

Famous African Americans Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad



Harriet Tubman was known as *Moses*. She lived during a time when it was illegal to help slaves escape to freedom. Moses is a character in the Bible. He led the Jews out of slavery in Egypt. Tubman, in the same way, led African Americans out of slavery in the American South. She became the most well known leader of the Underground Railroad. The Underground Railroad was a system of secret **routes**¹ that led blacks from slave-holding states to free states.

Harriet Tubman was born a slave. She escaped slavery and made a promise to help others do the same. She made a total of 19 rescue trips back down south. She never lost one of the 300 slaves she saved. She was **skillful**² and brave. She even led her parents to freedom in 1857.

Harriet Tubman continued to help other African American people. She was a nurse and a spy during the Civil War. In her later years, Tubman **established**³ a house for elderly African Americans who needed help. She was a true blessing to the African American community and to the United States.

¹ **route:** path; road; way to get somewhere

² **skillful:** good at what she did

³ **establish:** to bring into existence

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. How is Tubman most like Moses?
 - a. They are both characters in the Bible.
 - b. They both saved people from slavery.
 - c. They worshipped the same god.
 - d. They both parted seas.

2. Tubman promised to help other slaves to freedom because she
 - a. was a nice person.
 - b. wanted to be famous.
 - c. escaped to freedom herself.
 - d. needed to go back for her parents.

3. Tubman is described as skillful and brave because
 - a. she promised to help free slaves.
 - b. her rescue trips were very dangerous.
 - c. she fought in the Civil War.
 - d. she was good at sewing.

4. Which of these is an opinion?
 - a. Harriet Tubman was known as Moses.
 - b. Harriet Tubman made 19 rescue trips back down south.
 - c. Harriet Tubman was a nurse and a spy during the Civil War.
 - d. Harriet Tubman was a true blessing to the United States.

5. Based on the passage, it is likely that Tubman
 - a. often risked her life to help others.
 - b. thought slavery was right.
 - c. did not like to take risks.
 - d. is not respected by the African American community.

6. What was the Underground Railroad?

7. Based on the passage, why did Harriet Tubman most likely want to help other slaves escape?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Harriet Tubman continued to help African Americans _____ establishing a house for elderly African Americans who needed help.

- a. because
- b. so
- c. by
- d. instead

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

During the Civil War, Harriet Tubman was a nurse because she wanted to continue helping people.

Who? Harriet Tubman

What? _____

When? _____

Why? _____

10. **Vocabulary Word:** route: path, road, way to get somewhere

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: _____

Teacher Guide and Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 660

Featured Text Structure: Descriptive – the writer explains, defines or illustrates a concept or topic

Passage Summary: This passage describes the life of Harriet Tubman, who led African Americans out of slavery through the Underground Railroad, a system of secret routs that helped slaves get to free states.

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6. What was the Underground Railroad?

Suggested answer: The Underground Railroad was a system of secret routes that led blacks from slave-holding states to free states.

7. Based on the passage, why did Harriet Tubman most likely want to help other slaves escape?

Suggested answer: Harriet Tubman most likely wanted to help other slaves escape because she had been a slave herself and was able to escape, and wanted to give freedom to those still in slavery.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Harriet Tubman continued to help African Americans _____ establishing a house for elderly African Americans who needed help.

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- b. so
- c. by**
- d. instead

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

During the Civil War, Harriet Tubman was a nurse because she wanted to continue helping people.

Who? Harriet Tubman

What? **was a nurse**

When? **during the Civil War**

Why? **because she wanted to continue helping people**

10. **Vocabulary Word:** route: path, road, way to get somewhere

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.