

Name _____

Date _____

History Writing

History writing is nonfiction that presents events and people of the past. What makes this type of writing interesting is how it presents interactions between people and events. History writing often combines features of a narrative text (a true story with a setting, characters, and a plot) and an informational text (paragraphs of main ideas and factual details).

Read the following historical text and answer the questions.

The Underground Railroad

The Underground Railroad was not an actual railroad with tracks and trains, but a secret network of routes, safe houses, and people who helped enslaved African Americans escape to freedom in the Northern United States and Canada during the early to mid-1800s. Brave individuals known as "conductors" guided fugitives between hiding places called "stations," which were often the homes of abolitionists who opposed slavery. One of the most famous conductors was Harriet Tubman, who escaped slavery herself in 1849. After gaining her freedom, she returned to the South at least 13 times and helped approximately 70 people escape, including many of her own family members. Tubman was known as "Moses" for leading her people to freedom, and she was never caught despite a \$40,000 reward offered for her capture.

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Those who traveled the Underground Railroad faced extreme dangers. Runaway slaves risked severe punishment or death if captured. They traveled mostly at night, following the North Star, and used coded songs and quilts with special patterns to communicate secret messages about safe routes and locations.

By 1860, an estimated 100,000 enslaved people had found freedom through the Underground Railroad. This remarkable resistance movement not only saved lives but also strengthened the abolitionist cause that ultimately contributed to the end of slavery in the United States.

1. What was the Underground Railroad, and when was it active?

2. Who was Harriet Tubman, and what role did she play in this historical movement?

3. What evidence does the author provide about the dangers faced by people using the Underground Railroad?

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History Writing-Answer Key

1. What was the Underground Railroad, and when was it active?

A secret network of routes, safe houses, and people who helped enslaved African Americans escape to freedom in the North and Canada during the early to mid-1800s.

2. Who was Harriet Tubman, and what role did she play in this historical movement?

A formerly enslaved person who escaped in 1849 and became a famous "conductor" who returned South 13 times to help about 70 people escape to freedom.

3. What evidence does the author provide about the dangers faced by people using the Underground Railroad?

Runaway slaves risked severe punishment or death if captured, they traveled at night, and there was a \$40,000 reward for Tubman's capture.