

Educator Guide:

The JUNETEENTH Story

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9780760375143
becker&mayer! kids
hardcover, 32 pages, ages 6-9
USD: \$18.99, CAN: \$25.99

Learning Objective:

The purpose of this educational guide is to enhance reader engagement with *The Juneteenth Story*, an informational text about the evolution of slavery in America. Readers will take part in learning as follows:

- Answer essential questions about the events of *The Juneteenth Story*
- Practice different thinking strategies before, during, and after reading the book
- Engage with new vocabulary to replace/enhance the high frequency vocabulary words currently used
- Create a timeline of important events in their lives arranged in chronological order

About *The Juneteenth Story*:

On June 19, 1865—more than two years after President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation—the enslaved people of Texas first learned of their freedom. That day became a day of remembrance and celebration that changed and grew from year to year.

Learn about the events that led to emancipation and why it took so long for the enslaved people in Texas to hear the news. The first Juneteenth began as “Jubilee Day,” where families celebrated and learned of their new rights as citizens. As Black Texans moved to other parts of the country, they brought their traditions along with them, and Juneteenth continued to grow and develop.

Today, Juneteenth’s powerful spirit has endured through the centuries to become an official holiday in the United States in 2021. The Juneteenth Story provides an accessible introduction for kids to learn about this important American holiday.

About Alliah L. Agostini:

Alliah L. Agostini grew up celebrating Juneteenth in Buffalo, NY; Her grandfather was one of the co-founders of the Juneteenth Festival of Buffalo. Founded in 1976, it grew to become the third-largest Juneteenth celebration in the world.

A trained marketer with a passion for children’s literature, Alliah writes with a commitment to spread joy, truth, and to help more children see themselves on the page. Alliah is a member of SCBWI, KidLit in Color, Black Creators HQ, and the PB Sunrays. She lives with her family in NJ, and has both an A.B. and an M.B.A from Harvard. Learn more at alliahagostini.com or follow her on Twitter and Instagram @alliago.

About Sawyer Cloud:

Sawyer Cloud loves sunny days and music. Children’s books she has illustrated include *Jade Braves the Dark*, *Dear Mama’s Loving Arms*, *Our Favourite Things*, *Earthbred*, and *Under the Mango Tree*. If not drawing, she would be singing out loud in her room wearing her favorite fairy costume, and sharing the moment with her online friends. She lives in Madagascar with her family and two pets, Arya the dog and Potter the cat. Her dream is to travel and share her stories with the world.

Discussion Questions:

1. When is Juneteenth and why is it celebrated?
2. Why did the Civil War begin?
3. Why did southern states fight to keep slavery legal?
4. What is an abolitionist? Who was the abolitionist mentioned in the book? What was the goal of abolitionists like him?
5. Who came to tell enslaved Texans they were emancipated, and what is the name of the town where this happened? Why did it take so long for enslaved Texans to learn that they were free?
6. What was the original name of Juneteenth? What were some of the traditions created during the first celebration in 1866?
7. What was Emancipation Park? Who built it, and why?
8. Did all Black people feel the same about Juneteenth? Why or why not?
9. During the early 1900's it became harder to celebrate Juneteenth. Discuss some of the reasons why.
10. What was the Texas Centennial Exposition? What made this event so groundbreaking?
11. What was The Poor People's Campaign? Why was the Campaign important to the Juneteenth holiday?
12. When and how did Juneteenth officially become a Texas state holiday? A national holiday?

Activities:

KWL Chart: Before reading *The Juneteenth Story* with your students, create a KWL chart with students on a giant piece of paper or on the front board. KWL stands for know, wonder, and learned. Before reading the book, have students fill in the first two columns, either as a class or in smaller groups of 5-6 students. Ask students what they know about the Juneteenth holiday and its history, putting their responses in the first column. Then ask students what questions they wonder about Juneteenth and put their answers in the second column. As the leader of the activity, try to refrain from providing any information before reading the book to retain an accurate scope of what kids already know and wonder. Then read *The Juneteenth Story* and fill out the third column to reflect what the students learned from the book. Did they get all their questions answered? What additional research can students do if they didn't?

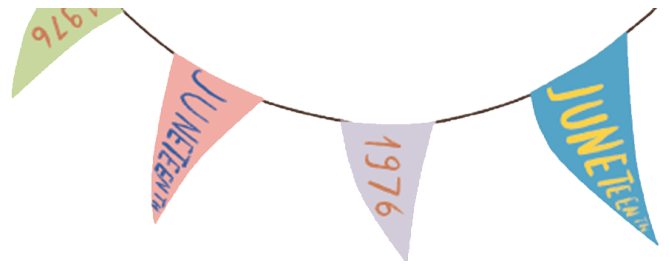
Text-to-Text, Text-to-Self, Text-to-World: *The Juneteenth Story* is a nonfiction book, which means everything in the book is based on actual history. Encourage students to connect the events from *The Juneteenth Story* to their own experiences and understanding of history by using The Text-to-Text, Text-to-Self, Text-to-World strategy. Take frequent breaks when reading the book to help students understand the text more deeply with questions like:

1. How does *The Juneteenth Story* connect to other books you've read? What common threads do you notice? What differences?
2. How do the text and illustrations in *The Juneteenth Story* connect to you and your life? Where can students find themselves in the book?
3. How does *The Juneteenth Story* connect to the larger world we live in? Where are students seeing the issues from the book in the world today?

Be sure to share the author's personal connection to Juneteenth from the back of the book and encourage students to consider how they will foster the connections they made from the questions above as they learn more about the history of Juneteenth.



Vocabulary: Below are some key words from *The Juneteenth Story* that students might not already be familiar with. This is not a comprehensive list, so encourage readers to go back through text to find any additional words they don't recognize and define them. For now, match the words on the left below with their definitions on the right by drawing a line between the two.



Word	Definition
Resurgence	Use force or violence to make someone work for you for no pay
Enslave	Lack of fairness
Perseverance	A group of people, countries, organizations, etc. joined together by a common interest, (in this case, the eleven southern states that broke away from the rest of the US to form their own government in an effort to keep slavery legal)
Amendment	A change or addition to a text (in this case, the Constitution)
Emancipate	The ability to live life and share beliefs without someone in charge stopping you from doing so.
Abolitionist	To set free
Injustice	Someone who was against slavery and actively worked to end it
Descendant	A blood-relative born from/after a person, plant, or animal
Confederacy	A person who works to bring about political or social change
Liberty	The action of continuing to do something despite its difficulty
Activist	A significant increase in activity of something that had already existed

Create a timeline: Show students the timeline in the back of *The Juneteenth Story* and explain how each box indicates a landmark event in the history of the holiday. Explain how history in general builds upon the past and that there are often many years between those landmark events. Have kids create their own timeline and chronicle their own histories. They can include events like the year they were born, their first-ever day of school, the day they met their best friend, etc. Split students into groups of 4-5 and allow them to present their timelines to their classmates. Do they have any predictions for their futures based on what they've seen in their pasts?

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TIMELINE