

Juneteenth History Lesson

Thanks so much for your purchase! I am so grateful for your support. Please, however **do not post** this resource on a publicly-accessible website like a blog, Wix, Weebly, or school webpage. This allows **any student** to find the attached answer key! You are more than welcome to use this [online, editable Google Doc version](#) with your students since Google Classroom is a secure environment.

This lesson has students review an essential question, analyze primary and secondary sources to develop evidence for it, and finally provide a response to the question.

There are 2 ways to do this. The first is to have students develop their own essential question about Juneteenth. Depending on your student's background knowledge, you can have them develop it first or do so after showing a video. This short, animated history of [Juneteenth found here](#) is good. Another very short, lighter story of Juneteenth with the Roots [can be seen here](#). Finally, there's this [simple one from USA Today](#).

Another option is to give them an Essential Question. These could be:

- Why do some Americans celebrate Juneteenth?
- What does Juneteenth mean to America?
- What can be concluded about how people celebrate and define freedom in America?
- Should Juneteenth be a national/federal holiday?
- What should all Americans understand about Juneteenth?

Following this, provide students with the secondary article on The History Juneteenth and then have them move through the primary sources. These interview excerpts are all taken from a collection titled *Voices from Slavery: 100 Authentic Slave Narratives*.

This collection is from the [Federal Writers Project](#), a New Deal jobs program during the Great Depression. Writers and journalists interviewed former slaves from 1936 to 1940. Most were well into their 80s or 90s and provided the last first-hand accounts of life during slavery and emancipation. If you have time, an excellent HBO [documentary with readings of these can be seen here](#).

After collecting their evidence, students answer the Essential Question on the response sheet. A rubric for this can be found at the end of this packet (page 13). I did not include a Key because each student's evidence will likely vary and you can also use different Essential Questions.

Finally, a Juneteenth food celebration would be a great way to commemorate the holiday in your classroom. From the *New York Times* Food section:

Red foods are customary for Juneteenth, the crimson a symbol of ingenuity and resilience in bondage. Watermelon, Texas Pete hot sauce and red velvet cake are abundant. A strawberry pie wouldn't be out of place. Spicy hot links on the grill — most commonly made with coarsely ground beef, and artificially dyed red — are a Juneteenth staple, too, and “a distinctive African-American contribution to barbecue,” said Adrian Miller, a James Beard award-winning author and soul food expert.

Red drinks, like strawberry soda and Texas-made Big Red pop, generally rule the Juneteenth bar, and link present to past. “Two traditional drinks from West Africa that had a lot of social meaning are kola nut tea and bissap,” Mr. Miller said. (Bissap is more commonly known as hibiscus tea.) Both came to the Americas with the slave trade; red kola nuts and hibiscus pods colored the water in which they were steeped.

Source: Hot Links and Red Drinks: A Juneteenth Tradition. New York Times June 14, 2017

Name _____

Juneteenth and American History

Directions: Write your essential question about Juneteenth in the space at the top. Then, review the primary and secondary sources and for each one, list the evidence that you learned towards the Essential Question. Finally, use the evidence you collect to complete your response paragraph.

Essential Question:		
A	B	C
D	E	F
G	H	I
Secondary Source: The History of Juneteenth		

The History of Juneteenth

Juneteenth, a portmanteau (combination) of “June” and “nineteenth,” commemorates the day the last slaves were freed in America. By June 19, 1865, the Emancipation Proclamation was two years old, the 13th Amendment had been written and the Confederate Army had surrendered. However, about 250,000 people remained enslaved in Texas until Union soldiers arrived in Galveston on that date and ordered their freedom.

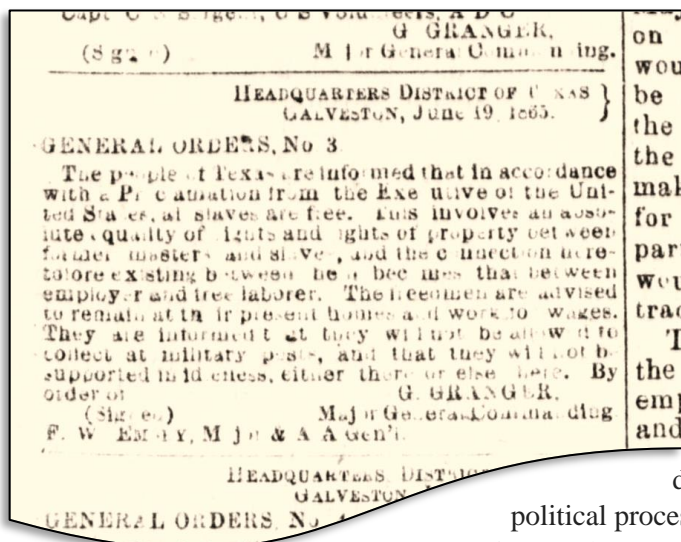
President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862, with an effective date of January 1, 1863. It declared all slaves to be freed in the Confederate States of America in rebellion and not in Union hands. This excluded the five border states, the four slave states who remained in the Union (Kentucky, Maryland, Delaware, and Missouri) and those counties of Virginia soon to form the state of West Virginia.

At the time, Texas was more isolated geographically than other Southern states. Since the capture of New Orleans in 1862, slave owners in Mississippi, Louisiana and other points east moved to Texas to escape the Union Army’s reach. Although most enslaved people lived in rural areas, over 1,000 resided in both Galveston and Houston by 1860, with several hundred in other large towns. By 1865, an estimated 250,000 enslaved people were in Texas.

The news of Robert E. Lee’s surrender at Appomattox on April 9, 1865 moved slowly and did not reach Texas until the following month. The Confederate Army of the Trans-Mississippi did not surrender until June 2. On June 18, 1865, Union Army General Gordon Granger arrived at Galveston Island with 2,000 federal troops to occupy Texas on behalf of the US government. On June 19, Granger stood on the balcony of Galveston’s Ashton Villa and read “General Order No. 3,” announcing the total emancipation of slaves:

The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and free laborer. The freedmen are advised to remain quietly at their present homes and work for wages. They are informed that they will not be allowed to collect at military posts and that they will not be supported in idleness either there or elsewhere.

Former slaves in Galveston rejoiced in the streets after the announcement, although in the years afterward, many struggled to achieve real freedom in the face of white resistance.



General Granger’s order printed in the Houston Tri-weekly Telegraph, June 23, 1865

The following year, freedmen organized the first of what became the annual celebration of Juneteenth in Texas. In some cities, African-Americans were barred from using public parks because of state-sponsored segregation of facilities. Across parts of Texas, freed people pooled their funds to purchase land to hold their celebrations, such as Houston’s Emancipation Park or Emancipation Park in Austin.

In the early 20th century, economic and political forces led to a decline in Juneteenth celebrations. From 1890 to 1908, Texas and other former Confederate states passed new constitutions or amendments that effectively

disenfranchised black people, excluding them from the political process. Jim Crow laws imposed a second-class status on African-Americans. The Great Depression forced many black people off farms and into urban areas for work. In cities, African Americans had difficulty taking the day off to celebrate. A Second Great Migration during World War II saw black people migrating to the West Coast for skilled jobs in the defense industry. More than 5 million black people left Texas, Louisiana, and other parts of the South for the North and the West Coast. This helped spread Juneteenth to the rest of America.

Juneteenth declined in popularity in the 1960s, when the civil-rights movement’s push for integration diminished interest. However, the 1970-1980’s saw a revitalization of the holiday with African-Americans’ renewed interest in celebrating their heritage.

Primary Source Interview Excerpts

Primary Source A

After the war was over, Massa Tucker brought the freedom papers and read them. He said we were all as free as hell. Old man Charlie so happy he just rolled on the floor like a hoss and kicked his heels. The next morning Mama started to do something and Missy cut her out.

I ran to Missy and said, "Us free as birds." She sure whip me for that but no more 'cause she's so mean we all left...

The first freedom work I got was pulling up potato hills at two bits a hundred. I worked two days to buy Mama a turkey hen for Christmas. Anything Mama want I think she got to have.

Jacob Branch

Double Bayou Settlement near Houston

Primary Source B

Well, the way it was explained to me, the 19th of June wasn't the exact day the Negro was freed. But that's the day they told them they was free ... And my Daddy told me that they whopped and hollered and bored holes in the trees with augers and stopped it up with [gun] powder and light that and that would be their blast for the celebration. Yeah, they'd tear a whole tree up and be hundreds of people looking at it.

Charles Morgan

Anderson County, Texas

Primary Source C

They sent the papers down on March 5th I heard, but they didn't turn us loose then. This was the last state to turn the slaves free. When they didn't let us go in March, the Yankee soldiers came in June and made sure they let us go. The next morning after the soldiers came, the overseer read the papers out and said we're free as he is and we can go. Some stayed on a long time and some went off. Old Massa never gave us nothing, but he told us we could stay on if we want, but I left.

The first money I made was working for the government in Galveston. After the War, the government hired folks to clean up the trash from the fighting and I was hired.

George Kye

Fort Gibson, Oklahoma

Primary Source D

When Massa come home from the War, he wants to let us loose, but Missy wouldn't do it. I stayed on and worked for them six years after the War and Missy whip me after the War just like she did before.

One time, Missy said to me, "You're never going to be free. You were made to work for white folks."

About that time, she look up and see a Yankee Soldier standing in the door with a pistol. She said, "Katie I didn't say nothing did I?"

I said, "I ain't telling no lie, you said we're never going to get free."

Katie Darling

Marshall, Texas

Primary Source E

One morning I remember it just like it yesterday, the 4th of July in 1865. Miss Lizzie say to me, "William, I want you to get your Pappy and the rest of the family and have them come to the porch right away. I scurried 'round quick-like and told them and she came out of the house and said, "Now the Yankees done set you free and you can do what you want, but you're going to see more carpetbaggers and liars than you ever has seen and you'll be worse off than you've ever been if you have anything to do with them."

Then she opened a book and told us all when we were born and how old we are so we have some record about ourselves. She told me I'm just 19 and $\frac{1}{4}$ years old when I set free.

I got a deckhand job on the Dinah, a steamboat that hauled freight and passengers between Galveston and Houston. Then, I worked on the Lizzie, a bigger boat. Course Houston was just a little bit of place to what it is now. There wasn't no big buildings like there is now.

William Davis
Houston Texas





Primary Source F: Juneteenth Emancipation Day Celebration, June 19, 1900, Texas



Primary Source G: Emancipation Day celebration in Richmond, Virginia, in 1905



Primary Source H: Juneteenth Day Celebration band, June 19, 1900, Texas

Primary Source I

Lift Every Voice and Sing

By James Weldon Johnson

“Lift Every Voice and Sing” was a poem written by James Weldon Johnson. It was first performed by 500 school children in celebration of President Lincoln's Birthday on February 12, 1900 in Jacksonville, FL. It was set to music by Johnson's brother, John Rosamond Johnson, and is referred to as the Black National Anthem.

Lift every voice and sing
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us,
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
Till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who has by Thy might led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,
May we forever stand,
True to our God,
True to our native land.

Essential Question Response Rubric

Rubric Scale	Student Response Includes:
<p>5 Mastery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, coherent, organized response to the EQ, makes position(s) clear • Writes in complete sentences • Several examples from class/materials are utilized to support response and prove understanding of the EQ – position(s) on the EQ are entirely evidence-based • Response is at least a paragraph in length (5-6 sentences)
<p>4 Approaching Mastery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, coherent, organized response to the EQ, makes position(s) clear • Writes in complete sentences • A few examples from class/materials are utilized to support response and prove understanding of the EQ – position(s) on the EQ are evidence-based • Response is at least a paragraph in length (4-5 sentences)
<p>3 Proficient</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally clear, coherent, organized response to the EQ, makes position(s) generally clear • Writes in complete sentences • A few examples from class/materials are utilized to support response and prove understanding of the EQ – position(s) on the EQ are generally evidence-based • Response is at least a paragraph in length (4-5 sentences)
<p>2 Working Toward Proficient</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacks a clear, coherent, organized response to the EQ, position(s) generally clear but lacks support • Generally, writes in complete sentences • One example or less from class/materials are utilized to support response and prove understanding of the EQ – position(s) on the EQ lack evidence • Response is less than a paragraph in length (3-4 sentences)
<p>1 Not Proficient/ Insufficient Evidence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacks a clear, coherent, organized response to the EQ, position(s) unclear/scattered • Generally, writes in fragments • Has no examples from class/materials to support response and prove understanding of the EQ – position(s) on the EQ lack evidence • Response is less than a paragraph in length (3-4 sentences or less)

