

Slavery, the Civil War & Reconstruction

The Emancipation Proclamation

On September 22, 1862, President Lincoln declared that all slaves in the rebellious states were free. The rebellious states of the South were fighting against the northern states because they wanted to secede, or separate from the Union. His announcement was called the Emancipation Proclamation. Emancipation means the same thing as “freedom.” Part of Lincoln’s **declaration**¹ is below:

“I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves...shall be free. The Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.”

In the last part of this sentence, Lincoln says that the Union Army will free and protect slaves. Northerners everywhere now knew why they were fighting the Civil War to free the slaves. The war was no longer just a battle to make the southern states come back to the Union. Now it was a war over slavery. Even if the southern states came back to the Union, there would be no more slavery.

The entire way of life in the South would have to change. Southerners could no longer sell people as if they were property. They could no longer run large plantations with slaves as workers. They could no longer force black men and women to work all day in their cotton fields. When the North won the Civil War, life in the South did change.

Many black slaves heard about the Emancipation Proclamation before the northern army arrived to free them. They were very excited. Some ran away to meet the northern army as they fought. Many wanted to join the fight and help the Union beat the Confederacy. As northern armies marched south, all of the slaves were freed.

In the North, many **abolitionists**² were happy. Abolitionists wanted slaves to be free. They spent their time convincing people that black men and women were no different than white men and women. They gave speeches about the horrible **institution**³ of slavery. Slavery, they said, did more than just chain black men and women. It also was against the basic ideas of liberty and equality that were part of the founding of our country. Slavery brought out the worst part of human nature. Slave owners might have been kind men, but slavery made them become **cruel**.⁴ The Emancipation Proclamation was the first big step to ending slavery.

¹ **declaration** – the act of making something officially known

² **abolitionists** – a person who is in favor of getting rid of something

³ **institution** – an established custom or practice

⁴ **cruel** – unkind, causing pain in others

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What did the Emancipation Proclamation declare?

- A all slaves in the rebellious states were free
- B the northern states were at war with the southern states
- C southern landowners could not buy any more slaves
- D the southern states had seceded from the Union

2. What does the author describe at the end of the passage?

- A the words that Abraham Lincoln wrote in the Emancipation Proclamation
- B why abolitionists believed slavery was a horrible institution
- C how the Civil War between the northern and southern states began
- D how life in the South would have to change after the end of slavery

3. The way of life in the South was forced to change after the Civil War. What evidence from the passage best supports this conclusion?

- A "Slavery brought out the worst part of human nature."
- B "Northerners now knew why they were fighting the Civil War to free the slaves."
- C "In the North, many abolitionists were happy."
- D "They could no longer run large plantations with slaves as workers."

4. How did slave owners in the South likely feel about the Emancipation Proclamation?

- A excited
- B proud
- C upset
- D tired

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A the proclamation that ended slavery in a large part of the United States
- B a famous speech that Abraham Lincoln made on a battlefield
- C how life in the South had to change after the Civil War
- D how northern abolitionists responded to the Emancipation Proclamation

6. Read the following sentences: "On September 22, 1862, President Lincoln **declared** that all slaves in the rebellious states were free. The rebellious states of the South were fighting against the northern states because they wanted to secede, or separate from the Union. His announcement was called the Emancipation Proclamation."

What does the word "**declared**" most nearly mean?

- A praised
- B announced
- C screamed
- D allowed

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862. _____, slaves in the rebellious states were free.

- A Before
- B However
- C For example
- D As a result

8. What did some slaves do after they heard about the Emancipation Proclamation?

9. Why were abolitionists happy about the Emancipation Proclamation?

10. Explain why abolitionists were against slavery and believed it was a horrible institution.
