



JUNETEENTH TIMELINE

LESSON PLAN for Grades 3-4 (Ages 8-9)

This Month Takes a Look at the Amazing Story of Opal Lee and Her Quest to have Juneteenth Recognized Nationally

WHAT IS JUNETEENTH?

You know best what children in this age group may need to help them understand the complex history of the United States, but guides with specific language can help! Here's our suggestion for this age group. However, be ready to modify wherever you see appropriate for different developmental levels and learning abilities.

"Juneteenth celebrates the day enslaved people in Texas learned they were free. But it took 2.5 years for this important news to travel from Washington D.C. to Texas! To understand why this happened, we need to learn about the Civil War and how it changed America. A determined woman named Opal Lee worked for many years to make Juneteenth a national holiday."

THE STORY OF FREEDOM

APRIL 12, 1861 ✕ Civil War Begins The Civil War started when Southern states wanted to keep slavery, but Northern states wanted to end it. The country was divided and fighting began.

JANUARY 1, 1863 📜 Emancipation Proclamation President Lincoln announced that enslaved people in rebellious states were free! But many areas, especially Texas, didn't get this news right away.

JUNE 19, 1865 🦶 Freedom News Arrives in Texas Union soldiers arrived in Texas with news that slavery had ended. This was 2.5 years after the Emancipation Proclamation! The celebration began on June 19th.

OCTOBER 7, 1926 👧 Opal Lee is Born Opal Lee was born in Marshall, Texas. From a young age, she believed in fairness and helping others.

1990s-2010s 🗣️ Fighting for Recognition Opal organized events and taught people about Juneteenth. She wanted everyone in America to know about this important day in history.

2016-2017 🚶 The Great Walk At age 89, Opal walked from Texas to Washington D.C.! She walked to show how important Juneteenth was to the whole country.



JUNE 17, 2021 🏛️ Victory at Last! President Biden signed a law making Juneteenth a federal holiday! Opal was invited to the White House to watch this historic moment.

🎮 INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES!

ACTIVITY 1: TEST YOUR STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE!

Ask these questions orally and have students provide the correct answer for each question:

Question 1: What was the Civil War about? a) Fighting with other countries b) Northern and Southern states disagreeing about slavery ← (Correct!) c) Arguments about money

Question 2: How long did it take for freedom news to reach Texas? a) 6 months b) 2.5 years ← (Correct!) c) 10 years

Question 3: What did Opal Lee do to raise awareness? a) Wrote a book b) Walked to Washington D.C. ← (Correct!) c) Made a movie

Question 4: In what year did Juneteenth become a federal holiday? a) 2020 b) 2021 ← (Correct!) c) 2022

ACTIVITY 2: WORD MATCHING GAME!

Draw these words on a chalk board so kids can connect each word with its meaning. You can also use our interactive or your smart-board.

WORDS:

- Emancipation
- Federal
- Activist
- Enslaved

MEANINGS:

- Related to the whole country's government (*Federal*)
- The act of setting people free (*Emancipation*)
- Someone who works hard to create positive change (*Activist*)
- Forced to work without pay or freedom (*Enslaved*)

ACTIVITY 3: PUT THE EVENTS IN ORDER!

Number these events from 1 (earliest) to 5 (latest):



___ Emancipation Proclamation (1863) ___ Juneteenth in Texas (1865) ___ Opal Lee is born (1926) ___ Opal walks to Washington (2016) ___ Juneteenth becomes federal holiday (2021)

Answer Key: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5



IMPORTANT VOCABULARY

CIVIL WAR - A war between Northern and Southern states over slavery and other issues

EMANCIPATION - The act of setting enslaved people free

PROCLAMATION - An official announcement from the government

FEDERAL - Related to the whole country's government

ACTIVIST - Someone who works hard to create positive change

ENSLAVED - Forced to work without pay or freedom

UNION SOLDIERS - Northern army soldiers who fought to end slavery



TAKE HOME ACTIVITIES!

FAMILY DISCUSSION

Ask your family these questions:

- What does freedom mean to our family?
- How do people work together to create positive change?
- What are some examples of unfairness that people have fought against?
- How can we help make our community more fair for everyone?

JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION IDEAS

Here are ways to celebrate Juneteenth at home:



Listen to African American music and learn about its history



Have a feast with traditional foods (red velvet cake, watermelon, barbecue)



Read books about freedom, civil rights, and American history



Create art celebrating freedom and equality



Volunteer in your community to help others





RESEARCH PROJECT


Choose one topic to learn more about:


- **The Underground Railroad** - How some helped enslaved people escape to freedom
- **Famous Civil War Leaders** - Learn about Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, or Harriet Tubman
- **Texas History** - Why was Texas one of the last places to receive freedom news?
- **Modern Civil Rights Heroes** - People who continue fighting for equality today

☆ WHAT YOU'RE LEARNING!

 **Reading Comprehension:** You're analyzing timeline events and understanding how historical events connect to each other.

 **Vocabulary Building:** You're learning important words related to American history and civil rights.

 **Chronological Thinking:** You can put events in order and understand how things that happened long ago still affect us today.

 **Civic Ideals:** You're exploring concepts of freedom, equality, and how people can work together to make positive changes.

🎉 GREAT JOB LEARNING ABOUT JUNETEENTH! 🎉

You now understand the connection between the Civil War, emancipation, and Juneteenth, plus how brave people like Opal Lee continue working for justice and equality!

This Month™ Educational Activities • Grade 3-4 • Juneteenth 2025