



lingoda

# Beginnings of slavery's end

READING

LEVEL  
Advanced

NUMBER  
C1\_2037R\_EN

LANGUAGE  
English





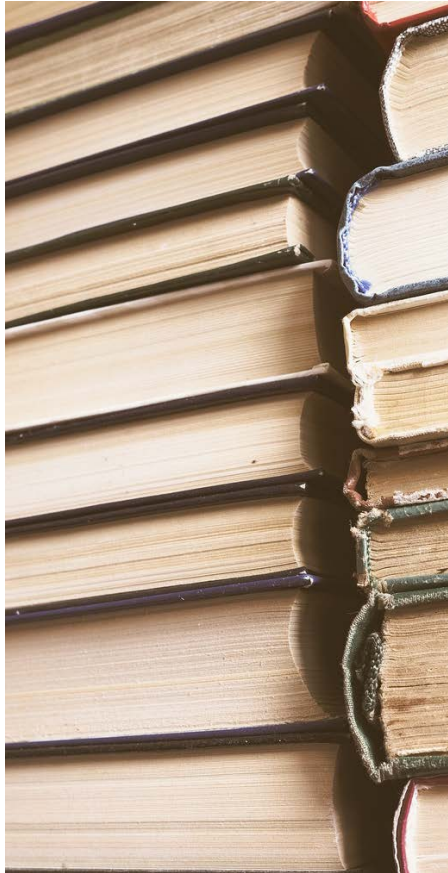
## Goals

- Can read and understand a challenging excerpt from a historical slave narrative text.
- Can maintain a sophisticated discussion social issues and imprisonment.





## Frederick Douglass's place in history



Douglass was born around 1818 and was a slave in Maryland, the United States.

Around the age of 20, he escaped to New York. He became an activist and public speaker within the **abolitionist** movement. His book was published in 1845.

The book contained real names, and Douglass had to flee to England because it was legal for him to be re-captured into slavery. He came back to the United States after 2 years.

Douglass died in 1895.



## How would you feel?

This text is about Douglass's escape from slavery and building a new life with his wife. Here is how he describes the feeling of being a free man.



I felt as one may imagine the unarmed mariner to feel when he is rescued by a friendly man-of-war from the pursuit of pirates.  
I felt like one who had escaped a den of hungry lions.



One common literary technique is the use of simile. What could these similes be describing?



...as the ferocious beasts of the forest lie in wait for their prey.



...is only equalled by that with which the monsters of the deep swallow up the helpless fish upon which they subsist.



...as the hideous crocodile seizes upon his prey!



## The first taste of freedom

I have been frequently asked how I felt when I found myself in a free State. I have never been able to answer the question with any satisfaction to myself. It was a moment of the highest excitement I ever experienced. I suppose I felt as one may imagine the unarmed mariner to feel when he is rescued by a friendly man-of-war from the pursuit of a pirate. I felt like one who had escaped a den of hungry lions. This state of mind, however, very soon subsided; and I was again **seized** with a feeling of great insecurity and loneliness.



## The first taste of freedom

I was yet **liable** to be taken back, and subjected to all the tortures of slavery. This in itself was enough to damp the **ardour** of my enthusiasm. But the loneliness overcame me. There I was **in the midst of** thousands, and yet a perfect stranger; without home and without friends, in the midst of thousands of my own **brethren**—children of a common Father, and yet I dared not to unfold to any one of them my sad condition. I was afraid to speak to any one for fear of speaking to the wrong one, and thereby falling into the hands of money-loving kidnappers, whose business it was to lie in wait for the **panting fugitive**, as the ferocious beasts of the forest lie in wait for their prey. The motto which I adopted when I started from slavery was this—Trust no man! I saw in every white man an enemy, and in almost every coloured man cause for distrust.



## Being a fugitive

It was a most painful situation; and, to understand it, one must needs experience it, or imagine himself in similar circumstances. Let him be a fugitive slave in a strange land—a land given up to be the hunting-ground for slaveholders—whose inhabitants are legalised kidnappers—where he is every moment subjected to the terrible liability of being seized upon by his fellowmen, as the hideous crocodile seizes upon his prey!—I say, let him place himself in my situation—without home or friends—without money or credit—wanting shelter, and no one to give it—wanting bread, and no money to buy it,—and at the same time let him feel that he is pursued by merciless men-hunters, and in total darkness as to what to do, where to go, or where to stay,—perfectly helpless both as to the means of defence and means of escape,—





## Being a fugitive



in the midst of plenty, yet suffering the terrible **gnawings** of hunger,—in the midst of houses, yet having no home,— among fellow-men, yet feeling as if in the midst of wild beasts, whose greediness to swallow up the trembling and half-**famished** fugitive is only equalled by that with which the monsters of the deep swallow up the helpless fish upon which they subsist,—I say, let him be placed in this most trying situation,—the situation in which I was placed,—then, and not till then, will he fully appreciate the hardships of, and know how to sympathize with, the toil-worn and whip-scarred fugitive slave.



Which of these words do you know? Which can you work out from the text?

famished

simile to be seized

liable ardour

brethren in the midst

n of

panting gnawing

abolitionist



## Compare and contrast

**The first two pages of this text describe the time shortly after Douglass became a free man.**



1

Re-read the first page of the text if necessary. Which of the words and phrases that he uses to describe the feeling of freedom stand out most for you?



## Compare and contrast

**The first two pages of this text describe the time shortly after Douglass became a free man.**



1

Re-read the first page of the text if necessary. Which of the words and phrases that he uses to describe the feeling of freedom stand out most for you?



2

Re-read the second page if necessary. Which of the words and phrases that he uses to describe the feeling of being a fugitive stand out most for you?



## Compare and contrast

**The first three pages of this text describe the time shortly after Douglass became a free man.**



1

Re-read the first page of the text if necessary. Which of the words and phrases that he uses to describe the feeling of freedom stand out most for you?



2

Re-read the second and third pages if necessary. Which of the words and phrases that he uses to describe the feeling of being a fugitive stand out most for you?



3

Douglass describes a tumult of emotions in these pages. What kinds of feelings do you think you would be having if you were in the same position?



## Conflicting feelings

**Douglass had conflicting feelings at this time. On the one hand, he was free. On the other, he was a fugitive and was constantly worried about survival.**



1

Talk about a time in your life when you had conflicting feelings about an event or situation.

2

Name the two most dominating emotions.

3

Use Douglass's style to describe the feeling of these emotions and the conflict between them. Be as descriptive as possible using similes.





## Time to move on



It became unsafe for me to remain in New York. I decided to go where I could get work. I thought of going to Canada; but decided against it, in favor of my going to New Bedford, thinking I should be able to get work there at my trade.

In the afternoon of the day when I reached New Bedford, I visited the wharves, to take a view of the shipping. Here I found myself surrounded with the strongest proofs of wealth. Lying at the wharves, and riding in the stream, I saw many ships of the finest model, in the best order, and of the largest size.



## Time to move on



Upon the right and left, I was walled in by granite warehouses of the widest dimensions, stowed to their **utmost capacity** with the necessaries and comforts of life. Every man appeared to understand his work, and went at it with a sober, yet cheerful **earnestness**, which **betokened** the deep interest which he felt in what he was doing, as well as a sense of his own dignity as a man.

To me this looked exceedingly strange. From the wharves I strolled around and over the town, gazing with wonder and admiration at the splendid churches, beautiful **dwellings**, and finely-cultivated gardens; evincing an amount of wealth, comfort, taste, and refinement, such as I had never seen in any part of slaveholding Maryland.





## Describing a better life



Every thing looked clean, new, and beautiful. I saw few or no **dilapidated** houses, with poverty-stricken inmates; no half-naked children and barefooted women, such as I had been accustomed to see in Hillsborough, Easton, St. Michael's, and Baltimore. The people looked more able, stronger, healthier, and happier, than those of Maryland.



## Describing a better life

I was for once made glad by a view of extreme wealth, without being saddened by seeing extreme poverty. But the most astonishing as well as the most interesting thing to me was the condition of the coloured people, a great many of whom, like myself, had escaped **thither** as a refuge from the hunters of men. I found many, who had not been seven years out of their chains, living in finer houses, and evidently enjoying more of the comforts of life, than the average of slaveholders in Maryland.



## Important language note



When Douglass was writing in the 1800s, it was perfectly acceptable to refer to people of African origin as **coloured**.

Today, this word is no longer acceptable for describing people and can be highly offensive.



## Vocabulary

**Match these words with their definitions.**

utmost, capacity, earnestness, betoken, dwelling, dilapidated

1. A place where people live

2. To show or indicate

3. Showing depth or sincerity of feeling

4. The greatest or highest

5. Run-down, in disrepair

6. The ability to receive or contain



Douglass was amazed by life in New Bedford. How does he use each of these phrases to describe his impression?

the strongest proofs  
of wealth

gazing with wonder  
and admiration at

I was for once made  
glad

To me this looked  
exceedingly strange



## The bigger picture

**Douglass makes a dramatic comparison between the way people live in Maryland and the way they live in New Bedford. Place this in the wider context of his work as an anti-slavery activist.**



1

How does he contrast the way white people live in slave-owning areas and free areas? How does this support his anti-slavery activism?



2

How does he contrast the way black people live in slave-owning areas and free areas? How does this support his anti-slavery activism?



## Self-rule within the community

I found the coloured people much more spirited than I had supposed they would be. I found among them a determination to protect each other from the blood-thirsty kidnapper, at all hazards. Soon after my arrival, I was told of a circumstance which illustrated their spirit. A coloured man and a fugitive slave were on unfriendly terms. The **former** was heard to threaten the **latter** with informing his master of his **whereabouts**. Straightway a meeting was called among the coloured people, under the **stereotyped** notice: Business of importance! The **betray**er was invited to attend.



## Self-rule within the community

The people came at the appointed hour, and organized the meeting by appointing a very religious old gentleman as president, who, I believe, made a prayer, after which he recommended that the betrayer be taken outside and killed! With this, a number of them bolted at him; but they were **intercepted** by some more timid than themselves, and the betrayer escaped their **vengeance**, and has not been seen in New Bedford since. I believe there have been no more such threats, and should there be **hereafter**, I doubt not that death would be the consequence.





## Vocabulary

**former**

referring to the first item in a list of two items

**latter**

referring to the second item in a list of two items

**betray**

to expose someone to an enemy or to be dishonest

**to intercept**

to cut someone or something off from an intended destination

**vengeance**

revenge

**hereafter**

from now on



## Improvise a dialogue

Imagine a dialogue which might have taken place between the free man, the fugitive slave, and the very religious old gentleman.

### The fugitive slave

explain your situation and ask for help



### Free man

explain your situation and defend yourself



### Religious man

defend the former, denounce the latter, give your orders.



Use these words

**Make up a short story  
about betrayal and  
vengeance.**

**Try to make it as dramatic  
as possible.**

betray

intercept

vengeance

former

latter



## Old fashioned words, their meanings and modern equivalents

|                    |                                   |                         |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>betoken</b>     | <b>to show</b>                    | <b>indicate</b>         |
| <b>thither</b>     | <b>indicates a nearby place</b>   | <b>over there</b>       |
| <b>brethren</b>    | <b>fellow humans</b>              | <b>peers</b>            |
| <b>stereotyped</b> | <b>copied with a machine</b>      | <b>photocopied</b>      |
| <b>whereabouts</b> | <b>place where someone is</b>     | <b>location</b>         |
| <b>hereafter</b>   | <b>after this time</b>            | <b>from now on</b>      |
| <b>coloured</b>    | <b>person of African origin</b>   | <b>African American</b> |
| <b>strange</b>     | <b>uncommon or new people who</b> | <b>different</b>        |
| <b>inmate</b>      | <b>live somewhere</b>             | <b>resident</b>         |





## Translate these sentences into more modern English

1. These dark clouds **betoken** rain.



---

2. The **inmates** of the house were noisy.



---

3. This country is **strange** to me.



---

4. I was surrounded by **my brethren**.



---

5. I saw a **stereotyped** notice on the wall.



---

6. We don't know the **whereabouts** of the fugitive.



---

7. **Hereafter** I will drink less coffee.



---

8. Your book is **thither** on the table.



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## Discuss these questions

Discuss these questions with your teacher or group.



1

If you could meet Frederick Douglass, what would you want him to talk about and why?



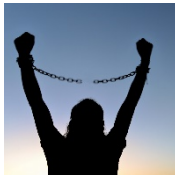
## Discuss these questions

Discuss these questions with your teacher or group.



1

If you could meet Frederick Douglass, what would you want him to talk about and why?



2

Have you ever had to escape from something? Whether it was a big escape or a small one, talk about it.



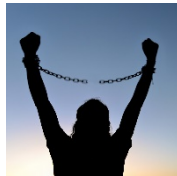
## Discuss these questions

Discuss these questions with your teacher or group.



1

If you could meet Frederick Douglass, what would you want him to talk about and why?



2

Have you ever had to escape from something? Whether it was a big escape or a small one, talk about it.



3

Douglass became a spokesman for the abolitionist movement. Which social movements are important to you and why?



simile

metaphor

Similes and metaphors are both comparisons of completely different things.

A simile usually includes words **as** or **like**.

A metaphor usually uses the verb **to be**.



**Simile:** Your eyes shine **like** stars.



**Metaphor:** You **are** my sunshine, my only sunshine.



# Is each phrase a simile or metaphor? What do they mean?

| simile | metaphor |
|--------|----------|
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fit as a fiddle

he's an animal

sharp as a tack

love is a battlefield

time is money

happy as a clam

dull as dishwater

he has cold feet

she is an old flame

that man is a pig



## Reflect on the lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!





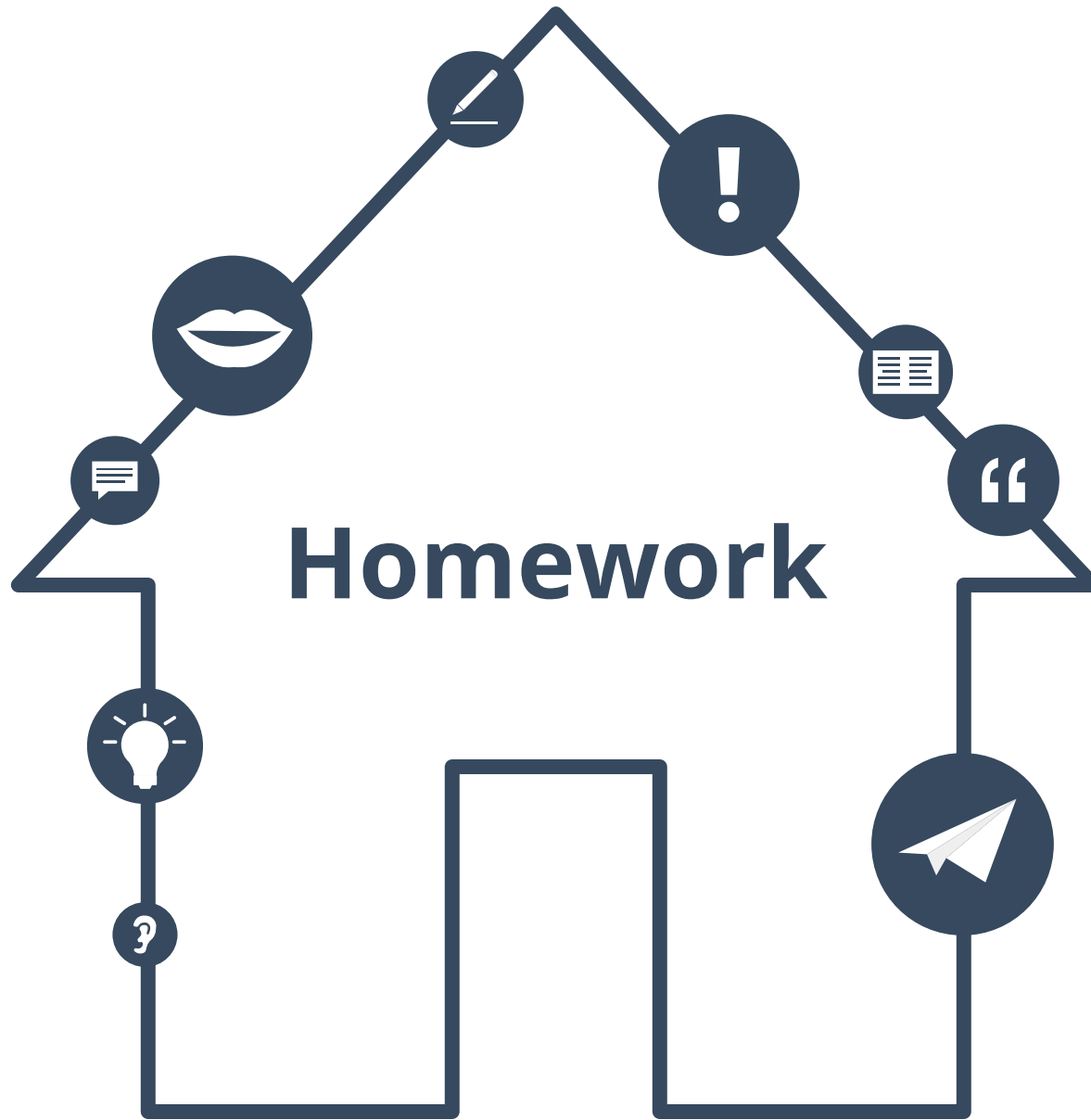
## Answer Key

### Exercise p. 20

1 dwelling, 2 betoken, 3 earnestness, 4 utmost, 5 dilapidated, 6 capacity

### Exercise p. 5

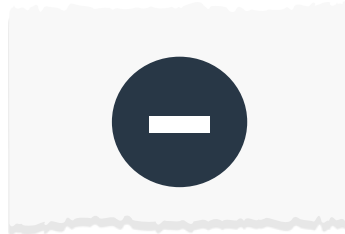
All are describing slave catchers.





## Evaluation

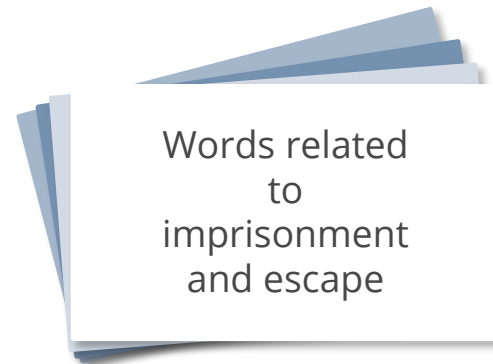
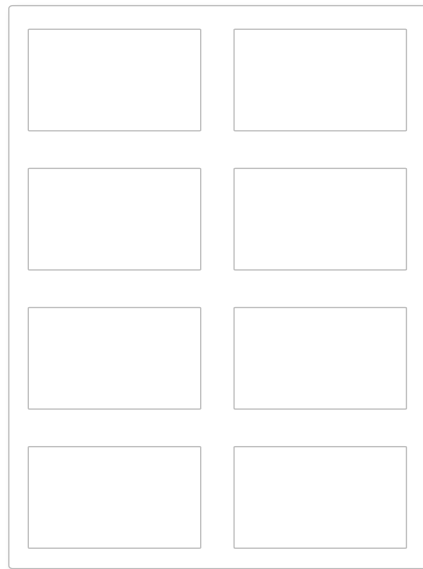
**How was the lesson for you?  
What did you find easy?  
What do you need to work on more?**

A vertical notepad with a white background and horizontal lines. The left edge features a series of circular punch holes, suggesting it's a page from a binder.



## Flashcards

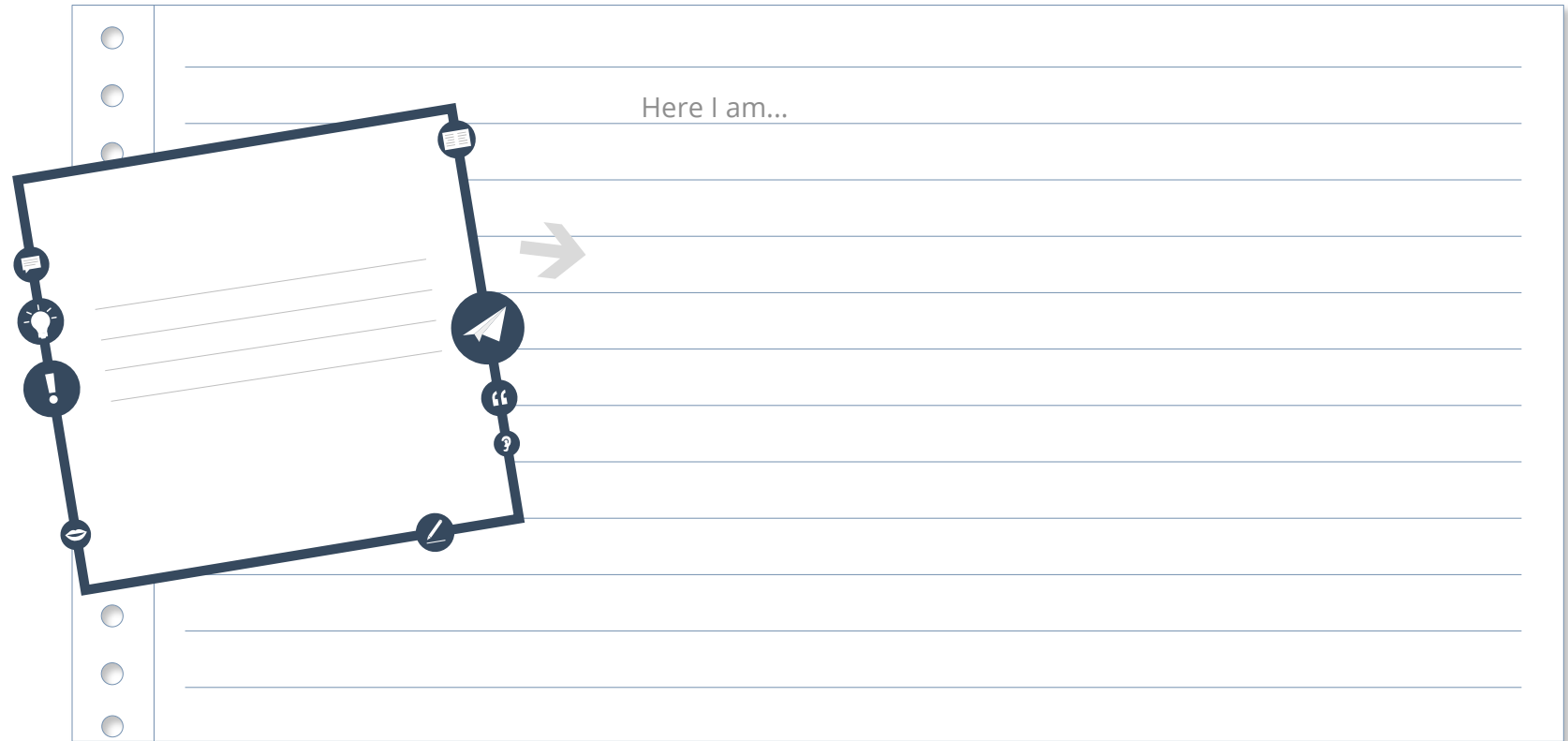
Take a few minutes to make some flashcards for interesting or difficult words you learned in this lesson.





## Write a message

**You find yourself imprisoned in a strange place. Where are you?  
What do you do?  
Write about it.**



The form is a digital message writing interface. It features a large, tilted rectangular area on the left side, outlined in dark blue. This area contains several icons: a speech bubble, a lightbulb, an exclamation mark, a paper airplane, a double quote, a question mark, and a slash. A grey arrow points from this tilted area towards the right. The right side of the form consists of a series of horizontal lines for writing. The first line is pre-filled with the text "Here I am...". There are three more lines below it, and then a gap followed by two more lines at the bottom.





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