

The History and Meaning of Juneteenth

As you are aware, June 19, Juneteenth, originally commemorating the announcement of the abolition of slavery in Texas in 1865, is celebrated throughout the U.S. to honor African-American freedom and achievement; an official NY city holiday beginning in 2021.

In the 1920s, '30s and '40s, because of Jim Crow laws, African-Americans celebrated Juneteenth in private settings, in their homes and in their churches. They were restricted in terms of parks and public spaces. They could not go to movie theaters except for on certain days, and they had to enter through certain doors. They were restricted from amusement parks, water fountains, lunch counters. All forms of segregation forced African-Americans into their own communities. And in these spaces, during the heart of Jim Crow segregation, African-Americans celebrated Juneteenth privately.

To support your efforts in discussing and teaching on the history and meaning of Juneteenth, please review the below resources and share with your school community. Thank you.

- National Museum of African American History and Culture [The Historical Legacy of Juneteenth](#)

Juneteenth marks our country's second Independence Day. Although it has long celebrated in the African American community, this monumental event remains largely unknown to most Americans.

- Juneteenth.com [Juneteenth.com World Wide Celebration!](#)

Juneteenth is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States. Dating back to 1865, it was on June 19th that the Union soldiers, led by Major General Gordon Granger, landed at Galveston, Texas with news that the war had ended and that the enslaved were now free.

- New York Times [So You Want to Learn About Juneteenth?](#)

The holiday received its name by combining June and 19. The day is also sometimes called "Juneteenth Independence Day," "Freedom Day" or "Emancipation Day."

- PBS blog [What Is Juneteenth?](#)

While national black leaders continued to debate the importance of remembering other milestone anniversaries, the freed people of Texas went about the business of celebrating their local version of Emancipation Day.

- Learning For Justice [Teaching Juneteenth](#)

There are many ways to teach students about this celebration. Lessons about Juneteenth need to recognize the challenges those who fight injustice have always faced, but they shouldn't be marked only by the tragedy of enslavement. Students, particularly Black students, can find empowerment in the jubilant celebrations of culture, activism and the humanity of a people.

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- Morningside Center [Juneteenth: Why is it Important to America?](#)

Students watch and discuss a short video about the history of Juneteenth and research their questions about the holiday.

- Social Studies for Kids [The Importance of Juneteenth](#)

By celebrating the Juneteenth holiday, you are celebrating a holiday just as important as the Fourth of July and Memorial Day. For without the end of slavery, the great country now known as the United States of America would not have been possible.

- We are Teachers, [17 Ways to Celebrate Juneteenth With Kids](#)

17 Ideas for teaching Juneteenth to kids.

- Read Write Think [Celebrate Juneteenth!](#)

Juneteenth has grown into a heritage-centered event that focuses on family, community, education, and achievement—but its origins are still very important. How does the historical background of the day, as a celebration of freedom for the slaves of Texas, compare to other important celebrations of freedom in the United States?

- PBS [Juneteenth All About the Holiday, short video K- 5](#)

Each June we celebrate the end of slavery in the United States in 1865. Across the country, family and friends gather to celebrate and learn more about the history and experience of African Americans before and after slavery.

- Facing History and Ourselves, [Reflecting on Juneteenth](#)

Described as a second independence day, June 19th or Juneteenth marks the day that emancipation reached slaves in the furthest reaches of the South. While the Emancipation Proclamation proclaimed that all slaves held within the rebellious states were freed, plantation life continued as though no change had occurred in many parts of the slaveholding South until this day.

- Anti-Defamation League (ADL), [Commemorating Juneteenth](#)

As the holiday approaches, we recognize that members of this multiracial nation will commemorate Juneteenth differently. ADL's Civil Rights and Education teams curated the following list of resources to help make the most of this year's Juneteenth, whether you are rejoicing, resting, reflecting, learning or taking action