

# JUNETEENTH!

**Have you ever heard of Juneteenth? You probably know about America's Independence Day, which is celebrated on the 4th of July, but Juneteenth is also called "America's second Independence Day". Keep reading to find out more!**



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Every year, Black families and communities come together to celebrate Juneteenth. They celebrate with food, singing and dancing, and parades. Juneteenth has become a celebration of Black culture, but it is also a day on which people remember their history and teach others about it.

On June 19th 1865, enslaved African Americans in Texas learned that they were free. This was two years after President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation<sup>1</sup>. People celebrated their freedom and many generations have celebrated this day ever since!

The first annual (*jaarlijkse*) celebration was in Texas in 1866, but since then Juneteenth celebrations have spread all over the US. In 2021, Juneteenth became a national holiday.

Juneteenth is important because it is a day on which the Black community can celebrate its culture and remember its history. But the day is also used to speak out against the injustices (*onrechten*) that still happen to Black people now.

Juneteenth is also important because there are Black people who feel left out on Independence Day on the 4th of July. They feel left out because slavery continued for another 89 years after America became independent from England on July 4th 1776. This means that their ancestors (*voorouders*) were not freed on this date. Because of this, some Black people feel like the celebration of independence and freedom on July 4th is not for them. This is why people wanted Juneteenth to become a national holiday.

This year (2023), Juneteenth will be celebrated for the third time since it became a federal holiday. Hopefully, it will be celebrated for many years to come.

## Did you know...?

Did you know that the American Civil War (1861-1865) started over the issue of slavery? For years, the Northern and the Southern states did not agree on this. The North did not want slavery to spread to new states. The South thought the US government should not get to decide if a state used enslaved people or not. The South was also afraid that slavery would be banned completely. This would be bad for their economy. The Southern states left the United States and became the Confederacy. The North was called the Union. Their armies fought each other during the Civil War. In the end, the Union won the war. The announcement on June 19th happened a few weeks after the end of the Civil War.

## Notes:

### 1. Emancipation Proclamation:

on September 22nd 1862, President Lincoln announced that enslaved people in the South would be freed on January 1st 1863.

## Adapted from:

*Juneteenth - Wikipedia | Independence Day: What does Fourth of July mean to black Americans? - BBC News, Juneteenth | History, Meaning, Flag, Importance, & Facts - Britannica | Why Do We Celebrate Juneteenth? Columbians Share the History and How They Observe the Day - YouTube American Civil War - Britannica Kids*

## Questions

**1** Why do you think the celebration is called *Juneteenth*? Look at the word and the information in the text to find out.

**2** How long has Juneteenth been celebrated?

**3** Look up Juneteenth online. What was the name of the person who told the enslaved people about their freedom? He read an order. What was the order called?



**4** Watch the video on the first page. Opal Lee walks 2.5 miles on Juneteenth. Why exactly 2.5 miles?



**5** Watch the video and look at the Juneteenth flag. Describe the flag and its meaning using your own words.

[Watch the video](#)



## Discussion questions

Discuss the following questions with a classmate or in small groups.



**6** Look at the websites of Juneteenth events that are being organised this year. Which event would you like to attend and why?

Juneteenth concert

Juneteenth walk/run

Juneteenth festival



**7a** Do you know what Keti Koti is? Look up Keti Koti online and write down what it is, when it is celebrated, and why.



You can use this website, for example:

Open the website



**7b** In which ways is Keti Koti similar to Juneteenth? In which ways is it different?



**8** Do you think teaching about the history of slavery is relevant in today's world? Why do you think so?

## Sources

**Juneteenth - Wikipedia** <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juneteenth>

**Independence Day: What does Fourth of July mean to black Americans? - BBC News** <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/newsbeat-53284807>

**History, Meaning, Flag, Importance, & Facts - Britannica**  
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Juneteenth>

**Why Do We Celebrate Juneteenth? Columbians Share History and How They Observe the Day - Youtube** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pfzXbBQVIY>

**American Civil War - Britannica Kids**  
<https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/American-Civil-War/352967>