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## African Americans

When the ancestors of today's African Americans first came to the United States long ago, they came as explorers. One of the most famous explorers was Estéban, who traveled through part of the country before Jamestown was settled by the British. Over the years, others settled in the United States and then, some people came as indentured servants (people who will work for a certain length of time to repay a debt and then get their freedom). But then there was a problem. The white settlers didn't want to lose their servants, who were working without being paid, so they kept them as slaves. This was a terrible thing to do, because people should never be bought and sold or made to work in terrible conditions. Everyone should have the freedom to decide where they want to live and what jobs they want to train to do. Some of the slaves not only had their freedom taken away, some of them were treated very cruelly, too.

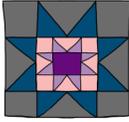
Color the picture showing the slaves doing farm work.

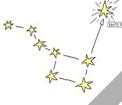


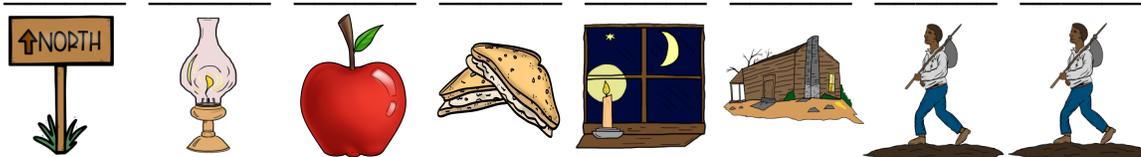
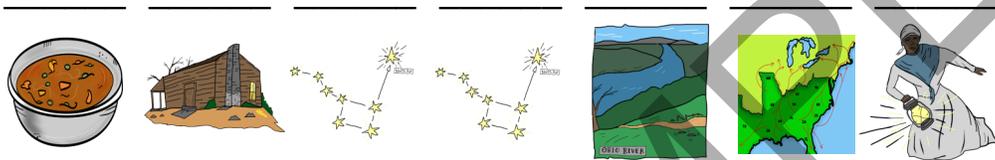
## Expansion of Slavery

Over time, slavery became more and more common. There was not much slavery in the northern states, even though some people in the north brought people to the United States and sold them as slaves. Slavery was very common in the southern states, as many plantation owners bought slaves because they needed lots of people to work on their plantations. In the North, the first person to die rebelling against Britain before the Revolutionary War started was Crispus Attucks. It is thought he was a slave who had managed to get his freedom. He was killed in the Boston Massacre when British soldiers fired on colonists who had been insulting and challenging them. During the Revolutionary War, many slaves and former slaves fought for the colonies. After the war, many were given their freedom, and the northern states stopped slavery. The Declaration of Independence said all people were created equal, but there was nothing in the law that kept people from owning slaves. Some of the states in the new nation decided to continue allowing people to own slaves. After a time, some people created the Underground Railroad as a way to help slaves run away and escape to freedom. People such as Harriet Tubman and many others found ways to get thousands of slaves from the slavery in the South to freedom in the North or in Canada.

People working with the Underground Railroad often allowed their homes to be used to hide slaves who were running away until the slaves could be moved to another area. Sometimes, the slaves would have to be sent to another hiding place to keep them safe. Other times, people would leave a candle in the window to let someone know if it was a house where the slaves would be safe. Sometimes people used the stars to find their way to freedom. Use the symbols on the next page to figure out what letters to put in the spaces and decode the names of people who were very helpful in stopping slavery.

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i
								

k	l	m	n	o	r	s	t	u
								

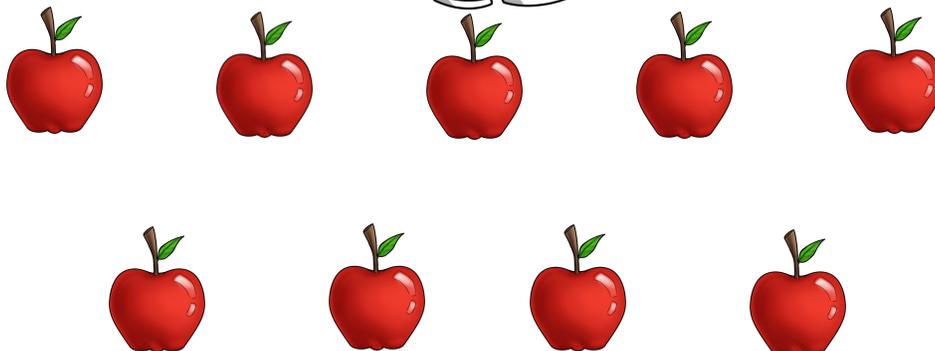


# Freedom for Slaves

As slaves, many people were not allowed to go to school. Even though they were very smart and could learn whatever was needed to do their jobs, people tried to say they were not smart enough to learn. Some slaves and free African Americans did get the chance to get an education. People like Benjamin Banneker and Frederick Douglass were very important in history. Benjamin Banneker, who was a surveyor, inventor, and astronomer, helped measure the land to be used for the capital in Washington, D.C. Frederick Douglass was a brilliant writer and speaker. He held several different offices in the government. These men and many more like them proved that the color of a person's skin did not have anything to do with how smart they were.

There were many problems between the northern states and the southern states because of slavery. After a time, the Civil War started and during this war, President Abraham Lincoln set all the slaves in the southern states free. The problem was that, even though they were given freedom, many places still did not allow them to have the same rights as the white people had.

Let's practice making equal amounts. There are nine apples on the table. Mary and two of her friends want to divide them evenly. Draw lines from the apples to Mary and her friends so that everyone gets an equal (the same) amount.



## Fighting for Freedom

After slavery was abolished (completely stopped and no longer allowed), African Americans should have had the same rights as everyone else in the United States. But, there were many people who did not want African Americans to have the right to vote or to live in the same neighborhood as they lived in. Some people did not want African Americans to go to the same school as they went to. In some areas, African Americans were not even allowed to use the same water fountains or eat at the same restaurants. Some people wanted white people and African Americans to be kept separate. There were many other ways African Americans were mistreated. It took many, many years before they were able to have the same rights as others. There were many people who worked hard to help African Americans get those rights.

Not all people agreed on the best way to achieve the rights they were promised. Booker T. Washington was one leader who felt that working and earning a good living would help African Americans prove they were good citizens. This should have worked, but there were many who did not care how successful African Americans were, they still did not want to give them the rights they should have had. Other African Americans became well-known for their work through the years, such as Mary McLeod Bethune, Sojourner Truth, Bessie Coleman, Jackie Robinson, Marian Anderson, Jesse Owens, Wilma Rudolph, Sarah E. Goode, Rosa Parks, and Thurgood Marshall. There were others, whose individual names we don't know, who contributed much to the country, such as police, rescue workers, and many in all branches of the military who have served to protect their country. The Tuskegee Airmen fought bravely in World War II. One of the most well-known African Americans was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He worked hard to try to win equal rights for all people. One of Dr. King's most famous speeches was one that has been called "I Have a Dream." In that speech, he talked about believing that someday all people would truly live equally.

There are still areas where it is hard for everyone to be treated the way they should be. One thing we can do is to remember to treat other people the way we want to be treated. If we wouldn't like being treated a certain way, we should not treat others that way.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had a dream that everyone would someday live in a world where everyone is treated equally. Are there things you think need to be changed in the way people live? Are there dreams you have for how people should treat each other in the future? Draw a picture of your dream.

SAMPLE

# African Americans

## Let's Review

Draw a line under the correct answer.

1. Who was one of the most famous African American explorers?

Columbus

Estéban

de Soto

2. What started when people didn't want to lose their workers who were working for no pay?

Slavery

Revolutionary War

Boston Tea Party

3. Who was the first person to die rebelling against Britain before the Revolutionary War?

Crispus Attucks

John Adams

George Washington

4. What was a way to help slaves run away and escape to freedom?

Transcontinental Railway

Underground Railroad

Statue of Liberty

5. Who helped measure the land to be used for the capital in Washington, D.C.?

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Rosa Parks

Benjamin Banneker

6. Who was a well-known African American who gave a famous speech that has been called "I Have a Dream."

Rosa Parks

Benjamin Banneker

Martin Luther King, Jr.