

Famous African Americans - Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad

by ReadWorks



Harriet Tubman lived during a time when it was illegal to help enslaved people escape to freedom, but she helped them escape anyway. Because of her efforts, she came to be known as "Moses," referring to an important figure in the Bible. The Moses of the Bible led the Jews, his own ethnic group, out of slavery in Egypt. Similarly, Tubman 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 that helped enslaved people escape to free states.

Harriet Tubman was born enslaved. 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 people she saved. She was skillful 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 a house for elderly African Americans who needed help. She was a beacon for the African American community and the United States.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. How was Harriet Tubman most like Moses?

- A. They are both important figures in the Bible.
- B. They both saved people from slavery.
- C. They are both famous Americans.
- D. They both lived in Egypt.

2. What does the author describe in the passage?

- A. slavery in the United States
- B. how Harriet Tubman escaped from slavery
- C. how Moses led the Jews out of Egypt
- D. the life and works of Harriet Tubman

3. Harriet Tubman helped African Americans in more ways than just her role in the Underground Railroad. What evidence from the passage supports this conclusion?

- A. She never lost one of the 300 enslaved people she led to freedom.
- B. She made a total of 19 rescue trips to the South.
- C. She established a house to help elderly African Americans.
- D. She became the most famous leader of the Underground Railroad.

4. Why is Tubman most likely described as brave?

- A. She promised to help free enslaved people.
- B. She made 19 rescue trips back down south.
- C. She established a house for elderly African Americans who needed help.
- D. She is compared to Moses, an important figure in the Bible.

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A. how Tubman helped enslaved people and other African Americans
- B. why the Underground Railroad was never discovered by police
- C. how Tubman trained to be a nurse in the Civil War
- D. similarities and differences between Tubman and Moses from the Bible

6. Read the sentences: "The Moses of the Bible led the Jews, his own ethnic group, out of slavery in Egypt. **Similarly**, Tubman led African Americans out of slavery in the American South."

As used in this sentence, what does the word "**similarly**" mean?

- A. mysteriously
- B. very differently
- C. legally
- D. in about the same way

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

Harriet Tubman wanted to continue helping African Americans, _____ she established a house for elderly African Americans who needed help.

- A. because
- B. so
- C. earlier
- D. instead

8. What was the Underground Railroad?

9. Based on the passage, why did Harriet Tubman most likely want to help other enslaved people escape?

10. One of the definitions of the word "beacon" is someone or something that guides or gives hope to others. The text states that Harriet Tubman was a "beacon" for the African American community and the United States. Use information from the text to support this statement.
