

## Before You Read

### *A Mason-Dixon Memory*

#### Connect to the Narrative Essay

What would you do if a friend experienced discrimination? How would you act to defend your friend's rights?

**Quickwrite** Freewrite for a few minutes about how you think you would react in such a situation.

#### Build Background

In this essay, the Mason-Dixon line is described as "a kind of invisible border between the North and the South."

- Originally, the Mason-Dixon line was the boundary between Maryland and Pennsylvania.
- From 1765 to 1768, Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon surveyed the 233-mile-long invisible line to settle a land dispute between the Penn family of Pennsylvania and the Calvert family of Maryland.
- By 1820 the Mason-Dixon line had become the dividing line between the slave states of the South and the free states of the North.

#### Vocabulary

**civic** (siv'ik) *adj.* having to do with a city or citizenship (p. 484). *Our civic leaders are working to strengthen the city's schools.*

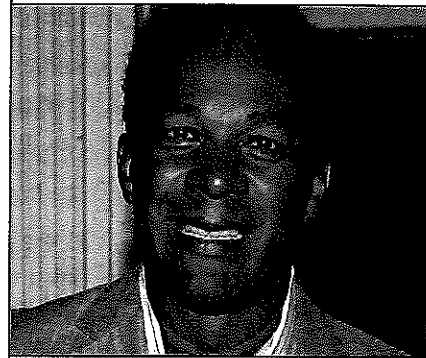
**predominantly** (pri.dom'ə nant'lē) *adv.* mainly, mostly (p. 484). *Although the guests were predominantly adults, some children also attended the party.*

**provoked** (prə vōkd') *v.* having brought out some action or emotion (p. 485). *The appearance of the ice cream truck provoked shouts of excitement from the children.*

**forfeit** (fôr'fit) *v.* to lose or lose the right to something (p. 485). *You will forfeit any prize you win if you don't follow the rules.*

**facility** (fə sil'ə tē) *n.* something, such as a building, built to serve a particular purpose (p. 490). *Many town residents were happy to see construction start on the new medical facility.*

#### Meet Clifton Davis



**Multitalented Artist** Clifton Davis is an actor, singer, and songwriter. His song "Never Can Say Goodbye" sold two million records. He has acted in several movies, Broadway plays, and TV shows. Davis told his "Mason-Dixon Memory" story to Mel White, who wrote it in Davis's voice.

Clifton Davis was born in 1945.



Literature Online

**Author Search** For more about Clifton Davis, go to [glencoe.com](http://glencoe.com) and enter QuickPass code GL29763u4.

## Set Purposes for Reading

### BQ BIG Question

As you read the essay, pay attention to the experiences of young people who would not accept racial discrimination. Ask yourself, how did their actions influence those around them?

### Literary Element Thesis

The main idea of an essay is called the **thesis**. The **thesis statement** is usually a single sentence that tells the main idea. However, in a narrative essay that tells a story from the author's life, the thesis often is not stated directly. Instead, it is implied with suggestions and hints.

Recognizing the thesis or main idea is often the most important part of understanding an essay. The main idea is what the author most wants to show, prove, or explain. In narrative essays, authors frequently use vivid details and examples to make their main ideas clear. As you read, look for suggestions and hints that point to the author's thesis.

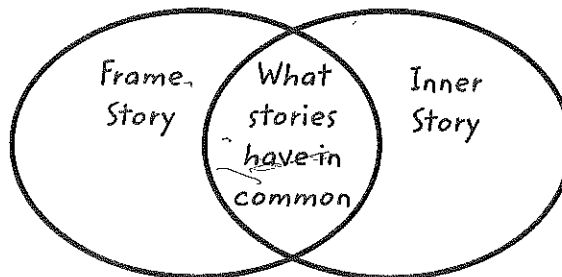
### Reading Skill Analyze Text Structure

**Analyzing text structure** means looking closely at the pattern the author uses to present events and ideas. Narrative essays usually tell short, true stories from the author's life. Some narrative essays use a text structure called a frame story. The frame is the outer story, which usually precedes and then follows the inner, more important story. It is like a picture frame that holds a photograph.

Analyzing text structure is important because it helps you better understand the author's main idea and purpose. To analyze text structure, pay attention to

- where the frame and inner stories begin and end and what they have in common
- how the inner story reinforces the main idea of the frame story

As you read, keep track of the characters, events, and ideas in the inner and frame stories. Also, keep track of what the stories have in common. Use a graphic organizer like the one below.



### Learning Objectives

For pages 482–493

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

**Literary Study:** Analyzing an essay.

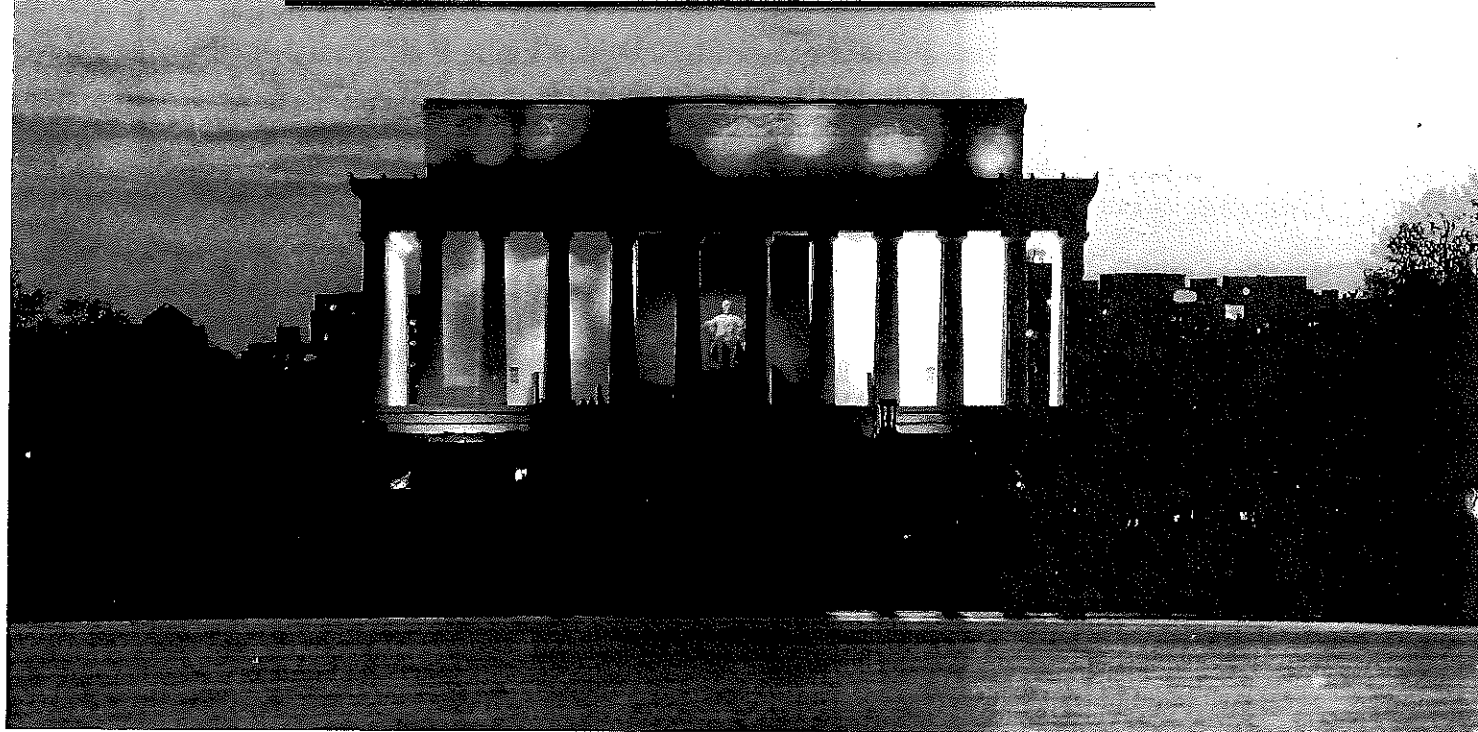
**Reading:** Analyzing text structure.

### TRY IT

**Analyze** Have you ever been telling a story and become sidetracked by having to explain another story? How did the two stories relate to each other? How was this experience similar to reading a frame story?

# A MASON-DIXON MEMORY

Clifton Davis



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.

## Vocabulary

**civic** (siv'ik) *adj.* having to do with a city or citizenship

**predominantly** (pri dom'ə nant'le) *adv.* mainly, mostly

A **tuxedo** is a formal suit, usually dark in color, that has a jacket and trousers with a single stripe along the outer edge of each leg.



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.

"Ladies and gentlemen," the emcee<sup>1</sup> said, "our special guest Dondré Green."

As the audience stood applauding, Dondré walked to the 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 only black member, I've always felt at home 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 in Columbia, we walked to the putting green."

Dondré and his teammates were too absorbed to notice the 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.

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1 An **emcee** is the leader of a ceremony.

#### Vocabulary

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

**forfeit** (fôr'fit) v. to lose or lose the right to something

**Thesis** Given the clues in this paragraph, what may the author's thesis relate to?

is about  
race

#### Analyze Text Structure

Who is the main character of the frame, or outer, story?  
What is the setting, or time and place of the story?

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 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.

My heart beating wildly, I raced home to deliver the mimeographed<sup>2</sup> letter describing the journey. But when my mother saw how much the trip cost, she just shook her head. We couldn't afford it.

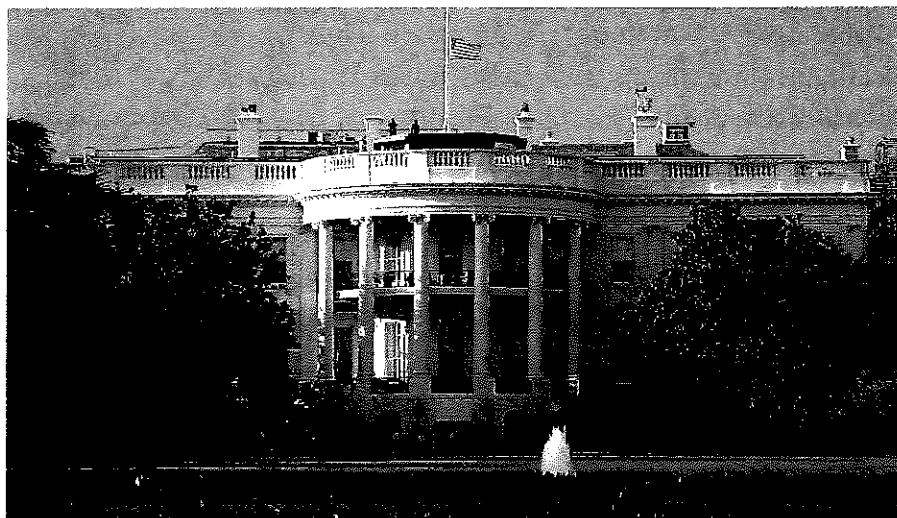
After feeling sad for ten seconds, I decided to try to fund the trip myself. For the next eight weeks, I sold candy bars door-to-door, delivered newspapers, and mowed lawns. Three days before the deadline, I'd made just barely enough. I was going!

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.

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2 If a letter was *mimeographed*, many copies of the letter were made.



#### Analyze Text Structure

How does the story change in this paragraph? Who is now the main character?

What is the setting?

The White House

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 route<sup>3</sup> to Arlington National Cemetery and even on an afternoon cruise down the Potomac River.

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 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 resolve<sup>4</sup> that these dead shall not have died in vain — that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom . . ."

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 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

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3 *En route* means "on the way."

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

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 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." My heart raced. Suddenly, I was not alone. A pint-size revolution had been born. The "water-balloon brigade,"<sup>6</sup> 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.

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<sup>6</sup> A **brigade** is a group of people organized for a specific purpose.

### **BQ** BIG Question

Reread the last two paragraphs. How does the experience of discrimination affect the narrator?

**Thesis** What is the "something" that is more important than going to the amusement park?

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.

"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** that invites a team, then bars any member because of race.

As Dondré concluded, his eyes glistened with tears. "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.<sup>7</sup> 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 erupted<sup>8</sup> 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.

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<sup>7</sup> **Bigotry** means "intolerance."

<sup>8</sup> **Erupted** means "exploded or burst forth."

#### Vocabulary

**facility** (fə sil'ə tē) *n.* something, such as a building, built to serve a particular purpose

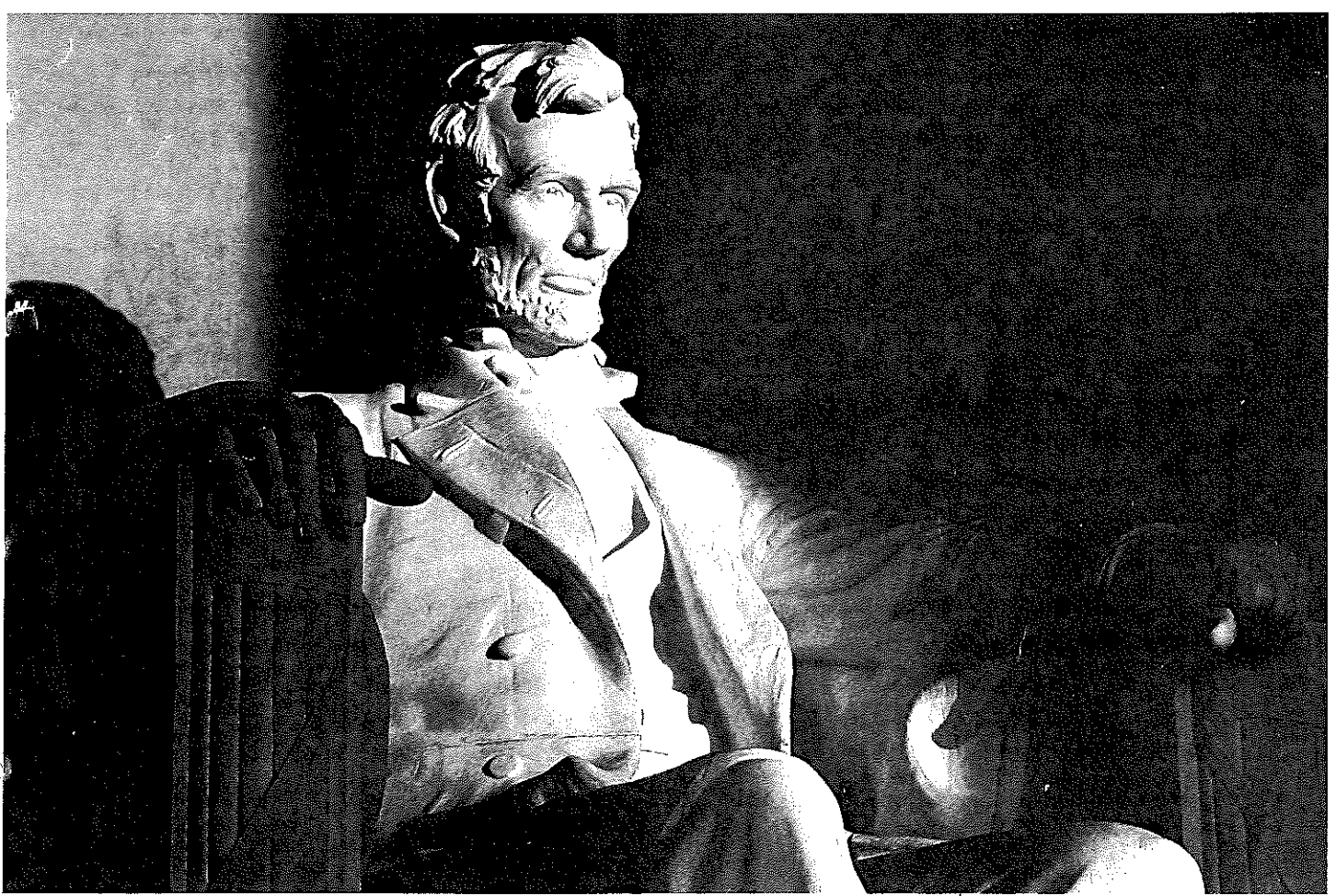
#### Analyze Text Structure

How do the inner and outer stories come together here?

#### BQ BIG Question

How did Dondré's experience influence his community?






The Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., is a tribute to President Abraham Lincoln and a symbol of freedom and the sacrifices of the Civil War.

View the Photograph In what way is the image of  
Memorial helpful, and how does the essay help?

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

In his words and in his life, Lincoln made it clear, that  
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.

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

**Thesis** Think back to  
the earlier description of  
the Lincoln statue. How  
does the description of a  
smiling Lincoln affect the  
author's thesis?

## After You Read

### Respond and Think Critically

1. What decision does Dondré's golf coach ask the team to make at the Caldwell Parish Country Club? [Recall]
2. In the essay, find the quotation from the Lincoln Memorial. In your own words, describe what Lincoln said he would do. [Paraphrase]
3. Think of the events described in the essay. Do you think the other boys would have defended Dondré or the narrator if they had not known them? Explain. [Conclude]
4. What does the Mason-Dixon line represent in this story? Explain. [Analyze]
5. Why were the settings of the frame and inner stories important to Dondré's and the narrator's experiences? Explain. [Evaluate]
6. **BQ** **BIG Question** What did the life experience of discrimination teach both the narrator and Dondré? Use evidence from the essay to support your answer. [Conclude]

### Vocabulary Practice

Respond to these questions.

1. Which would you call a **civic** project—helping to clean up a park or painting your bedroom?
2. In which place would the people be **predominantly** children—an elementary school or an office building?
3. Which would your team rather **forfeit**—one point in a game or the whole game?
4. Which movie probably **provoked** laughter—a funny movie or a serious drama?
5. What would you describe as a sports **facility**—a collection of baseball cards or a building with athletic courts?

### Academic Vocabulary

Davis's chaperone explained that Davis would be unable to go to the amusement park because the park's management **restricted** African Americans from entering. In the preceding sentence, *restricted* means "specifically excluded." Think about your own experiences. Have you ever been restricted from entering a place or taking part in an activity? Why? Was the restriction fair? Explain.

### TIP

#### Paraphrasing

To answer question 2, use your own words to restate Lincoln's main ideas.

- Reread the quotation from Lincoln's Gettysburg Address included in the essay.
- Ask yourself, what is the main idea of the quotation?
- Check to make sure that you have used your own words and included the central points of the quotation.



Keep track of your ideas about the **BIG Question** in your unit Foldable.



Literature Online

#### Selection Resources

For Selection Quizzes, eFlashcards, and Reading-Writing Connection activities, go to [glencoe.com](http://glencoe.com) and enter QuickPass code GL29763u4.

## Literary Element Thesis

### Test Skills Practice

1. If the essay needed a new title, which of these would be BEST?
  - A "A Forgotten Memory"
  - B "How Love Conquers Hatred"
  - C "A Special Baseball Game"
  - D "The Speaker from Louisiana"

### Review: Narrator and Point of View

As you learned on page 9, The person who tells a story is the **narrator**. When the narrator is a character in the story and uses first-person pronouns, the story uses **first-person point of view**. In a first-person narrative, all information about the story's characters and events comes from the narrator. A skillful reader must determine how the narrator's experience and opinions influence the telling of the story.

In a story with a **limited third-person point of view**, the narrator reveals the thoughts of only one character, but refers to that character as "he" or "she." In a story with an **omniscient point of view**, the narrator reveals the thoughts of several characters.

2. Who is the narrator of the frame story in "A Mason-Dixon Memory"? Who is the narrator of the inner story? Explain how the point of view from which the stories are told influences a reader's understanding of the stories' events.

### Reading Skill Analyze Text Structure

3. How are Clifton Davis's and Dondré Green's stories similar? How are they different? To help you answer, use the graphic organizer you completed as you read the essay.
4. How would the essay change if the author did not use a frame story? Explain.

## Grammar Link

**Subjects and Predicates** Every sentence has two parts: a subject and a predicate.

- The **complete subject** tells who or what a sentence is about.
- The **complete predicate** tells what the subject is doing, being, or has.

*Dondré and his friends play golf.*

Who plays golf? Dondré and his friends.

The complete subject is "Dondré and his friends."

What do Dondré and his friends do?  
They play golf.

The complete predicate is "play golf."

Dondré and his friends play golf.

**Practice** Underline the complete subjects in the following sentences from the selection once. Underline the complete predicates twice. Then write two of your own sentences. Underline the complete subjects once and the complete predicates twice.

Murphy paused and looked at Dondré.

Our hotel was not far from the White House.

I walked to the elevators feeling confusion, disbelief, anger, and a deep sadness.

## Speaking and Listening

**Literature Groups** In a group, talk about the discrimination that Dondré and Davis faced. How did this discrimination influence not only Dondré and Davis, but also those around them? How would you have reacted in Dondré's or Davis's place? Think about the experiences of people today. Discuss how they are similar to or different from the experiences described in the essay. Listen carefully to other speakers. Then ask questions that will help you to better understand their claims and conclusions.

