

GRADES
6-8

JUNETEENTH

READING COMPREHENSION ACTIVITIES



INFORMATIONAL
READING PASSAGE



VOCABULARY
PRACTICE



COMPREHENSION
QUESTIONS

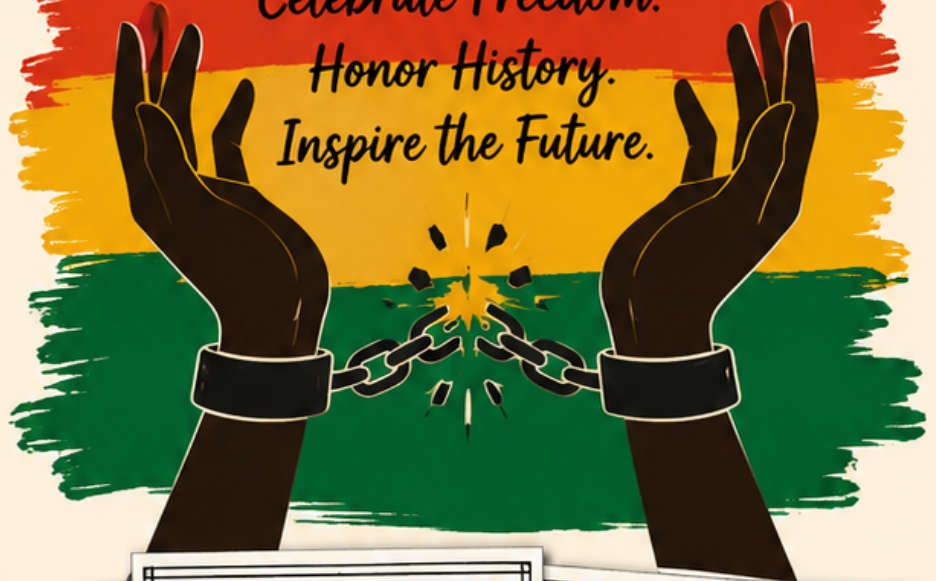


WRITING
REFLECTION



ANSWER KEY
INCLUDED

*Celebrate Freedom.
Honor History.
Inspire the Future.*



Freedom
Unity
Hope

Vocabulary

1. <u>freedom</u>	The power to live without unfair control.
2. <u>enslaved</u>	Forced to work without pay or freedom.
3. <u>proclamation</u>	An important public announcement.
4. <u>federal holiday</u>	A holiday recognized by the United States government.
5. <u>equality</u>	When people are treated fairly and equally.

What Is Juneteenth?

Juneteenth is a holiday that celebrates freedom in the United States. It is celebrated every year on June 19. The holiday remembers the day when enslaved African Americans in Texas learned they were free.

During the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. This order declared that enslaved people in Confederate states were free. However, many enslaved people did not learn the news right away.

Questions

- When is Juneteenth celebrated?
A. July 4
B. June 19
C. January 1
D. February 14
- What did the Emancipation Proclamation declare?
A. Schools would close
B. Texas became a state
C. Enslaved people were free
D. A new president was elected
- In which state did people learn they were free on June 19, 1865?
A. Georgia
B. Florida
C. Texas
D. Virginia



NO PREP • PRINT & GO • EASY TO USE



Informational Reading Passage

Juneteenth is a holiday celebrated on June 19 that honors the end of slavery in the United States. The holiday began after enslaved African Americans in Texas finally learned they were free, more than two years after slavery had officially been ended in Confederate states.

During the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. This document declared that enslaved people in Confederate states were free. However, the order could only be enforced in areas controlled by Union troops. In many southern states, slavery continued because Confederate leaders refused to follow the proclamation.

Texas was one of the last Confederate states where slavery remained largely unchanged during the war. Because it was far from major battle areas, many enslavers moved to Texas and brought enslaved people with them. As a result, thousands of African Americans in Texas remained enslaved even after the Emancipation Proclamation was announced.

On June 19, 1865, Union General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, with federal troops. He announced General Order No. 3, which informed enslaved African Americans that they were free and had equal personal rights under the law. This day became known as Juneteenth, combining the words “June” and “nineteenth.”

After learning of their freedom, African American communities began celebrating Juneteenth with gatherings, music, prayer services, food, storytelling, and educational events. These celebrations became an important way to honor freedom, remember history, and strengthen communities.

Over time, Juneteenth spread beyond Texas as African American families moved to other states. In 2021, Juneteenth officially became a federal holiday in the United States. Today, people across the country celebrate by attending festivals, supporting Black-owned businesses, learning about history, and reflecting on the importance of equality and justice.

Juneteenth is more than a celebration of freedom. It is also a reminder that change can take time and that many people throughout history fought for equal rights and opportunities. The holiday encourages people to learn from the past while continuing to work toward a more just future.

Vocabulary

1. Emancipation

The act of being set free from control or slavery.

2. Proclamation

An official public announcement made by a government or leader.

3. Confederate

The southern states that separated from the United States during the Civil War.

4. Equality

The state of being treated fairly and having the same rights and opportunities.

5. Federal

Related to the national government of the United States.

6. Justice

Fair treatment under the law and in society.

7. Enslaved

Forced to work without freedom or pay.

8. Community

A group of people living or working together and supporting one another.



Comprehension Questions

1. What does Juneteenth celebrate?
 - a. The end of the Civil War
 - b. The signing of the Constitution
 - c. The end of slavery in the United States
 - d. The first Independence Day celebration
2. Who issued the Emancipation Proclamation?
 - a. George Washington
 - b. Abraham Lincoln
 - c. Thomas Jefferson
 - d. Theodore Roosevelt
3. Why did slavery continue in Texas after the Emancipation Proclamation?
 - a. Texas was not part of the United States
 - b. The proclamation only applied in areas controlled by Union troops
 - c. People in Texas did not know about the Civil War
 - d. The government changed its mind
4. What happened on June 19, 1865?
 - a. The Civil War officially began
 - b. General Gordon Granger announced freedom for enslaved African Americans in Texas
 - c. Texas became a state
 - d. The Constitution was signed
5. Which statement best explains the main idea of the passage?
 - a. Juneteenth is only celebrated in Texas
 - b. Juneteenth honors freedom and the importance of equality and history
 - c. The Civil War ended immediately after the Emancipation Proclamation
 - d. Juneteenth is mainly about food and festivals

Comprehension Questions

6. Why is Juneteenth considered an important part of American history?

7. Describe two ways people celebrate Juneteenth today.

8. Why do you think it is important to remember historical events like Juneteenth?

Comprehension Questions

9. Explain why some enslaved African Americans did not learn they were free until 1865.

10. What message does Juneteenth send about equality and justice?

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Writing Prompt

Informative/Reflective Writing

Juneteenth is both a celebration and a reminder of important events in American history.

Write a paragraph explaining:

why Juneteenth is important, what lessons people can learn from the holiday, and why learning about history matters today.

Your response should include:

- at least 8–10 complete sentences,
- details from the reading passage,
- and your own thoughts or reflections.

Writing Prompt

Writing Prompt

Answer Key

Multiple Choice

1. What does Juneteenth celebrate?
c. The end of slavery in the United States
2. Who issued the Emancipation Proclamation?
b. Abraham Lincoln
3. Why did slavery continue in Texas after the Emancipation Proclamation?
b. The proclamation only applied in areas controlled by Union troops
4. What happened on June 19, 1865?
b. General Gordon Granger announced freedom for enslaved African Americans in Texas
5. Which statement best explains the main idea of the passage?
b. Juneteenth honors freedom and the importance of equality and history

Answer Key

Sample Short Answer Responses

6. Why is Juneteenth considered an important part of American history?

Juneteenth is important because it marks the day enslaved African Americans in Texas learned they were free. It honors freedom and reminds people about the struggle for equality and justice.

7. Describe two ways people celebrate Juneteenth today.

People celebrate Juneteenth with parades, festivals, music, food, educational events, and family gatherings.

8. Why do you think it is important to remember historical events like Juneteenth?

It is important to remember historical events so people can learn from the past, understand the importance of equality, and prevent unfair treatment in the future.

9. Explain why some enslaved African Americans did not learn they were free until 1865.

Some enslaved African Americans did not learn they were free because the Emancipation Proclamation could only be enforced in areas controlled by Union troops, and Texas was far from many battle areas.

10. What message does Juneteenth send about equality and justice?

Juneteenth reminds people that freedom and equal rights are important and that society should continue working toward fairness and justice for everyone.

Projects

Juneteenth Historical Reflection Project

Objective

Students will explore the history and importance of Juneteenth while connecting it to themes of freedom, equality, and justice.

Project Options

Choose ONE of the following:

Option 1: Poster Project

Create an informative poster about Juneteenth that includes:

- important historical facts,
- dates and people,
- symbols or illustrations,
- and a paragraph explaining why Juneteenth matters today.

Option 2: Timeline Project

Create a timeline showing important events related to Juneteenth, including:

- the Civil War,
- the Emancipation Proclamation,
- June 19, 1865,
- and Juneteenth becoming a federal holiday in 2021.
- Include short explanations for each event.

Option 3: Speech or Presentation

Prepare a short 2–3 minute presentation answering:

- What is Juneteenth?
- Why is it important?
- How should people honor and remember this history today?
- Students may use slides, note cards, or visuals.

Project Rubric

4 – Excellent

Includes accurate historical information
Shows strong effort and creativity
Explains the importance of Juneteenth clearly
Organized and easy to understand

3 – Proficient

Includes most required information
Shows good understanding of the topic
Mostly organized and clear

2 – Developing

Missing some required information
Limited details or explanations
Organization may be confusing

1 – Beginning

Incomplete project
Very limited understanding shown
Difficult to understand or missing major parts