Name_____

The Emancipation Proclamation

The Emancipation Proclamation was an executive order issued by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863. The power to issue an executive order is granted by the Constitution and is subject to judicial review—that is, a federal court may rule that something is constitutional or not.

It was issued during the Civil War and freed slaves in the ten states still in rebellion against the United States. The order did not make slavery illegal, make former slaves citizens, or compensate their ex-owners.

The purpose of the Emancipation Proclamation was to eliminate slavery and bring the country together.

Although issued January 1, 1863, President Lincoln never signed the order into law. A Constitutional Amendment supporting the Proclamation was ratified by the states in 1865.

When Lincoln first presented the proclamation to his cabinet in 1862, they were opposed to it. They felt it was too radical. Eventually, Lincoln overruled his cabinet and issued the order as he thought best to do.

One of the major non-slavery issues was that by issuing the order, it kept Europe from joining the war on the side of the Confederacy. Britain and France were interested in the cotton industry in the South and were prepared to become involved so as to have a part of that economy. However, the majority of Europe was against slavery. Because the Proclamation directed the attention of the war to slavery, it became an instrument in making the war an international issue.

Regardless of the particulars of issuing the Emancipation Order, it is one of the greatest documents in the history of the world.

Text Questions

1. What was the purpose of the Emancipation Proclamation?
   a. to end the war
   b. to free the slaves in the Confederate states
   c. to encourage Europe to join the war
   d. to proclaim that Lincoln was in charge of the war
2. Who proposed the Proclamation?
   a. Europe
   b. the slaves
   c. President Lincoln
   d. President Lincoln's cabinet
3. What does the word *radical* mean as it is used in the text?
   a. illegal
   b. extreme
   c. unfriendly
   d. advanced
4. Which of the following happened first?
   a. Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation.
   b. Lincoln signed the Proclamation into law.
   c. Lincoln presented the Proclamation to his cabinet.
   d. The states ratified the Proclamation with a Constitutional Amendment.
5. What lasting effect did the Emancipation Proclamation have on the United States?

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LIVEWORKSHEETS