

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 slaves.

It all started when she was born in 1820. Her name was Araminta Minty Ross, but she later took the name of her mother, Harriet. She grew up on a plantation in Dorchester County, Maryland. Being a slave wasn't easy. She was mistreated, given scraps for food, and was sometimes beaten by her masters. She lived in a tiny one bedroom cabin with her parents and eleven other children, so life was cramped.



**“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”**



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

This was not an actual railroad. It was a group of people, homes, and secret hiding spots that kept slaves 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 slaves who were escaping. They were also sometimes called “cargo.” Some people helping the slaves were abolitionists. They wanted to end slavery. They were not only African American but also white people, both men and women. They believed in freedom for all.



When Harriet escaped, slavery was against the law in some northern states. That is why so many slaves left their plantations in 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 slaves who escaped. It meant



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family. Each time she helped a slave, 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 slaves.

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 blacks and women. She eventually died of pneumonia when she was in her nineties, but her legacy continues to live on today.



## About the Author

Lydia Lukidis is a children's author with a multi-disciplinary background that spans the fields of literature, science and theater. So far, she has over 40 books and eBooks published, as well as a dozen educational books. Her latest STEM books include [A Real Live Pet!](#) and [The Space Rock Mystery.](#)

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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
2. Describe the kind of work Harriet Tubman did on the plantation before she ran away.



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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 her plantation through the Underground Railroad.

\_\_\_\_\_ Harriet served the abolitionist cause in the Civil War.

\_\_\_\_\_ Harriet suffered a terrible head injury at the hands of a slave owner.

\_\_\_\_\_ The Fugitive Slave Act was passed, and Harriet continued to help hundreds of slaves 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
2. \_\_\_\_\_ abolitionists                      b. something passed down by a predecessor



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who helped slaves move 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 slaves 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 along the Underground Railroad. With an adult's permission, use the Internet to research facts about the Underground Railroad to help you answer the question. Write the website you used at the bottom of this page.



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Website I used: \_\_\_\_\_

## ANSWER KEY

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

a. 13

**b. 29**

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