



American Expression E0145 Juneteenth

IOTS Publishing Team  
International Online Teachers Society  
Since 2011

Juneteenth, also known as Juneteenth Independence Day or Freedom Day, is an annual holiday celebrated in the United States on June 19th. It commemorates the emancipation of enslaved African Americans and the end of slavery in the United States. The word "Juneteenth" is a combination of "June" and "nineteenth," referring to the day when Union General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, in 1865, and announced the emancipation of slaves, two and a half years after the Emancipation Proclamation had been signed.

On June 19, 1865, General Granger issued General Order No. 3, which stated that "all slaves are free." This news had a significant impact on enslaved African Americans in Texas, who had remained in bondage despite the Emancipation Proclamation. Juneteenth marked a turning point in their lives, symbolizing their liberation and the end of one of the darkest chapters in American history.

Since then, Juneteenth has been celebrated annually to honor the resilience, courage, and perseverance of African Americans, as well as to reflect on the ongoing struggle for racial equality and social justice. It is a time for remembrance, education, and the celebration of African American culture and achievements.

Juneteenth celebrations often include parades, picnics, family gatherings, music, dance, storytelling, and community events. It is an opportunity for people of all backgrounds to come together, learn about African American history, and engage in conversations about the legacy of slavery and the ongoing fight against racism.

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition and observance of Juneteenth across the United States. Many states have officially recognized it as a state holiday or a day of observance, and efforts are underway to make it a federal holiday. The significance of Juneteenth has also gained greater attention and resonance, particularly in the context of the ongoing struggle for racial justice and the affirmation of Black lives.

Juneteenth serves as a reminder of the long journey towards freedom and equality, and it emphasizes the importance of continuing the work to eradicate systemic racism and injustice. It is a time to reflect on the progress made, acknowledge the challenges that persist, and renew the commitment to create a more just and equitable society for all.

As Juneteenth continues to gain recognition and importance, it provides an opportunity for individuals and communities to come together, learn from history, and work towards a future of equality, justice, and inclusivity.

#### Questions for Discussion

1. What is the historical significance of Juneteenth in relation to the end of slavery in the United States?
2. How has the celebration and recognition of Juneteenth evolved over time, and what factors have contributed to its increased prominence in recent years?
3. What are some of the key traditions and activities associated with Juneteenth celebrations, and how do they help foster a sense of community and cultural pride?
4. In what ways does Juneteenth provide an opportunity for individuals and communities to engage in conversations about racial equality, social justice, and the ongoing fight against racism?
5. What are some ongoing efforts to elevate the significance of Juneteenth, such as the push for federal recognition and the incorporation of educational programs about Juneteenth into school curricula? How can these initiatives contribute to a broader understanding of African American history and the pursuit of racial equity?