

12 Years A Slave Viewing Guide

As you view the film, please write responses to prompts – due on exam day for 5 pts extra credit

1) Who is Solomon Northup in his regular life? Describe him and his life.

2.) Describe the motives for the men who sell Solomon into slavery. How is it even possible to sell a free citizen? How do they convince Solomon to come with them?

3) What experiences discourage Solomon from repeated attempts to explain his situation, and to try escaping slavery?

4) Describe the variety in treatment that Solomon and other slaves receive from different masters, and explain which details are most surprising to you and why.

5) What aspect of slave culture presented in the film did you find interesting or surprising and WHY? (religion, relationships, behavior, dress, labor, etc.)

6) How does the film end and what is your reaction to the end of the film. What feelings are you left with? How else could the film have ended? Why would the director choose to close the film as he did?

7.) Read this [Jan. 20, 1853, Times article](#) detailing the kidnapping and rescue of Solomon Northup (misspelled “Northrop” in the article). What does this newspaper story add to our understanding of Mr. Northup’s case?

8.) What is the most compelling information in the article to your mind and why?