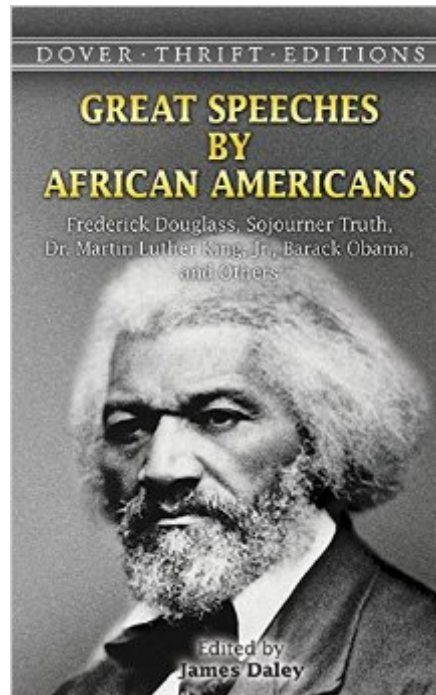


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Great Speeches By African Americans: Frederick Douglass



Synopsis

Tracing the struggle for freedom and civil rights across two centuries, this anthology comprises speeches by Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, W. E. B. Du Bois, Martin Luther King, Jr., and other influential figures in the history of African-American culture and politics. The collection begins with Henry Highland Garnet's 1843 "An Address to the Slaves of the United States of America," followed by Jermain Wesley Loguen's "I Am a Fugitive Slave," the famous "Ain't I a Woman?" speech by Sojourner Truth, and Frederick Douglass's immortal "What, to the Slave, Is the Fourth of July?" Subsequent orators include John Sweat Rock, John M. Langston, James T. Rapier, Alexander Crummell, Booker T. Washington, Mary Church Terrell, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Francis J. Grimké, Marcus Garvey, and Mary McLeod Bethune. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech appears here, along with Malcolm X's "The Ballot or The Bullet," Shirley Chisholm's "The Black Woman in Contemporary America," "The Constitution: A Living Document" by Thurgood Marshall, and Barack Obama's "Knox College Commencement Address." Includes 2 selections from the Common Core State Standards Initiative: "I Have a Dream" and "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July."

Book Information

Paperback: 160 pages

Publisher: Dover Publications (April 28, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0486447618

ISBN-13: 978-0486447612

Product Dimensions: 0.5 x 5.5 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 5 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (111 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #20,602 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #8 in [Books > Textbooks > Communication & Journalism > Speech](#) #16 in [Books > Reference > Words, Language & Grammar > Speech](#) #141 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Specific Demographics > African-American Studies](#)

Customer Reviews

More than a book of speeches, this solemn and profound book is a window into the history (or should I say plight?) of African Americans. Of many sagacious passages, here are a few highlights: Fellow citizens, I will not enlarge further on your national inconsistencies. The existence of

slavery in this country brands your republicanism as a sham, your humanity as a base pretence, and your Christianity as a lie. It destroys your moral power abroad; it corrupts your politicians at home. It saps the foundation of religion; it makes your name a hissing and a by word to a mocking earth. It is the antagonistic force in your government, the only thing that seriously disturbs and endangers your union. It fetters your progress; it is the enemy of improvement; the deadly foe of education; it fosters pride; it breeds insolence; it promotes vice; it shelters crime; it is a curse to the earth that supports it; and yet your cling to it as if it were the sheet anchor of all your hopes. Oh, be warned! Be warned! A horrible reptile is coiled up in your nation's bosom; the venomous creature is nursing at the tender breast of your youthful republic; for the love of God, tear way, and fling from you the hideous monster, and let the weight of twenty millions crush and destroy it forever!

Frederick Douglass

July 5, 1852

No, I'm not an American. I'm one of the 22 million black people who are the victims of Americanism. One of the 22 million black people who are the victims of democracy, nothing but disguised hypocrisy. So, I'm not standing here speaking to you as an American, or a patriot, or a flag-saluter, or a flag-waver - no, not I. I'm speaking as a victim of this American system. And I see America through the eyes of the victim.

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