Freedom Reaches Texas

Read how emancipation became a day of remembrance.

USH.C.1.2.A "Identify the significance of Juneteenth in relation to emancipation and modern-day commemorations."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that show why freedom was delayed in Texas. Circle the event on June 19, 1865, and number two ways people commemorate Juneteenth today.

Why June 19 Matters

1. On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. It declared freedom for enslaved people in areas rebelling against the United States, but it did not immediately free everyone held in slavery. The order did not apply to loyal border states, and its enforcement in Confederate territory depended on Union military power. In Texas, far from many major Union campaigns, slavery continued for more than two years after the proclamation. For enslaved Texans, the difference between a government order and a change they could experience was not abstract. Their freedom required federal authority to reach the places where they lived.

2. On June 19, 1865, Union General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, and issued General Order No. 3. The order announced that enslaved people in Texas were free. The news did not mean that every enslaved person in the United States first became free that day, nor did one announcement erase the dangers and inequalities formerly enslaved people faced. But June 19 marked a turning point in Texas: federal authority openly challenged slavery where it had persisted after the Emancipation Proclamation. Later that year, ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery throughout the United States, except as punishment for a crime.

3. Formerly enslaved people and their descendants began celebrating June 19, later called Juneteenth, with gatherings that honored freedom and maintained community ties. Today, celebrations may include family reunions, public readings, music, and lessons about local Black history. In 2021, Juneteenth became a federal holiday, giving the date wider official recognition. Commemorating it does more than recall an order read in Galveston. The holiday invites people to consider why freedom announced in law was delayed in practice, whose experiences have shaped the nation's account of emancipation, and how communities continue to define and defend freedom.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did the Emancipation Proclamation not immediately end slavery in Texas?

2. Why is June 19, 1865, a turning point in Texas, but not the day every enslaved person in the United States first became free?

3. How can public readings and lessons about local Black history help people understand the significance of Juneteenth?

4. Why did Juneteenth matter before it became a federal holiday in 2021?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 70 to 95 word opening announcement for a community Juneteenth event. Include a specific fact about emancipation in Texas, propose a commemorative activity not named in the passage, and explain how it would help people understand the gap between a legal declaration and freedom in daily life.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · USH.C.1.2.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details that show why freedom was delayed in Texas. Circle the event on June 19, 1865, and number two ways people commemorate Juneteenth today. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did the Emancipation Proclamation not immediately end slavery in Texas?	**Enforcing the proclamation in Confederate territory depended on Union military power, which had not yet reached much of Texas.**
2	Why is June 19, 1865, a turning point in Texas, but not the day every enslaved person in the United States first became free?	**General Order No. 3 announced freedom for enslaved people in Texas, where slavery had persisted after the proclamation. Emancipation occurred at different times elsewhere, and the Thirteenth Amendment was ratified later in 1865.**
3	How can public readings and lessons about local Black history help people understand the significance of Juneteenth?	**They keep the history of delayed emancipation visible and bring community experiences into the account of freedom.**
4	Why did Juneteenth matter before it became a federal holiday in 2021?	**Formerly enslaved people and their descendants had long celebrated June 19 to honor freedom and maintain community ties.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Welcome to our Juneteenth gathering. In 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation declared freedom in rebellious states, but slavery persisted in Texas after that order. In 1865, Union officials announced emancipation in Galveston. Today, we invite you to add a question to our Freedom Wall: What does it take for a promise to become real in daily life? This activity connects the delay between declaration and enforcement to choices communities face now. Read a neighbor's question, then consider whose voices must be heard when we tell the history of freedom.

Accept answers that distinguish the 1863 proclamation from its delayed enforcement in Texas and connect Juneteenth commemorations to that history. For Your Turn, accept any new activity that clearly serves that purpose.