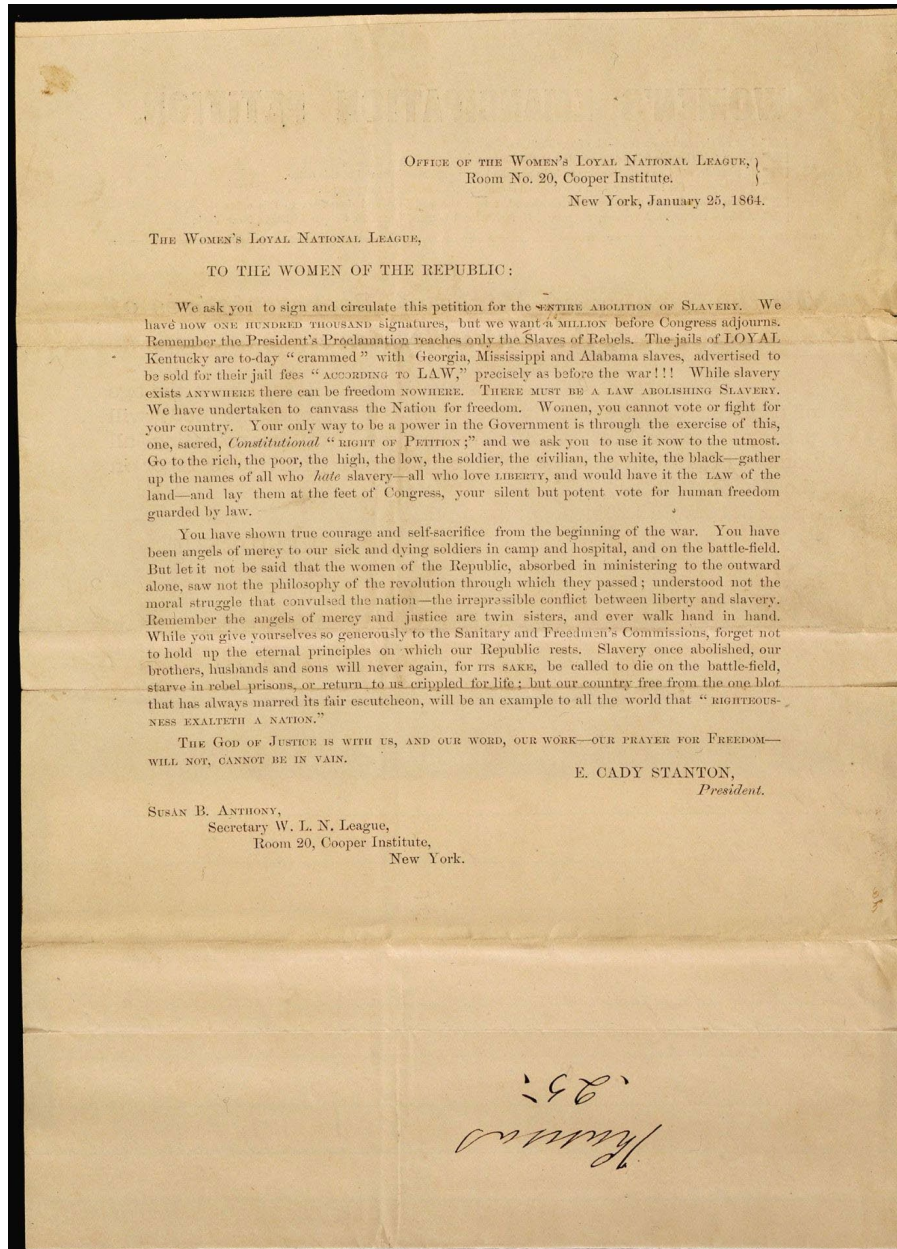


Activity 2: Anti-Slavery Petitions



Activity 2: Anti-Slavery Petitions

Guiding Questions

- How can people take action to promote the fundamental values and principles promised by the Declaration of Independence?
- How do people change rules and laws, and how do we promote change in an effective way?

National Standards

National Center for History in the Schools History Standards

- *Standard 4:* How democratic values came to be, and how they have been exemplified by people, events, and symbols
 - *Standard 4B:* Demonstrate understanding of ordinary people who have exemplified values and principles of American democracy

National Standards for Civics and Government

- *NSCG.K-4.2.F.* How can people work together to promote the values and principles of American democracy?
 - Students should be able to identify ways people can work together to promote the values and principles of American democracy.

Common Core State Standards

- *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.2:* Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.
- *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.1:* Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

College, Career, & Civic Life C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards

- *D2.Civ.2.3-5.* Explain how a democracy relies on people's responsible participation, and draw implications for how individuals should participate.
- *D2.Civ.12.3-5.* Explain how rules and laws change society and how people change rules and laws.

Educating for American Democracy Roadmap

- *HDQ1.2A:* Why and how do people take action in order to solve problems that affect them and others?
- *CDQ1.2A:* Why might we want to make changes at local, state, or national levels? How can we promote change in an effective way?

Historical Context

Antislavery Petitions in Congress¹

One of the most contentious issues facing our nation in the early years was slavery. Unsurprisingly, the First Congress received a series of antislavery petitions as part of the first unified campaign to the new Federal Government.

These petitions came from three organizations: the Philadelphia and New York Yearly Meetings of the Society of Friends (Quakers) and the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery. All three petitions sparked intense debate in the House and the Senate.

After a day of debate, the Senate decided to take no action on the petitions. The House referred them to a select committee for further consideration. The committee reported on March 5, 1790, stating that the Constitution restrained Congress from prohibiting the importation of slaves until 1808 and interfering with the emancipation of slaves. The House then tabled the petitions, effectively ending the debate on the issue of slavery in the First Congress.

Perhaps the most significant call for the abolition of slavery came over 80 years later. This round originated from the Women's Loyal National League, an organization whose sole mission was to campaign for a constitutional amendment to abolish slavery. With Elizabeth Cady Stanton as the league's president and Susan B. Anthony as the secretary, the women organized one of the largest petition drives the nation and Congress had ever seen.

Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts introduced the first 100,000 signatures to Congress on February 9, 1864. And although in April the Senate passed the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery, Sumner continued to introduce petitions from this drive at least twice a month throughout the summer. The House passed the 13th Amendment in January 1865, and it was sent to the states for ratification. The amendment was ratified by the states in December of that year.

13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Abolition of Slavery (1865)²

Passed by Congress on January 31, 1865, and ratified on December 6, 1865, the 13th Amendment abolished slavery in the United States.

In 1863 President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation declaring "all persons held as slaves within any State, or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free." Nonetheless, the Emancipation Proclamation did not end slavery in the nation since it only applied to areas of the Confederacy currently in a state of rebellion (and not even to the loyal "border states" that remained in the Union). Lincoln recognized that the Emancipation Proclamation would have to be followed by a constitutional amendment in order to guarantee the abolishment of slavery.

¹ Available online at <https://prologue.blogs.archives.gov/2015/02/09/from-ben-franklin-to-the-civil-war-antislavery-petitions-in-congress/>

² Available online at <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/13th-amendment>

The 13th Amendment was passed at the end of the Civil War before the Southern states had been restored to the Union, and should have easily passed in Congress. However, though the Senate passed it in April 1864, the House initially did not. At that point, Lincoln took an active role to ensure passage through Congress. He insisted that passage of the 13th Amendment be added to the Republican Party platform for the upcoming 1864 Presidential election. His efforts met with success when the House passed the bill in January 1865 with a vote of 119–56.

On February 1, 1865, President Abraham Lincoln approved the Joint Resolution of Congress submitting the proposed amendment to the state legislatures. The necessary number of states (three-fourths) ratified it by December 6, 1865. The 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution provides that "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."

With the adoption of the 13th Amendment, the United States found a final constitutional solution to the issue of slavery. The 13th Amendment, along with the 14th and 15th, is one of the trio of Civil War amendments that greatly expanded the civil rights of Americans.

Educational Activity

Anti-Slavery Petitions

In this activity, upper elementary school students will examine petitions to abolish slavery in the first half of the 19th century. After reviewing key details from the petitions, students will see the Joint Resolution proposing the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution. Estimated time: 45 minutes.

A digital version of this activity is available on DocsTeach, the online tool for teaching with documents from the National Archives. The [teacher page](#) provides an overview of the activity and suggested teaching instructions. Students can access the [student page](#) on their devices or you can project or screen share the activity with the whole class.



Teaching Instructions

This activity can be used during a unit on slavery and the abolition of slavery or during a unit on the fundamental values and principles from the Declaration of Independence. For grades 3-5. Approximate time needed is 45 minutes. Students can complete the activity as a whole class, in small groups, or in pairs.

Begin the activity by asking students to define the terms enslaved person and abolition.

- What does it mean to be an enslaved person?
- What does it mean when we say the abolition of slavery?

After defining these terms as a class, model with students how to analyze the Address from the Women's Loyal National League Supporting the Abolition of Slavery. Begin the activity by asking students to identify what details they notice about the document.

- What type of document is this?

After discussing the details they notice, model with students how to become Document Detectives to uncover key ideas about the document. Ask students the following questions and give them time to brainstorm their response to each question as a whole class.

- Who wrote the document?
- When was it written?
- Where is it from?

After sharing their observations, tell students they are now going to take a closer look at the main purpose of this document. Direct students' attention to key phrases in the opening paragraph of the letter.

- What is the main idea of this paragraph?
- What is the author of the letter asking the women of the republic to do?

Following the whole class discussion about the main idea and purpose of the letter, explain to students that this letter asks women from around the country to circulate a petition for the abolition of slavery. At that time, women in the United States were unable to vote. To make their voices heard on important social issues of their day women organized themselves and used petitions to influence Congress. The Women's National League was an organization whose sole mission was to campaign for a constitutional amendment to abolish slavery. With Elizabeth Cady Stanton as the league's president and Susan B. Anthony as the secretary, the women organized one of the largest petition drives the nation and Congress had ever seen. The constitutional right to petition the government is protected in the First Amendment, and the American people have exercised their right to petition since 1789.

Following the whole class discussion about the Address from the Women's Loyal National League Supporting the Abolition of Slavery, divide students into small groups and assign each group one of the following petitions to analyze: *Anti-Slavery Petition from the Women of Philadelphia*, *Anti-Slavery Petition from the Citizens of New York*, OR *Petition from Pennsylvanians to Reject Slavery*. Ask students to become document detectives and to identify key details about the document. Give students 10 minutes in their small groups to examine the document and to answer the following questions:

- Are there any special markings on the document?
- Who wrote the document?
- When was it written?
- Where is it from?
- What is the main idea of the document?
- Why do you think this document was written?

Ask groups to share details they discovered about their document with the whole class. What similarities and differences do they notice between the documents they analyzed?

After analyzing the documents, ask students to reflect on the ideals of the Declaration of Independence and how Americans have fought to define, secure, and protect those ideals throughout history.

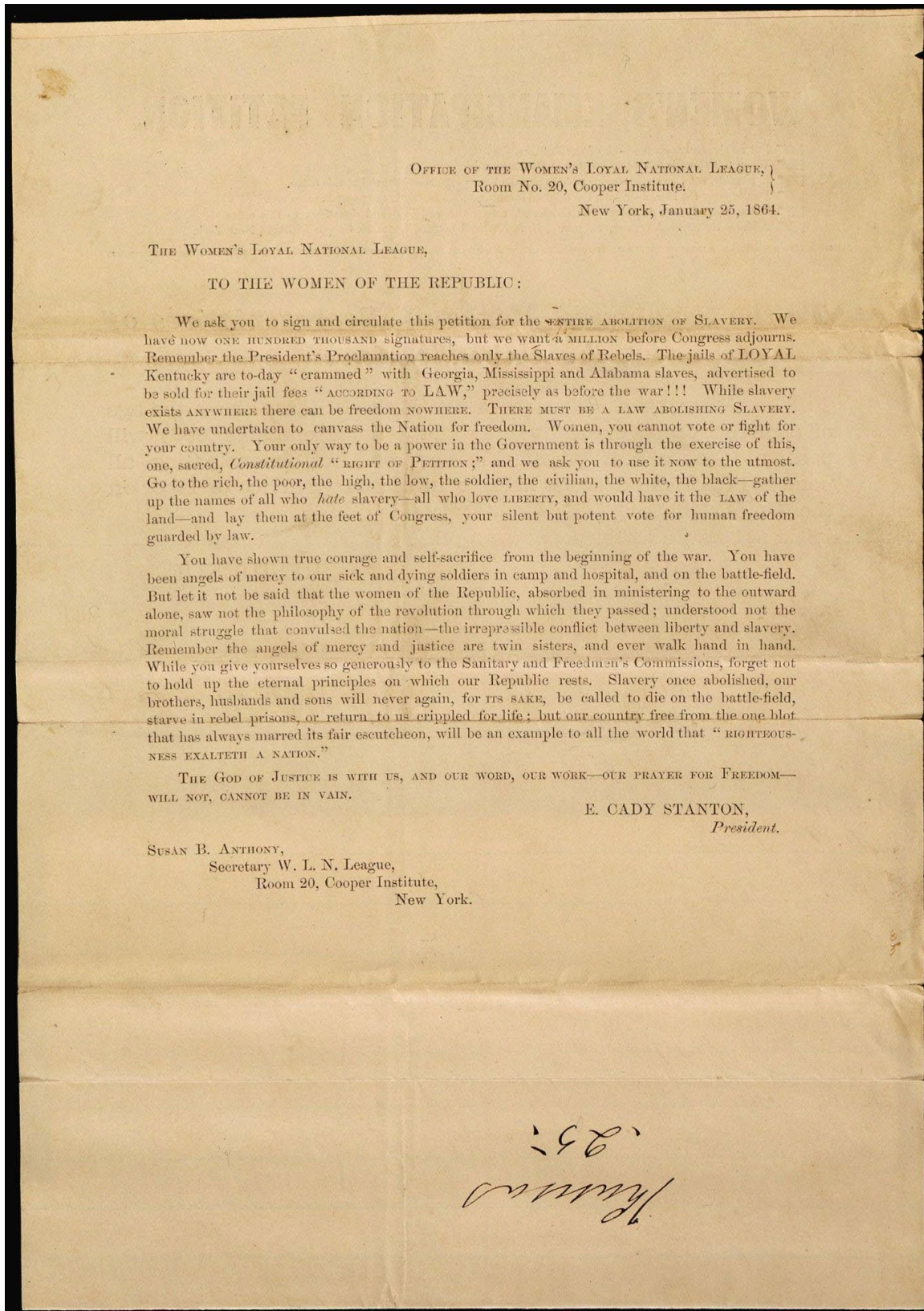
- How have Americans fought to define, secure, and protect the ideal that all men are created equal throughout history?
- How can you take action to change rules and laws that seem unfair, and promote change in an effective way?

Explain to students that the constitutional right to petition the government is protected in the First Amendment, and the American people have exercised their right to petition since 1789.

Following the discussion of the key ideals from the Declaration of Independence, display the Joint Resolution proposing the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution. Share the following about the document:

A joint resolution is something that both parts of Congress (who make laws) agree to. A constitutional amendment must be passed as a joint resolution first, and then it is sent to all the states for ratification. If at least three-fourths of states ratify it, it becomes an amendment – a change to the Constitution. This is a draft of a joint resolution proposing the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution that started in the Senate. This particular resolution became the 13th Amendment, ending slavery in the United States in 1865. Anti-slavery petitions influenced the passage of the 13th Amendment by bringing public pressure to Congress and by helping build support for the amendment.

Educational Activity Resources



Address from the Women's Loyal National League Supporting the Abolition of Slavery
<https://docsteach.org/documents/document/address-womens-loyal-national-league>

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States.

The undersigned, women of Pennsylvania, respectfully ask, that you will abolish every thing in the constitution or laws of the United States, which in any manner sanctions or sustains slavery.

Eliza Roberts	Philena Bailey
M. G. Lamborn	Ann Pennock
Philena Phillips	Mira Davis
Mary S. Agnew	Edith Pennock
Rev. Lamborn	Jeanne Pennock
Hannah J. Pennock	Susan Pyle
Mary S. Pennock	Eliza M. Bullough
Hannah Pennock	Ann Moxer
Mary Roberts	Sarah P. Mercer
Martha C. Hooper	Anna B. Eoy
Edith B. Phillips	S. H. Harvey
Emily Hooper	H. H. Harvey
Phoebe Mendenhall	Hannah Cox
Elizabeth Pullen	Mary H. Cox
Ruthanna C. Gilpin	Lydia E. Cox
L. G. Chaffin	Ann Hadley
Sarah W. Marshall	Philena Hadley
Jane Thompson	Mary Hadley
Mary Scarlett	Margaret Watts
Anne Scarlett	Mary Jeffery
Lydia Scarlett	Cypha Pastmore
H. M. Darlington	Elizabeth Phillips
Mary Ann Lammey	Ann Preston
Phoebe John	Mary Phillips
Rachel P. Lamborn	Mary Hurlan
Eliza Wilson	

Phoebe D. Phillips
 Ann Pennock
 Elizabeth Pennock
 Rebecca W. Taylor
 Hannah Chambers
 Susan D. Chambers

Sarah Jacobs
 Hannah Muesich
 Lydia B. Taylor
 Harriet C. Harvey
 Mary Holm
 Rebecca J. B. B. B.
 Susan B. B. B.
 A. W. Speakman

PETITION

For the Establishment and Protection of Freedom in the Territories of the United States.

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

The undersigned, citizens and electors of the State of *New York*, residing in *Birmingham & Perry*, in the county of *Wagoning*, respectfully pray that Slavery and the Slave-trade may be expressly prohibited by act of Congress in all the Territories of the United States.

NAMES.

NAMES.

The initials designate the political parties to which the individual signers belong "W" Whig - "D" Democrat - "A" Abolitionist

Ephraim Glasgow	W	Nelson Hoxford	W
A. Randall	D	Morgan Bronkhite	W
Mrs. Chappell	W	Geo. B. Morgan	A
Charles C. Morgan	D	William Atton	W
Daniel Hough	A	Daniel Howard	D
Maria Johnson	W	Isaac C. Clark	W
Emory Witter	D	George W. Ames	W
Harvey Wellman	W	John Jackson	W
Horace Lapham	D	John Mendel	D
Chancy Wellman	W	Ernest Mayhem	W
D. W. Howard	A	Wm. Patterson	A
D. D. Doane	D	Geo. W. Ryder	A
Austin Lane	W	Isaac Glasgow	W
John S. Thompson		Isaac H. Greene	
John S. Thompson	W	C. R. Patterson	W
Letter Bryan	W	Chester W. Sanford	W
Alfred Wellman	W	John Olds	W
Jan. Rudger	D	Samuel Goran	W
George Wyke	D		
Nathan H. Cook	W		
Harvey J. Mendel	D		
Charles Ellis	D		
Samuel Strong	W		
Knight Jendry	D		
Daniel Johnson	W		
James W. Hallett	A		
Amos L. Thomas	H		
Abin B. Witter	D		
D. B. Taylor	W		
Warren Daniels	A		
Joseph Black	W		
Salmon Brooks	W		
William Daniels	W		
Jonathan Howard	D		
J. J. Chug	W		

Whigs 30
Democrats 15
Abolitionists 6
1

Anti-Slavery Petition from the Citizens of New York

docsteach.org/documents/document/petition-citizens-new-york-prohibit-slavery-and-slave-trade

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America.

The petition of the undersigned citizens of Pennsylvania, respectfully asks that you will exert your full constitutional power towards the abolition of all provisions of the Constitution and laws, which in any manner sanction or sustain slavery, or which authorize a representation for slaves, or which make any distinction of rights or privileges by reason of complexion, and that you will refuse to admit any additional slave-holding state into the American Union.

Joshua Mallowa Saml C. Hastings

Wm. Kim Wm P Jackson

Benz. S. Jones

W. Wilson

C. C. Burleigh

Edward Lewis

Wm Mariot

Samuel Phares

Ephraim Wilson

Ralph Smith

Enoch Stratton

Edward M Davis

A. T. Chur

Wm. S. Pickering

Robt Hays

Joseph Shapley

Thos. Smith

Thompson

J. H. Bias

J. B. Barry

James Brooke

J. Gibbons

G. Ellwyn Jones

L. E. Conson

Edward W. Timber

Stephen E. Merrihue

David Loder

Phiny E. Chase

Saml. Dickinson

W. Gibbons

Jacob A. Young

Gilbert Fryer

Edwin H. Coates

Robt E. Evans

Thomas E. Longshore

Andrew Coard

Edmund Roberts

Petition from Pennsylvanians to Reject Slavery

docsteach.org/documents/document/petition-from-pennsylvanians-to-reject-slavery

S.R. 16

Recd. 2 Febr

Pub. Res. 10

1864
A.C.

Thirty-Eighth

Congress of the United States of America;

At the Second Session,

Begun and held at the City of Washington, on Monday, the fifth day of December, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-four.

A RESOLUTION

Submitting to the legislatures of the several States a proposition to amend the Constitution of the United States.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

(two-thirds of both houses concurring), that the following article be proposed to the legislatures of the several States as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which, when ratified by three-fourths of said Legislatures, shall be valid, to all intents and purposes, as a part of the said Constitution, namely: Article XIII. Section 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction. Section 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Stephen A. Crawford
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

H. C. G. G. G.
Vice President of the United States
and President of the Senate.

Approved February 1, 1865.

Abraham Lincoln

PRIVATE LAWS

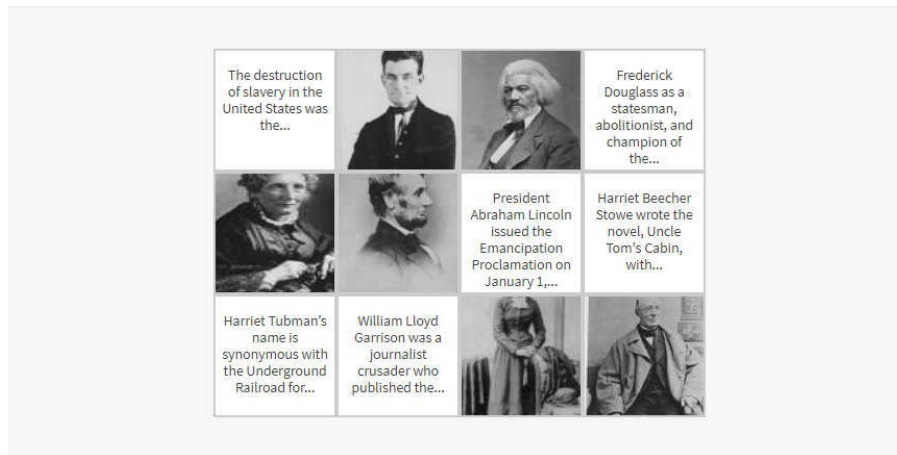
Supplemental Educational Resources

The following educational activities are designed to support student learning. These activities are not required. Feel free to facilitate only the activities that you think would be most helpful for your students.

1. Key Figures Who Worked to End Slavery

Examine photographs of some of the abolitionists and other key figures who were part of the movement to abolish slavery in the first half of the 19th century.

The [teacher page](#) provides an overview of the activity and suggested teaching instructions. Students can access the [student page](#) on their devices or you can project or screen share the activity with the whole class.



2. Analyzing a Photograph of Harriet Tubman

Students will answer questions to help them analyze a photograph of Harriet Tubman. Students will consider whether a photograph can convey the roles and jobs a person has.

The [teacher page](#) provides an overview of the activity and suggested teaching instructions. Students can access the [student page](#) on their devices or you can project or screen share the activity with the whole class.

