

Extension: Building Your Vocabulary

Name _____

Date _____

Your Turn Carefully read the following passage and define the underlined words using context clues. Afterward, compare your definitions with those in a dictionary.

The passage that follows comes from an address presented by Frederick Douglass in which he discusses John Brown's assault on Harper's Ferry, West Virginia. Douglass wrote this address in 1881. (Jon Brown made his assault in 1859.)

Viewed thus broadly our subject is worthy of thoughtful and dispassionate consideration. It invites the study of the poet, scholar, philosopher, and statesman. What the masters in natural science have done for man in the physical world, the masters of social science may yet do for him in the moral world. Science now tells us when storms are in the sky, and when and where their violence will be most felt. Why may we not yet know with equal certainty when storms are in the moral sky, and how to avoid their desolating force? But I can invite you to no such profound discussions. I am not the man, nor is this the occasion for such philosophical enquiry. Mine is the world of grateful memory of an old friend; to tell you what I knew of him—what I knew of his inner life—of what he did and what he attempted, and thus if possible to make the mainspring of his actions manifest and thereby give you a clearer view of his character and services.

■ Dispassionate: _____

■ Desolating: _____

■ Profound: _____

■ Mainspring: _____

■ Manifest: _____

Follow-up: Reread the passage. It should be easier for you to understand after your word study. **Extension:** What synonyms, if any, could Douglass have used for the underlined words?
