

Name _____



What is Juneteenth?

Juneteenth is a special day that is celebrated every year on June 19th. The purpose of Juneteenth is to remember and celebrate the day when African American people who were enslaved in the United States were officially declared free.

The story of Juneteenth begins with a sad time in American history called slavery, when some people were forced to work without being paid and were treated unfairly because of the color of their skin. This happened for many years, until a big war called the Civil War began in 1861. One of the reasons for this war was to end slavery.

During the Civil War, in 1862, President Abraham Lincoln made a very important law called the Emancipation Proclamation, which said that all enslaved people should be free. But news traveled slowly in those days, and not everyone heard about this right away.

Finally, on June 19th, 1865, a General named Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, with the news that the Civil War had ended and all enslaved people were free. This was two and a half years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation! So, June 19th became known as Juneteenth, a combination of "June" and "nineteenth."

How do people celebrate Juneteenth? There are many ways! Some communities have big parades, music, and dance performances. Other people might have picnics or family gatherings with lots of good food. It's a day to remember the past, but also to celebrate freedom, education, and achievement.

Schools might celebrate Juneteenth by teaching about the history of slavery, the Civil War, and the Emancipation Proclamation. It's a time to learn about and honor the many contributions African Americans have made to our country.

So remember, Juneteenth is a day of both joy and reflection, a day to remember a crucial moment in American history and to celebrate freedom and progress.

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Reading Comprehension Questions

1. When is Juneteenth celebrated?
2. What is the purpose of Juneteenth?
3. What is the Emancipation Proclamation?
4. Why did it take so long for the enslaved people in Galveston, Texas to learn they were free?
5. How is Juneteenth celebrated?