

The Emancipation Proclamation

ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL

January 1, 1863

The Emancipation Proclamation was an executive order issued by President Abraham Lincoln more than 150 years ago, during the Civil War.

The Proclamation freed the slaves in the Confederate states. It also ordered the federal government to do all it could to keep the ex-slaves free and the military to accept the free slaves as Union soldiers and pay them for their service.

Critics of the Proclamation say that Lincoln should have freed the slaves in all of the states. In states like Missouri and Kentucky, which were considered Border States because there was sympathy for both the Union and the Confederacy, the slaves were not freed.

Lincoln's critics then and today argue that this shows that the Emancipation Proclamation was more of a political maneuver than a sincere desire on Lincoln's part to free the slaves.

By the end of the war, however, The Proclamation had influenced Americans to advocate for and accept the abolition of all slavery in both the North and South. Less than two years later, the 13th Amendment was passed ending slavery in the United States.

Lincoln considered The Proclamation the most important aspect of his legacy. He said "If my name ever goes into history it will be for this act, and my whole soul is in it."



AN IMPORTANT DOCUMENT FOR HUMAN FREEDOM

- Lincoln actually issued the Emancipation Proclamation twice. On Sept. 22, 1862, he issued a preliminary proclamation giving the southern states until Jan. 1 to cease the rebellion. When the Confederates did not yield, he issued the final Emancipation Proclamation on Jan. 1, 1863.
- Lincoln's Cabinet initially resisted his idea for The Proclamation. It was only after the Battle of Antietam, which gave the Union an advantage, that it was persuaded. The Emancipation Proclamation was issued five days later.
- The Emancipation Proclamation changed the Civil War from a war to save the Union to a war for freedom, adding a moral force to strengthen the Union effort.
- It was the first step toward freeing all slaves and the eventual passage of the 13th Amendment, which made slavery unconstitutional.
- Throughout his life, Lincoln spoke against the evils of slavery and the need to make the words in the Declaration of Independence about all men are created equal a true statement about our country. The Emancipation Proclamation turned his words into action.
- The Emancipation Proclamation gave great hope to slaves everywhere that there was freedom in their future.



MISSOURI LEARNING STANDARDS:
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1,
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.2,
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.3,
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.4,
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.10

USE THE NEWS!

- 1 What do the words *emancipation* and *proclamation* mean? Using the newspaper, find words that could be used as synonyms for these words.
- 2 What is an executive order? Search your local newspaper or an online newspaper for examples of the President's activities or speeches and brainstorm about what might be the topic of a future executive order.
- 3 Do you think that the phrase *all men are created equal* is true for all groups of people living in the United States in the 21st century? Using a newspaper, find examples that show both sides of this issue—that we, as a nation, are moving toward equality for all but that there is still need for improvement.