Informative Essay Writing Prompt:

Write an informative essay about a person who accomplished a great goal. Include relevant details about his/her life. Give sufficient evidence from research from at least two (2) respectable articles. Use appropriate language for the audience to maintain a formal style. Use appropriate transitions to show the relationships among paragraphs. Cite your sources correctly within the essay and in the works cited page.

**Introduction:**

**Quote as hook**: Frederick Douglass wrote in his autobiography that “Mistress, in teaching me the alphabet, had given me the inch, and no precaution could prevent me from taking the ell” (3). **Explanation of quote**: Today, this idiom would sound more like “give someone an inch, and they will take a mile.” Douglass refers to learning the alphabet, which made him utterly unsatisfied until he learned to read. Reading was Douglass’s first step to freedom from the bondage of slavery. **Person’s goals**: Some of his major goals were to learn to read and to write and to escape slavery. By learning to read and write, he was able to escape slavery at the age of twenty. By writing and publishing his own autobiography, he showed the people of his time the cruelties and injustices of slavery and helped the leaders of our nation decide to abolish slavery. **Thesis/Main Idea of Entire Essay:** Frederick Douglass is a great example of a person who accomplished the great goals of learning to read and to write and of escaping slavery despite numerous obstacles.

**First Body Paragraph:**  
 **Main Idea/Topic Sentence: background and obstacles:** When Frederick Douglass was a child, he endured much harsh labor and injustice, and he would have to conquer society’s acceptance of slavery and society’s choice to deprive slaves of education in order to accomplish his goals. **Background specifics from articles:** According to the National Park Service, Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey was born into slavery in Maryland in 1818. Douglass’s mother died when he was young, and he never knew his father. Douglass was hired out to a different family in Baltimore for a time; the family wanted Douglass to be a companion to their own son. With this family, the Aulds, he began to learn to read. Mrs. Auld began teaching Douglass to read before her husband discovered their lessons and insisted that she stop (Douglass 1-2). This experience gave Douglass a burning desire to learn to read and write. **Obstacles person faced:** So, Douglass faced the obstacle of his masters’ disapproval of his desire to learn and the fact that he was denied the right to an education. Furthermore, Douglass also faced the obstacle of his enslavement. PBS explains that early on in life Douglass “was exposed to the degradations of slavery, witnessing firsthand brutal whippings and spending much time cold and hungry.” Later, after seven years in Baltimore with the Aulds, Douglass was hired out to a malicious “slavebreaker” named Edward Covey. Under Covey’s authority, Douglass was “whipped daily and barely fed.” The entire legal institution of slavery of his time period was a huge obstacle for Douglass to try to overcome. **Summation sentence**: These are some of the obstacles that Douglass faced as a child and young man.

**Second Body Paragraph:**

**Topic Sentence: Transition from obstacles to person’s attitude and actions to accomplish goal:** So, how did Douglass respond to these obstacles that were in the way of accomplishing his dreams? He faced them with determination and perseverance and, quite frankly, his intellect. It could be said that Douglass “reasoned” or “outsmarted” those who were in authority over him. **Evidence from articles:** Douglass records in his own autobiography that, even though Mrs. Auld quit teaching him and later opposed his education, she had taught him the alphabet and how to spell some short words (1). He learned more each time that he was given an errand in the city; he would complete the errand quickly and then use bread to “pay” the young boys of Baltimore to teach him more about reading and writing (3-4). Douglass learned to read from this clever plan. From the achievement of learning to read, Douglass read a book called “The Columbian Orator” and learned much about masters and slaves (4). From it, he began to loathe the thought that he would be *a slave for life*. Thus, after learning to read, he set a new goal to escape from slavery and become a free man (4). However, he felt that he should learn to write before trying to escape, since he thought he could write his own pass (5). Douglass learned four letters from the Baltimore harbor, where boards were labeled with L, F, S, A—standing for larboard, forward, starboard, and aft, respectively (5-6). Then he would challenge any boy he met that he could write better than the boy could. From these boys, he learned his other letters. He also copied the discarded copybooks that his master’s son had completed; he would trace over these whenever no one was home (6). Douglass learned to read, so now he desired to make his escape. In 1836, he planned his first escape, but he was jailed when local authorities discovered his plan (PBS). Two years later, with the help of a free black woman, Anne Murray, Douglass, dressed as a sailor, fled Baltimore by train then steamboat then train and arrived in New York City the next day (PBS and NPS). From September 3, 1838, Douglass was a free man. **Summation sentence:** Douglass kept an attitude of hope and determination until he had achieved the goals of learning to read and write and escaping slavery.

**Conclusion: Legacy of person**

**Topic Sentence: Person’s Legacy:** Today, Douglass’s legacy continues as he inspires people across the globe to fight for education and equal rights. **Relevant biographical information after goal accomplishment**: After Douglass’s escape, he immediately set new goals: advocating for the abolition of slavery and later suffrage for African Americans and women. Douglass and Anne Murray married soon after his escape and chose Massachusetts as their home and Douglass as their surname (NPS). Douglass soon began speaking at abolitionist meetings, and he published his first autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* in 1845 (NPS). Douglass and Anne had five children, and Douglass traveled extensively speaking for abolition. He published his own newspaper, the North Star, and he even met with Lincoln to represent African Americans in the Union army who weren’t give equal treatment or equal pay in the Civil War. He hoped that abolition would be one of the outcomes of the Civil War. Until his death in 1895, he continued to fight for civil rights and women’s rights (NPS). **Summation sentence:** Douglass’s legacy continues today—through those who read his life story and persevere in accomplishing their own goals.

**Informative Essay: Writing Guide for Students**

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**Hook, Starter, Interesting Fact, or Question:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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**Explanation of Quote or Hook: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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**Person’s goals: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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**Thesis/Main Idea of Entire Essay**:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**First Body Paragraph:**

**Transition and Topic Sentence: overview of background and obstacles: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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**Background specifics from articles:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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**Explain the obstacles the person faced: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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**Summation sentence:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Second Body Paragraph:**

**Topic Sentence: Transition from obstacles to person’s attitude and actions to accomplish goal: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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**Evidence from articles: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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**Closing Statement: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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**Conclusion: Legacy of person**

**Topic Sentence: Person’s legacy: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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**Relevant biographical information after goal accomplishment:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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**Summation sentence:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

Self-assessment Checklist and Rubric

\_\_\_\_\_1. Introduce the topic clearly.

\_\_\_\_\_2. Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

\_\_\_\_\_3. Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

\_\_\_\_\_4. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

\_\_\_\_\_5. Establish and maintain a formal style.

\_\_\_\_\_6. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

\_\_\_\_\_7. Paraphrase or quote from articles correctly within the essay.