

Objectives

For pages 197–210, 349

In studying this text, you will focus on the following objectives:

Literary Study: Analyzing an essay.

Reading: Analyzing text structure.



A

MASON-DIXON

Memory



by Clifton Davis

A MASON-DIXON Memory



Connect to the Narrative Essay

Do you know someone who has experienced discrimination? How did you react?

Imagine that you participate in your park district swim team. Your team is scheduled to swim in a meet at a private club. The day of the meet, you find out that the private club will not let one of your teammates swim because she is African American.

Problem You want to swim in the meet. But you think it is wrong that the private club discriminates against African Americans. What do you do?

Solution _____

Build Background

In "A Mason-Dixon Memory," the narrator describes how he learned about an invisible border between the North and the South. The name of this border is the "Mason-Dixon line."

- At first, the Mason-Dixon line marked the border between Maryland and Pennsylvania.
- In the 1700s, Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon marked the 233-mile-long line to settle a land dispute between a family in Pennsylvania and a family in Maryland.
- By 1820, the Mason-Dixon line divided the slave states in the South from the free states of the North.

Set Purposes for Reading

Read "A Mason-Dixon Memory" to find out what happens when young people do not accept racial discrimination. As you read, notice how a few brave young people can influence those around them.

Literary Element Thesis

The main idea of an essay is called the **thesis**. The thesis of an essay is what the author wants to show, prove, or explain. Many times, the thesis is the first sentence of the essay. This kind of sentence is called a **thesis statement**.

In essays that tell personal stories, the thesis might be harder to find. Instead, the author might use details and examples to imply, or suggest, the thesis.

Reading Skill Analyze Text Structure

Text structure is the way a writer organizes events and ideas. When you **analyze text structure**, you look at the patterns within the text. You try to find out *how* the text is organized.

“A Mason-Dixon Memory” is a **narrative essay**, or an essay that tells a story. In some narrative essays, there are two stories. One story is the **frame story**. It begins and ends the essay. The other story is the **inner story**. It makes up much of the middle of the essay. The inner story is usually the more important story.

As you read narrative essays, pay attention to

- where the frame story ends and the inner story begins.
- where the inner story ends and the frame story starts again.
- what the frame and inner stories have in common.
- how the inner story supports the main idea of the frame story.

Vocabulary

Read each word and definition at the right. Then read each set of clues. Write the vocabulary word that best completes each sentence.

1. The school auditorium was filled _____ with students.
2. The team will _____ the game if it does not show up on time.
3. The city built a new _____ that gives the homeless a place to sleep.
4. The good news _____ the crowd to cheer.
5. The mayor is one of my city's _____ leaders.

Vocabulary

civic (siv' ik) *adj.* having to do with a city and its people

predominantly (pri dom' ə nant' lē) *adv.* mainly or mostly

forfeit (fôr' fit) *v.* to lose or give up something

provoked (prə vōkd') *v.* brought out some action or emotion in someone

facility (fə sil' ə tē) *n.* a place built to serve a particular purpose

A MASON-DIXON Memory



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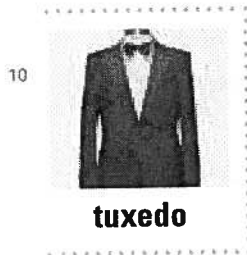


Literary Element

Thesis Underline the words that explain the thesis of the frame story. What do you think is the main idea of the frame story?

Dondré Green glanced uneasily at the **civic** leaders and sports figures filling the hotel ballroom in Cleveland. They had come from across the nation to attend a fundraiser for the National Minority College Golf Scholarship Foundation.

I was the banquet's featured entertainer. Dondré, an 18-year-old high school senior from Monroe, Louisiana, was the evening's honored guest.



"Nervous?" I asked the handsome young man in his starched white shirt and rented tuxedo.

"A little," he whispered, grinning.

One month earlier, Dondré had been just one more black student attending a **predominantly** white school. Although most of his friends and classmates were white, Dondré's race was never an issue. Then, on April 17, 1991, Dondré's black skin **provoked** an incident that made nationwide news.

20 "Ladies and gentlemen," the emcee¹ said, "our special guest Dondré Green." As the audience stood applauding, Dondré walked to microphone and began his story. "I love golf," he said quietly. "For the past two years, I've been a member of the St. Frederick High School golf team. And though I was the black member, I've always felt at home

1. An **emcee** is the leader of an event or party.

playing at mostly white country clubs across Louisiana.”

The audience leaned forward; even the waiters and bus boys stopped to listen. As I listened, a memory buried in my heart since childhood fought its way to life.

“Our team had driven from Monroe,” Dondré continued. “When we arrived at the Caldwell Parish Country Club Columbia, we walked to the putting green.”

Dondré and his teammates were too absorbed to notice conversation between a man and St. Frederick athletic director James Murphy. After disappearing into the clubhouse, Murphy returned to his players.

“I want to see the seniors,” he said. “On the double!” His face seemed strained as he gathered the four students, including Dondré.

“I don’t know how to tell you this,” he said, “but the Caldwell Parish Country Club is reserved for whites only.” Murphy paused and looked at Dondré. His teammates glanced at each other in disbelief. “I want you seniors to decide what our response should be,” Murphy continued. “If we leave, we **forfeit** this tournament. If we stay, Dondré can’t play.” As I listened, my own childhood memory from 32 years ago broke free.

In 1959 I was thirteen years old, a poor black kid living with my mother and stepfather in a small black ghetto on Long Island, New York. My mother worked nights in a hospital, and my stepfather drove a coal truck. Needless to say, our standard of living was somewhat short of the American dream.

Nevertheless, when my eighth-grade teacher



Reading Skill

Analyze Text Structure

Underline the words that tell you that the narrator is about to begin telling a second story. Is the second story the frame story or inner story? Explain.

Vocabulary

forfeit (fôr' fit) *v.* to lose or give up something



Literary Element

Thesis Underline the words that give a clue about the thesis of the inner story. How might the main idea of the inner story relate to the main idea of the frame story?

announced a graduation trip to Washington, D.C., it never crossed my mind that I would be left behind. Besides a complete tour of the nation's capital, we would visit Glen Echo Amusement Park in Maryland. In my imagination, Glen Echo was Disneyland, Knott's Berry Farm, and Magic Mountain rolled into one.

60 My heart beating wildly, I raced home to deliver the mimeographed² letter describing the journey. But when my mother saw how much the trip cost, she just shook her head. We couldn't afford it.

After feeling sad for ten seconds, I decided to try to fund the trip myself. For the next eight weeks, I sold candy bars door-to-door, delivered newspapers, and mowed lawns. Three days before the deadline, I'd made just barely enough. I was going!

70 The day of the trip, trembling with excitement, I climbed onto the train. I was the only nonwhite in our section. Our hotel was not far from the White House. My roommate was Frank Miller, the son of a businessman. Leaning together out of our window and dropping water balloons on tourists quickly cemented our new friendship.

Every morning, almost a hundred of us loaded noisily onto our bus for another adventure. We sang our school fight song dozens of times—en route³ to Arlington National Cemetery and even on an afternoon cruise down the Potomac River.

80 We visited the Lincoln Memorial twice, once in daylight, the second time at dusk. My classmates and I fell silent as we walked in the shadows of those thirty-six marble

2. If you *mimeographed*, a letter, you made copies of the letter.
3. *En route* means "on the way."

columns, one for every state in the Union that Lincoln labored to preserve. I stood next to Frank at the base of the nineteen-foot seated statue. Spotlights made the white Georgian marble seem to glow. Together, we read those famous words from Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg, remembering the most bloody battle in the War Between the States: "... we here highly resolve⁴ that these dead shall not have died in vain — that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom ..."

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As Frank motioned me into place to take my picture, I took one last look at Lincoln's face. He seemed alive and so terribly sad.

The next morning, I understood a little better why he wasn't smiling. "Clifton," a chaperone said, "could I see you for a moment?"

The other guys at my table, especially Frank, turned pale. We had been joking about the previous night's direct waterballoon hit on a fat lady and her poodle. It was a stupid, dangerous act, but luckily nobody got hurt. We

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4. **Resolve** means "to make a decision."

MY NOTES



Reading Skill

Analyze Text Structure

Reread the highlighted text. How do Lincoln's words relate to both the inner story about Clifton and the frame story about Dondré?

Vocabulary

In first-person point of view, a narrator is also a character in the story and uses *I* or *we*. In the third-person point of view, the story is told by a narrator who is not a character in the story and uses *he*, *she*, *it*, and *they*. Contrast the point of view at the beginning of the essay and in Dondré's story on this page. How are they different?



Literary Element

Thesis Underline the words that show how the amusement park unfairly treats African Americans. How does this statement about the amusement park help to show the thesis of the essay?

were celebrating our escape from punishment when the chaperone asked to see me.

"Clifton," she began, "do you know about the Mason-Dixon line?"

"No," I said, wondering what this had to do with drenching fat ladies.

"Before the Civil War," she explained, "the Mason-Dixon line was originally the boundary between Maryland and Pennsylvania — the dividing line between the slave
110 and free states." Having escaped one disaster, I could feel another brewing. I noticed that her eyes were damp and her hands were shaking.

"Today," she continued, "the Mason-Dixon line is a kind of invisible border between the North and the South. When you cross that invisible line out of Washington, D.C., into Maryland, things change."

There was an ominous⁵ drift to this conversation, but I wasn't following it. Why did she look and sound so
120 nervous?

"Glen Echo Amusement Park is in Maryland," she said at last, "and the management doesn't allow Negroes inside." She stared at me in silence.

I was still grinning and nodding when the meaning finally sank in.

"You mean I can't go to the park," I stuttered, "because I'm a Negro?"

She nodded slowly. "I'm sorry, Clifton," she said, taking my hand.

130 "You'll have to stay in the hotel tonight. Why don't you and I watch a movie on television?"

I walked to the elevators feeling confusion, disbelief,

5. **Ominous** means "sounding like something bad will happen."

anger, and a deep sadness. "What happened, Clifton?" Frank said when I got back to the room.

"Did the fat lady tell on us?"

Without saying a word, I walked over to my bed, lay down, and began to cry. Frank was stunned into silence. Junior-high boys didn't cry, at least not in front of each other.

It wasn't just missing the class adventure that made me feel so sad. For the first time in my life, I was learning what it felt like to be a "nigger." Of course there was discrimination in the North, but the color of my skin had never officially kept me out of a coffee shop, a church—or an amusement park.

"Clifton," Frank whispered, "what is the matter?"

"They won't let me go to Glen Echo Park tonight," I sobbed.

"Because of the water balloon?" he asked.

"No," I answered, "because I'm a Negro."

"Well, that's a relief!" Frank said, and then he laughed, obviously relieved to have escaped punishment for our caper with the balloons. "I thought it was serious!"

Wiping away the tears with my sleeve, I stared at him. "It is serious. They don't let Negroes into the park. I can't go with you!" I shouted. "That's pretty damn serious to me."

I was about to wipe the silly grin off Frank's face with a blow to his jaw when I heard him say, "Then I won't go either."

For an instant we just froze. Then Frank grinned. I will never forget that moment. Frank was just a kid. He wanted to go to that amusement park as much as I did, but there



Reading Skill

Analyze Text Structure

Underline the words that show how both the narrator and Dondré encounter similar problems. What other details are similar in the stories of Dondré and the narrator?

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Literary Element

Thesis Reread the highlighted text. How do these sentences help explain the thesis of the essay?

Vocabulary

facility (fə'sɪl'əte) *n.* a place built to serve a particular purpose

was something even more important than the class night out. Still, he didn't explain or expand.

The next thing I knew, the room was filled with kids listening to Frank. "They don't allow Negroes in the park," he said, "so I'm staying with Clifton."

"Me, too," a second boy said.

"Those jerks," a third muttered. "I'm with you, Clifton."
170 My heart raced. Suddenly, I was not alone. A pint-size revolution had been born. The "water-balloon brigade,"⁶ eleven white boys from Long Island, had made its decision: "We won't go." And as I sat on my bed in the center of it all, I felt grateful. But, above all, I was filled with pride.

Dondré Green's story brought that childhood memory back to life. His golfing teammates, like my childhood friends, faced an important decision. If they stood by their friend it would cost them dearly. But when it came time to decide, no one hesitated.

180 "Let's get out of here," one of them whispered.

"They just turned and walked toward the van," Dondré told us. "They didn't debate it. And the younger players joined us without looking back."

Dondré was astounded by the response of his friends—and the people of Louisiana. The whole state was outraged and tried to make it right. The Louisiana House of Representatives proclaimed a Dondré Green Day and passed legislation permitting lawsuits for damages, attorneys' fees and court costs against any private **facility**
190 that invites a team, then bars any member because of race.

As Dondré concluded, his eyes glistened with tears.

6. A **brigade** is a group of people put together to do one thing.

"I love my coach and my teammates for **sticking by me**," he said. "It goes to show that there are always good people who will not give in to bigotry.⁷ The kind of love they showed me that day will conquer hatred every time."

My friends, too, had shown that kind of love. As we sat in the hotel, a chaperone came in waving an envelope. "Boys!" he shouted. "I've just bought thirteen tickets to the Senators-Tigers game. Anybody want to go?"

"The room erupted⁸ in cheers. Not one of us had ever been to a professional baseball game in a real baseball park.

On the way to the stadium, we grew silent as our driver paused before the Lincoln Memorial. For one long moment, I stared through the marble pillars at Mr. Lincoln, bathed in that warm, yellow light. There was still no smile and no sign of hope in his sad and tired eyes."

"... We here highly resolve ... that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom ..."



Reading Skill

Analyze Text Structure

Underline the sentence in which the narrator connects Dondré's story with his own. How is the narrator able to understand Dondré's experience?

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7. **Bigotry** is a dislike of people because of their race or religion.
 8. **Erupted** means "exploded or burst forth."

MY NOTES



Literary Element

Thesis Reread the highlighted text. Do Dondré's words imply or directly state the thesis? Explain.

In his words and in his life, Lincoln made it clear, that
210 freedom is not free. Every time the color of a person's skin
keeps him out of an amusement park or off a country-club
fairway, the war for freedom begins again. Sometimes the
battle is fought with fists and guns, but more often the most
effective weapon is a simple act of love and courage.

Whenever I hear those words from Lincoln's speech at
Gettysburg, I remember my eleven white friends, and I feel
hope once again. I like to imagine that when we paused
that night at the foot of his great monument, Mr. Lincoln
smiled at last.

220 As Dondré said, "The kind of love they showed me that
day will conquer hatred every time."

A MASON-DIXON Memory



Connect to the Short Story

Look back at what you wrote on page 198 about what you would do if someone you knew were discriminated against. How did the friends of Dondré Green and the narrator respond to discrimination? Write your answers in the graphic organizer below.

Dondré's Problem	Clifton's Problem
Dondré is not allowed to play at a country club because he is African American.	Clifton is not allowed to go to the amusement park because he is African American.
Solution	Solution

Imagine that your friend is not allowed to join a book club because of her gender. How would you respond?

Literary Element Thesis

What is the thesis of the essay? Explain.

Reading Skill Analyze Text Structure

How do the frame story and the inner story work together to make a statement about racial discrimination in the United States?

A MASON-DIXON Memory



Vocabulary

civic

facility

forfeit

predominantly

provoked

A. Word Meaning Write the vocabulary word that best completes each sentence.

1. Sports figures and _____ leaders came to see Dondré Green.
2. The unfair treatment of Dondré Green _____ anger among his teammates.
3. If Dondré's team left the golf course, they had to _____ their tournament.
4. For a long time in the South, an African American could not use the same public _____ as a white person.
5. Both Dondré and Clifton attended _____ white schools.

B. Vocabulary Skills Practice On the line beside each sentence, write the vocabulary word that has the same meaning as the underlined word or words.

1. _____ City and community leaders supported Dondré and the National Minority College Golf Scholarship Foundation.
2. _____ Dondré Green belonged to a golf team that was mostly white.
3. _____ Frank wanted to give up going to the amusement park to stay with Clifton.
4. _____ Dondré's experience caused Louisiana lawmakers to pass new laws.
5. _____ New laws in Louisiana protect against discrimination at any sports stadium or field.