A Turning Point

How Antietam shaped Lincoln's next move

8.C.12.4.A "Explain how the Battle of Antietam proved that the Union could withstand the Confederate Army, providing Lincoln the confidence to issue the Emancipation Proclamation."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two facts that show Lee's invasion was stopped. Circle the sentences that connect the battle's result to Lincoln's decision to announce emancipation.

Antietam and Lincoln's Decision

1. In September 1862, Confederate general Robert E. Lee led his army into Maryland, a Union state where slavery was legal. His move threatened to carry the war onto Union-held ground and perhaps win support for the Confederacy. Union general George B. McClellan met Lee's forces near Antietam Creek at Sharpsburg on September 17. Soldiers fought across a cornfield, a sunken road, and a stone bridge. The fighting killed or wounded thousands on both sides, making Antietam the bloodiest single day in American military history.

2. Neither army destroyed the other at Antietam, and McClellan did not chase Lee aggressively. Yet Lee's invasion did not achieve its goal: his army stopped advancing, then withdrew across the Potomac River to Virginia. Union forces remained in control of the battlefield and had blocked a Confederate push into Union territory. That made Antietam a strategic Union victory, even though the battle itself had no clear tactical winner. The result showed that the Union could meet Lee's army and prevent it from holding new ground in the North.

3. President Abraham Lincoln had already drafted a plan to free enslaved people in states rebelling against the Union. He waited to announce it because a major Union defeat might make the order look like a desperate attempt to save a losing war. Antietam gave him a different setting: Lee had retreated, and Union troops had held their ground. On September 22, 1862, Lincoln issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. It warned that enslaved people in states still in rebellion on January 1, 1863, would be declared free.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which two results of the battle show that Union forces withstood Lee's invasion?

2. Why was Antietam a strategic Union victory even though neither army destroyed the other?

3. Why did Lincoln wait to announce his emancipation plan before Antietam?

4. How did the result at Antietam give Lincoln a stronger moment to issue the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

For a museum display called "A Victory Without a Surrender," write four sentences. Start with a question a visitor might ask, then connect Lee's retreat, Lincoln's earlier concern, and his September 22 announcement.

ANSWER KEY

A Turning Point

GRADE 8 · 8.C.12.4.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two facts that show Lee's invasion was stopped. Circle the sentences that connect the battle's result to Lincoln's decision to announce emancipation. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which two results of the battle show that Union forces withstood Lee's invasion?	**Lee's army stopped advancing and withdrew to Virginia. Union forces kept control of the battlefield.**
2	Why was Antietam a strategic Union victory even though neither army destroyed the other?	**Union forces blocked Lee's push into Union territory and prevented his army from holding new ground in the North.**
3	Why did Lincoln wait to announce his emancipation plan before Antietam?	**He feared that announcing it after a major Union defeat would make it look like a desperate attempt to save a losing war.**
4	How did the result at Antietam give Lincoln a stronger moment to issue the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation?	**Lee had retreated after Union forces held the battlefield, showing that the Union could withstand his army. Lincoln could announce his plan after that success rather than after a major defeat.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

How could Antietam be a victory if Lee's army was not destroyed? Lee retreated to Virginia, leaving Union forces in control of the battlefield. Lincoln had worried that announcing emancipation after a major defeat would look desperate. After Antietam, he issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation on September 22.

Accept responses that distinguish stopping Lee's invasion from destroying his army. The museum label should accurately link that result to Lincoln's concern about timing and his September 22 announcement.