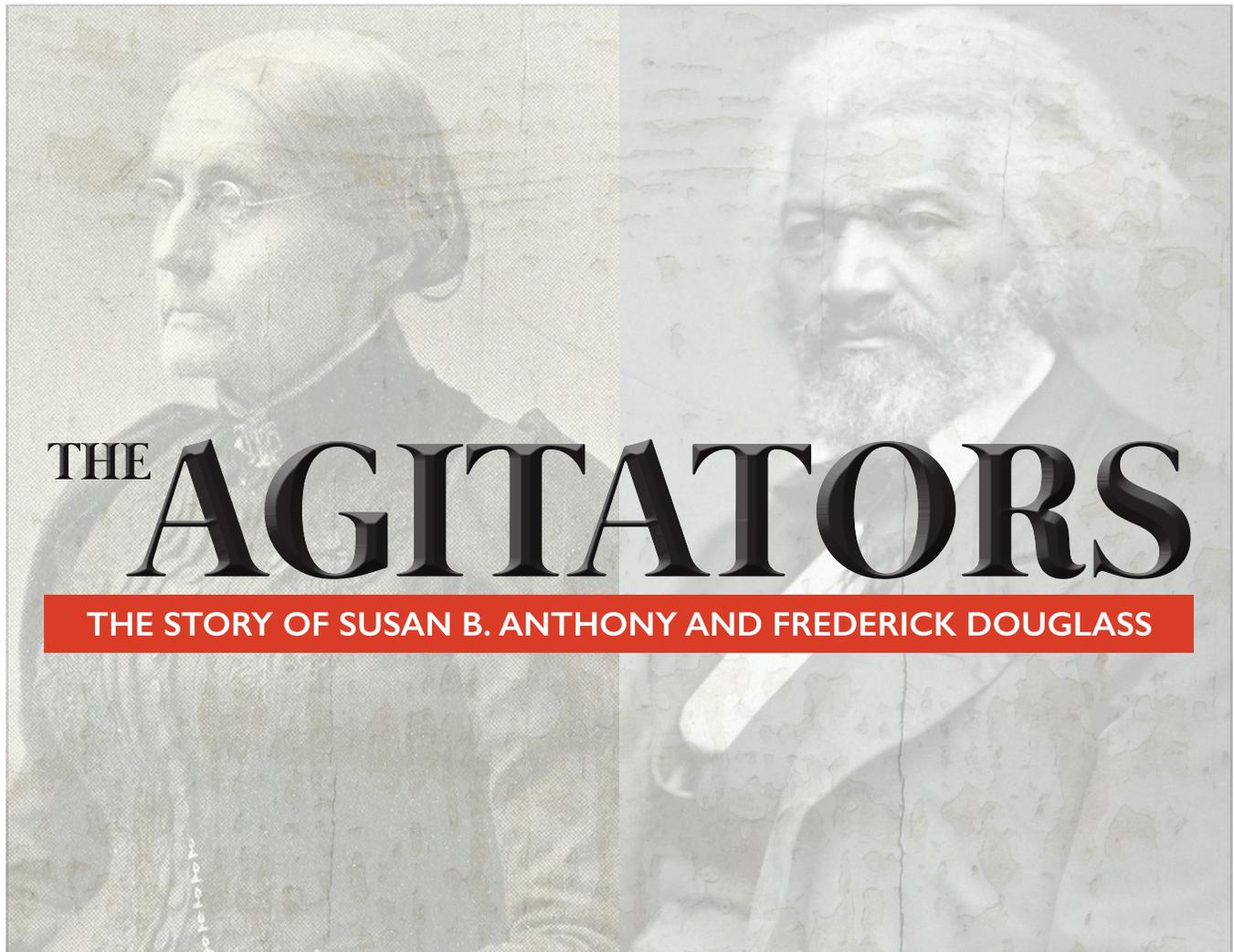


# Study Guide



by Mat Smart

A Commission from Geva Theatre Center and the New York State Council on the Arts

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# WELCOME TO COMPANY OF FOOLS

Dear Educator,

Company of Fools and the Sun Valley Center for the Arts is pleased to offer you this study guide to prepare you and your students for our production of THE AGITATORS. Working with schools is a fundamental part of The Center's mission.

We hope this study guide will serve as a useful resource for you as educators and parents. It is designed to enhance student learning both before and after the performance, to support your classroom lesson plans and deepen the educational value of your students' experience. The resources and activities in this study guide support the Idaho Content Standards in English Language Arts and Literacy for grades 9–12.

Thank you for the sharing the magic of performing arts with your students!

—Company of Fools



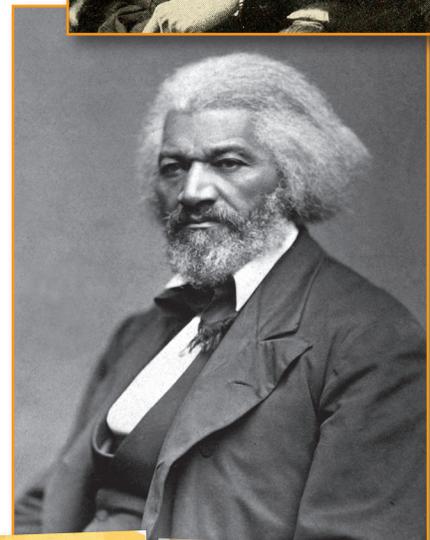
# ABOUT THE PLAY: *The Agitators*

*The Agitators* tells of the enduring but tempestuous friendship of Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass. Great allies. And at times, great adversaries. Young abolitionists when they met in Rochester in the 1840s, they were full of hopes, dreams and a common purpose. As they grew to become the cultural icons we know today, their movements collided and their friendship was severely tested. They agitated the nation, they agitated each other and, in doing so, they helped shape the Constitution and the course of American history.

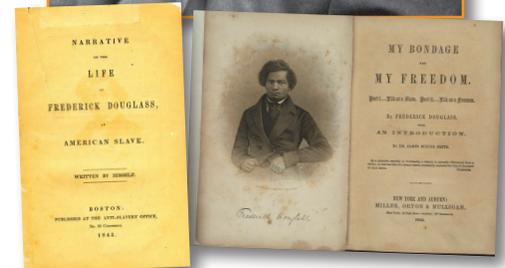
**SUSAN B. ANTHONY** was born on February 15, 1820 in Adams, Massachusetts. Anthony was raised in a Quaker family, where women were considered equal with men under God. From an early age, Anthony made her life's work one of justice and sought to establish equality in the larger world. Anthony never married and became a teacher. After teaching for many years, she returned to the family farm. There, she met many activists, who visited her family, including abolitionists William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass. Ignoring opposition and abuse, Anthony traveled, lectured, and canvassed across the nation for women's right to vote. She also campaigned for the abolition of slavery, the right for women to own their own property and retain their earnings, and she advocated for women's labor organizations. Anthony was aggressive and compassionate by nature. She had a keen mind and a great ability to inspire. She remained active until her death on March 13, 1906.

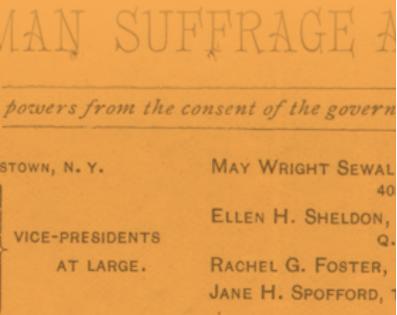


**FREDERICK AUGUSTUS WASHINGTON BAILEY** was born into slavery on the Eastern Shore of Maryland in February 1818. At an early age, Frederick realized there was a connection between literacy and freedom. Not allowed to attend school, he taught himself to read and write in the streets of Baltimore. On September 3, 1838, he disguised himself as a sailor and boarded a northbound train. In less than 24 hours, Frederick arrived in New York City and declared himself free. After escaping from slavery, Frederick married Anna Murray, who had helped him escape and settled in New Bedford, Massachusetts. There, they adopted the last name "Douglass" and they started their family. Douglass gained a reputation as an orator, and travelled on speaking tours across the country and overseas. In 1845, he published his first autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* and in 1855, he published his second autobiography, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, which expanded on his first autobiography and challenged racial segregation in the North.



Anthony and Douglass most likely met in Rochester in 1849, when Susan was 29 and Frederick was 31. They were friends, allies, and adversaries for the next 45 years.





# ENGAGING STUDENTS

★ Start the conversation!

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER BEFORE SEEING THE PLAY

- What do you imagine a friendship between Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass would be like?
- Do you have similar or differing views/opinions from others in your family, classroom or community? How do you express your opinions and ideas? What gives you the courage to express yourself?

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER AFTER SEEING THE PLAY

- How would you briefly describe this play's story or what this play is about in one sentence?  
"This is a play about \_\_\_\_\_."
- This was a play reading, not a full production. What kind of set, costumes, lighting, sound design might you imagine being used in a full production?

★ Teacher Tip!

## WAYS TO ENGAGE STUDENTS AFTER SEEING THE PLAY

Using the above questions as potential prompts, here are some ways to encourage further examination of the play-going experience.

### EXPLORE

- Free-write a journal entry
- Write a scene, short play or story

### ANALYZE

- Draw a connection to a current event or cultural reference
- Connect, compare, contrast

### INTERACT

- Improvise scenes
- Talk to others in your community about their story

# IDAHO CONTENT STANDARDS

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Reading Standards for Literature that apply to **THE AGITATORS, Company of Fools** staged reading.

## KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

**Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.**

**8th:** Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

**9th–10th:** Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

## CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

**Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.**

**8th:** Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.

**9th–10th:** Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.

## INTEGRATION OF KEY IDEAS

**Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.**

**11th–12th:** Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)

**Materials for this study guide were gathered from the following sources:**

<https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/susan-b-anthony>

<http://susanbanthonyhouse.org/her-story/biography.php>