

Name: _____

THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

In January of 1863, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation – a document which attempted to free slaves in the rebelling states, that is – the Confederacy. Lincoln’s action was seen as a military tactic because it was aimed at weakening the South’s economy by freeing the slaves. Although the document had a huge impact on the public and broadened the war’s goals to including abolishing slavery, it actually **freed very few slaves** because the Union army was unable to enforce the document.

The Emancipation Proclamation aimed to free the slaves in the South only because as president, Lincoln did not actually have the power to abolish slavery throughout the entire United States. However, as **Commander-in-Chief**, he could ask Congress to gradually ban it as a military action. He also did not want to upset border states that had slaves, but remained in the Union, like Kentucky and Maryland. Although the Emancipation Proclamation did not free many slaves at the time it was issued, it is seen today as an incredibly powerful symbolic measure and a significant moment in America’s history.



“That on the first day of January, AD 1863, all persons held as slaves within any state [that is in rebellion] against the United States of America shall be then...and forever free; and the government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons.”

-Excerpt from the Emancipation Proclamation

1. When was the Emancipation Proclamation issued?
2. What was the purpose of the Emancipation Proclamation?
3. Did the proclamation free **all** slaves? Explain your answer.
4. Why didn’t Lincoln free all slaves?
5. Why do you think the proclamation was seen as such an important *symbolic* measure?