Writing Assignment 1:
Defining a Key Term In Your Own Words

Due Date
The assignment is due Monday, October 19th, to your TA <u>at the beginning of lecture</u>.

Overview
Explaining a key term in your own words can help you evaluate whether or not you understand its meaning and application. In this assignment, your goal is to define an important DOC key term in your own words using examples from your reading. You should imagine the primary reader of your paper is a friend or family member who is not attending this class (rather than your professor or TA).

The Assignment

Define the term **contradiction** as it has been explained in lecture as part of the DOC method of analysis.   Use examples from <u>either</u> the David Walker <u>or</u> John Brown reading (choose <u>one</u>) to help explain your definition. To what extent does the text you selected expose contradictions in U.S. society at the time it was written?

Final drafts should be <u>approximately two pages</u> and should be typed, double-spaced, with 12-point font and 1-inch margins. Your name, your TA's name, and your section number should be typed at the top. (Do not use a cover page).

NOTE: You do not need to include a works cited page for this assignment, but you should cite the page numbers from the reader if you use any direct quotations.

Suggestions for Developing the Writing Process
<u>Before beginning your definition</u>, begin the process of taking notes, reviewing your reading, and organizing your thoughts to make sure you understand the key terms and examples.

- Can I explain the concept in my own words?
- Where in my materials can I find some definitions?
- Who is the author of the text you have chosen to use for examples? Who was the intended audience or reader of this text?
- What institutions in society are being criticized and why?
- What dominant ideologies are being criticized?
- What does the author believe should be done to resolve the contradictions he describes?

Evaluation Rubric

Grade Range	Description
"A" Range – Exceptional Response	The assignment demonstrates an exceptional response in nearly every way. Casual readers would clearly understand the meaning of this concept based on how well the examples are used and explained. It demonstrates strong critical reading skills as we are developing them in DOC.
"B" Range – Strong and Successful Response	The "B" paper is a successful response to the assignment. The term is mostly defined well and examples are relatively easy to follow. However, there are a few places where either: 1) the concept could be clarified; 2) better example(s) could be chosen; or 3) additional explanation or clarification in any/all parts of the assignment could be improved for reader comprehension. One more draft may have been necessary to put the paper in the "A" range.
"C" Range – Adequate Response	The "C" paper demonstrates an adequate response to the assignment. There is a clear attempt to define term but improvement in a few areas is necessary. These include: 1) the term is only partially defined; 2) the term is not defined in relation to how it is used in DOC lectures; 3) an unfamiliar reader may need more help in understanding its meaning; 4) examples provided are either partially unclear or unexplained; 5) there may also be distracting sentence-level editing errors that prohibit readers from understanding the definition and examples. With a little more reading, review, revision and editing -- and perhaps an office hour visit to the TA, lecturer or even to Gwen Fish and/or the campus writing center -- this could have been a stronger paper.
"D" and Below Range– Unsuccessful Response	Work that earns a grade below a "C" indicates that the paper fails to demonstrate an adequate understanding of the assignment. A paper in this range may struggle with some/all of the following: It does not define the term correctly as used in DOC. The paper may also have significant structural and sentence-level errors that distract readers from following its key points. It may also contain evidence of plagiarism. The student may not be a native English speaker or English might not have been her/his primary language at home. A paper in this range could have strongly benefited from: additional planning and outlining work; office hour visits with the TA; writing center appointments; and/or greater class participation.