

MORE TO THINK ABOUT

The Underground Railroad occurred during one of the most challenging eras in the history of the United States of America. It is presented as a dramatic event involving freedom seekers migrating toward the northern United States into Canada. While the experiences of both freedom seekers and members of the Underground Railroad are noted – the impact of the Underground Railroad beyond the Emancipation Proclamation are seldom presented.

The Emancipation Proclamation is the proclamation issued by President Abraham Lincoln on September 22, 1862, that freed the people held as slaves in those territories still in rebellion against the Union from January 1, 1863 forward.

There are several reasons why the Underground Railroad was important and should be studied.

- It was one of the most multicultural collaborative events and protests in United States history as ordinary men and women of many races, religions, and beliefs worked together for social justice.
- It is a demonstration of how African Americans could organize on their own, dispelling the myth that they did not resist enslavement.
- It provided an opportunity for sympathetic Americans to assist in the abolition of slavery.
- It demonstrates the creativity and innovation of communication systems and planned escapes.

One question your students may ask is, **“Why do we need to study the Underground Railroad today? What does it have to do with anything today?”**

OTHER HISTORICAL EVENTS TO THINK ABOUT:



Being able to see the Underground Railroad through a more holistic lens leads to a better understanding of not only why this event is so historically significant, but how it continues to be significant in modern times. Have students think about some ways individuals and groups worked across the racial divide for greater good.