

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Great Minds: Harriet Tubman

By Lydia Lukidis



Some people are courageous trailblazers. They never give up, even in the face of adversity. Somehow, they change the course of history and will never be forgotten. This is the case with Harriet Tubman. Imagine this: she was born into slavery, yet managed to help free hundreds of other enslaved people.



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***“Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.”***

**- Harriet Tubman**

onto wagons. She was also a maid and a cook. The days were long and hard.

When she was thirteen, she had a terrible accident. An enslaver threw a heavy metal weight at one of the people he enslaved. But it missed and hit Harriet in the head instead. It had such a big impact that she almost died.

That injury caused her to have seizures and blackouts for the rest of her life.

Her years of slavery went on and on. Harriet grew tired of being mistreated, along with other enslaved people. Many of them were escaping at that time. And in 1849, Harriet also escaped thanks to the Underground Railroad.

This was not an actual railroad. It was a group of people, homes, and secret hiding spots that kept freedom seekers safe. The people involved used railroad terms as code

words to keep it secretive. "Conductors" helped people move from place to place. "Passengers" were the people who were escaping. They were also sometimes called "cargo." Some people helping were abolitionists. They wanted to end slavery and

they believed in freedom for all.

When Harriet escaped, slavery was against the law in some northern states. That is why so many enslaved people left the south. They fled to the north, seeking freedom. After a very long and terrifying journey, Harriet finally made it to Philadelphia and was free.

A year later, the Fugitive Slave Act was passed. That was bad news for the people who escaped. It meant they could be taken from



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she helped someone, she put her own life at risk. If the conductors and other helpers were discovered, they were put to death by hanging. But that didn't stop Harriet. She believed in standing up for what's right.

Her service continued during the Civil War. She helped nurse injured soldiers. She was also a spy for the north, and even helped the army free more enslaved people.

After the war, she went to live with her family in New York. She continued being a Civil Rights Activist. She supported equal rights for Black people and women. She eventually died of pneumonia when she was in her nineties, but her legacy continues to live on today.

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1. Based on the information in the article, how old was Harriet Tubman when she ran away from slavery?

- a. 13
- b. 29
- c. 30
- d. 55



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4. According to the information you read in the article, write the number **1**, **2**, **3**, or **4** next to the historical event that happened first, second, third, and fourth.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Harriet escaped from slavery through the Underground Railroad.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Harriet served the abolitionist cause in the Civil War.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Harriet suffered a terrible head injury at the hands of an enslaver.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The Fugitive Slave Act was passed, and Harriet continued to help hundreds of people escape their lives of slavery at the risk of her own life.

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The following terms are vocabulary words from the article.  
Match the vocabulary word with its correct definition by writing  
the corresponding letter on the line.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ trailblazers                      a. hard times; difficulties



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5. \_\_\_\_\_ injured                      from place to place on the Underground Railroad
6. \_\_\_\_\_ activist                      f. a bacterial or viral lung infection causing inflammation
7. \_\_\_\_\_ legacy                      g. people who lead the way for others; pioneers
8. \_\_\_\_\_ conductors                      h. the rights of citizens to equality and social and political freedom
9. \_\_\_\_\_ pneumonia                      i. a person who has escaped from somewhere and has to hide to avoid being arrested or persecuted
10. \_\_\_\_\_ civil rights                      j. a person who works for social or political change

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In the article, "Great Minds: Harriet Tubman," you learned that Harriet Tubman faced many dangers and risked her life many times to help other people escape from slavery on the Underground Railroad. She was a courageous, heroic woman who put others before herself and helped the fight for freedom.

On the lines below, describe some of the dangers Harriet Tubman and others faced



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- 4 Harriet served the abolitionist cause in the Civil War.
- 1 Harriet suffered a terrible head injury at the hands of an enslaver.
- 3 The Fugitive Slave Act was passed, and Harriet continued to help hundreds of people escape their lives of slavery at the risk of her own life.

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9. f. pneumonia

10. h. civil rights

i. a person who has escaped from somewhere and has to hide to avoid being arrested or persecuted

j. a person who works for social or political change