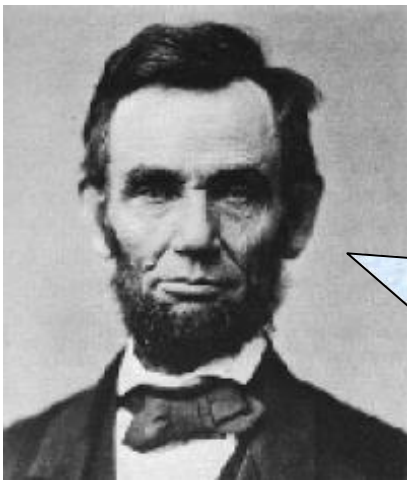


Name: _____

THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

In January of 1863, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation – a document which attempted to free slaves in the rebelling states, that is – the Confederacy. Lincoln’s action was seen as a military tactic because it was aimed at weakening the South’s economy by freeing the slaves. Although the document had a huge impact on the public and broadened the war’s goals to including abolishing slavery, it actually **freed very few slaves** because the Union army was unable to enforce the document.

The Emancipation Proclamation aimed to free the slaves in the South only because as president, Lincoln did not actually have the power to abolish slavery throughout the entire United States. However, as **Commander-in-Chief**, he could ask Congress to gradually ban it as a military action. He also did not want to upset border states that had slaves, but remained in the Union, like Kentucky and Maryland. Although the Emancipation Proclamation did not free many slaves at the time it was issued, it is seen today as an incredibly powerful symbolic measure and a significant moment in America’s history.



“That on the first day of January, AD 1863, all persons held as slaves within any state [that is in rebellion] against the United States of America shall be then...and forever free; and the government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons.”

-Excerpt from the Emancipation Proclamation

1. When was the Emancipation Proclamation issued?
2. What was the purpose of the Emancipation Proclamation?
3. Did the proclamation free **all** slaves? Explain your answer.
4. Why didn’t Lincoln free all slaves?
5. Why do you think the proclamation was seen as such an important *symbolic* measure?

ANSWER KEY & TEACHER'S GUIDE

1. When was the Emancipation Proclamation issued?

The Emancipation Proclamation was issued in January, 1863. The Civil War was in its 3rd bloody year and Lincoln was looking for a motivational issue to help end it. Lincoln began discussing the idea of it in July 1862 with his cabinet. His Secretary of War Edwin Stanton advised him to wait until after a major victory to announce it so that it did not sound like a desperate measure. The Battle of Antietam - the bloodiest single day in American History – gave him enough of a victory to issue it.

2. What was the purpose of the Emancipation Proclamation?

It was a military tactic because it was aimed at weakening the South's economy by freeing the slaves. Lincoln told his Cabinet members that he had made a covenant with God, that if the Union drove the Confederacy out of Maryland, he would issue the Emancipation Proclamation. Lincoln used his powers as Commander-in-Chief to issue the Proclamation as “a necessary war measure”.

3. Did the proclamation free **all** slaves? Explain your answer.

It did not free all slaves, because slaves in border states remained in bondage and most slaves in Southern states were not freed. This was done because Lincoln feared that border states might join the Confederacy if they were included. He did not want to lose these important parts of the Union. Additionally, slaves in the South were not immediately freed because those states were in rebellion, the plantation owners were not going to follow Lincoln's commands,

4. Why didn't Lincoln free all slaves?

Lincoln did not want to upset the border states and he could not enforce the measure in the South because those states were already rebelling against the United States.

5. Why do you think the proclamation was seen as such an important *symbolic* measure?

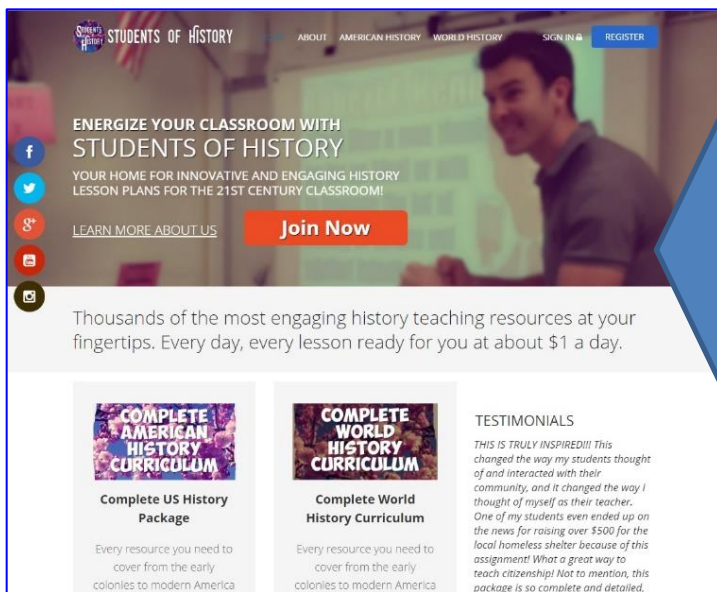
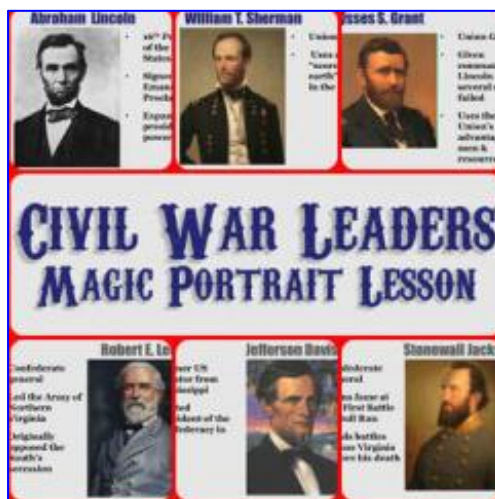
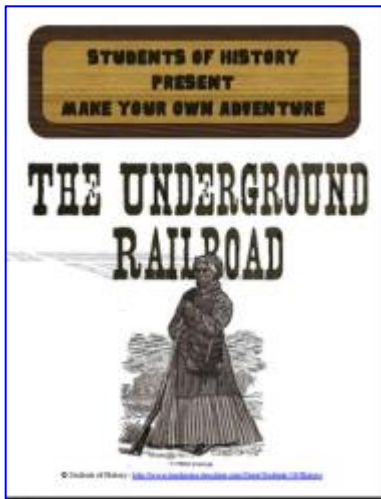
This is open to student opinion but they should note that since it had little actual effect, the symbolism of the freeing the slaves was more important and gave the Union a moral reason for winning the war.



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