

# Reading List for Juneteenth

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## Picture Books

### [Juneteenth by Van G. Garrett](#)

Summary An African American family attends a modern-day Juneteenth parade in Galveston, Texas (the birthplace of the holiday). [2023]

### [All good in the hood by Dwayne Reed](#)

A bounce-to-the-beat story, set against the backdrop of a Juneteenth celebration, about a young boy who's afraid of the sounds in the city but is comforted by his older brother, who tells him not to worry: "It's all good in the hood." [2023]

### [Juneteenth by Anece Rochell](#)

Daylen (one of the characters from the Beautiful Me Series) is excited and ready to share everything he knows about Juneteenth. Juneteenth is an entertaining picture storybook that explains the origin, customs, and importance of the Juneteenth Holiday, in a fun and interactive way.[2021]

### [They built me for freedom: the story of Juneteenth and Houston's Emancipation Park by Tonya Duncan Ellis](#)

Bringing to life the 150-year story of Emancipation Park in Houston, Texas, and the origins of Juneteenth, this moving picture book, with lyrical text and vibrant artwork, is an ode to the struggle, triumph, courage and joy of Black America.[2024]

### [All different now : Juneteenth, the first day of freedom by Angela Johnson](#)

In 1865, members of a family start their day as slaves, working in a Texas cotton field, and end it celebrating their freedom on what came to be known as Juneteenth.[2014]

### [Juneteenth for Mazie by Floyd Cooper.](#)

Little Mazie wants the freedom to stay up late, but her father explains what freedom really means in the story of Juneteenth, and how her ancestors celebrated their true freedom. [2015]

### [The night before freedom : a Juneteenth story by Glenda Armand](#)

Eight-year-old David and his family gather at Grandma's house in Galveston, Texas, for a cherished family tradition--Grandma's annual retelling of the story of Juneteenth, the holiday that commemorates the end of slavery in the United States.[2023]

### [Free at last: a Juneteenth poem by Sojourner Kincaid Rolle](#)

Deeply emotional, evocative free verse by poet and activist Sojourner Kincaid Rolle traces the solemnity and celebration of Juneteenth from its 1865 origins in Galveston, Texas to contemporary observances all over the United States. This is an ode to the strength of Black Americans and a call to remember and honor a holiday whose importance reverberates far beyond the borders of Texas. [2022]

### [A flag for Juneteenth by Kim Taylor.](#)

A Flag for Juneteenth depicts a close-knit community of enslaved African Americans on a plantation in Texas, the day before the announcement is to be made that all enslaved people are free. Young Huldah, who is preparing to celebrate her tenth birthday, can't possibly anticipate how much her life will change that Juneteenth morning.[2022]

### [Jayylen's Juneteenth surprise by Lavaille Lavette](#)

When Jayylen's grandfather, Paw Paw Jimmy, begins preparing for a big Juneteenth celebration, Jayylen has a lot of questions. Most importantly, what is Juneteenth? His mother and Paw Paw Jimmy explain that the holiday marks the anniversary of when enslaved African Americans found out that they were free. Paw Paw Jimmy plays some zydeco for him, which is the type of music they will dance to at the celebration. Jayylen practices every day so that he will be able to play the frottoir. [2023]

### [The Juneteenth story: celebrating the end of slavery in the United States by Alliah L. Agostini](#)

With colorful illustrations and a timeline, this introductory history of Juneteenth for kids details the evolution of the holiday commemorating the date the enslaved people of Texas first learned of their freedom. [2022]

### [Juneteenth is by Natasha Tripplett](#)

This book is an ode to the history of the Black community in the United States, a tribute to Black joy, and a portrait of familial love"-- A girl contemplates what Juneteenth means to her, her family, and her community. [2024]

## **Fiction Books**

### [Come Juneteenth by Ann Rinaldi.](#)

(Young Adult)

Sis Goose is a beloved member of Luli's family, despite the fact that she was born a slave. But the family is harboring a terrible secret. And when Union soldiers arrive on their Texas plantation to announce that slaves have been declared free for nearly two years, Sis Goose is horrified to learn that the people she called family have lied to her for so long. She runs away - but her newly found freedom has tragic consequences.

[Juneteenth : our day of freedom by Sharon Dennis Wyeth](#)

(Lower Elementary)

Learn more about Juneteenth, a holiday that celebrates the end of chattel slavery in the United States in this Step 3 History Reader

[The story of Juneteenth: an interactive history adventure by Steven Offinoski.](#)

(Upper Elementary)

In You Choose format, explores the history of Juneteenth Day, including the Emancipation Proclamation, the post-Civil War South, and efforts to end racism

## **Nonfiction Books**

[Celebrating Juneteenth by Jody Jensen Shaffer](#) (Lower Elementary)

Juneteenth, also called Freedom Day and Emancipation Day, commemorates the ending of slavery in the United States. Readers will discover the history behind the day and find out ways to celebrate on their own. [2022]

[Juneteenth: a first look by Katie Peters](#) (Lower Elementary)

Juneteenth is about being free. Young learners will explore the cultural and historic holiday through engaging text and photos. [2023]

[Juneteenth by Rebecca Sabelko.](#) (Lower Elementary)

This book introduces beginning readers to Juneteenth through simple, predictable text and related photos. [2023]

[Juneteenth J. P. Miller.](#) (Lower Elementary)

In this book, early fluent readers will learn about the history of Juneteenth, including when, where, and who first celebrated Emancipation Day, its meaning, the traditions associated with it, and how African American people around the United States celebrate independence today. Vibrant, full-color photos and carefully leveled text will engage young readers as they learn more about the history behind this important holiday that freed enslaved people. [2024]

[Juneteenth / Sarah Fuentes.](#) (Lower Elementary)

Introduction to Juneteenth that explains the events of June 19th, 1865, and how and why people celebrate on this festive day.[2024]

[The story behind Juneteenth by Jack Reader](#) (Lower Elementary)

In this book, readers are given an in-depth look at the history of Juneteenth, including the events leading up to its creation.[2020]

[Opal Lee and what it means to be free : the true story of the grandmother of Juneteenth by Alice Faye Duncan](#) (Lower Elementary/Everyone)

The true story of Black activist Opal Lee and her vision of Juneteenth as a holiday for everyone will inspire children to be brave and make a difference. Growing up in Texas, Opal knew the history of Juneteenth, but she soon discovered that most Americans had never heard of the holiday that represents the nation's creed of "freedom for all." [2021]

[A kids book about Juneteenth by Garrison Hayes](#) (Lower/Upper Elementary)

Our history echoes with events which, over time, have become hidden, yet are important to all of us. Juneteenth is a celebration which recognizes the end of the enslavement of Black people in America. This book opens a door to understanding our history and celebrating our future--together. [2024]

[Juneteenth by Emily Dolbear](#) (Lower/Upper Elementary)

Learn the basics about Juneteenth, also called Emancipation Day or Freedom Day, and how the holiday celebrates the emancipation of slaves in the United States. [2021]

[Juneteenth / by Lisa A. Crayton.](#) (Upper Elementary)

Juneteenth celebrates the emancipation of enslaved people in the United States. Across the country, people observe the day with speeches, poetry readings, festivals, picnics, street fairs, and family reunions. It is a day for people to come together and continue working toward equality. Readers will discover how a shared holiday can have multiple traditions and be celebrated in all sorts of ways. [2021]

[J is for Juneteenth by Jamariah Cross, Kimani Prince and Ariyah Webster.](#) (Upper Elementary)

J is for Juneteenth was written by three young writers as part of a collaborative youth writing competition hosted by Planting People Growing Justice Leadership Institute. Spelling out the word "Juneteenth" ("J is for Justice, U is for Union Army. . ."), the authors share with readers a thoughtful celebration of the history of Juneteenth. [2024]

[Opal Lee written by Shelia P. Moses](#) (Upper Elementary)

Opal Lee grew up as a Black girl in Texas at a time when Black and white people were kept separate and Black people had fewer opportunities than white people did. She knew that this wasn't right, and she grew up to be a teacher and a community leader, determined to help create a better future for all people. A big part of her work and life was making Juneteenth a national holiday to mark the end of enslavement for Black Americans. She loved this day as both a celebration and as a way of teaching about the past. [2023]

[What is Juneteenth? by Kirsti Jewel](#) (Upper Elementary)

On June 19, 1865, a group of enslaved men, women, and children in Texas gathered around a Union soldier and listened as he read the most remarkable words they would ever hear. They were no longer enslaved: they were free. The inhumane practice of forced labor with no pay was now illegal in all of the United States. This news was cause for celebration, so the group of people jumped in excitement, danced, and wept tears of joy. They did not know it at the time, but their joyous celebration of freedom would become a holiday--Juneteenth--that is observed each year by more and more Americans [2022]

[The history of Juneteenth by Arlisha Norwood, PhD](#) (Upper Elementary/Middle School)

On June 19, 1865, a Union soldier traveled to Texas to tell the enslaved people who lived there that they were free--that slavery was now illegal in every state. The people danced and sang in celebration of their freedom. Today, we pay tribute to this historical day with a special holiday on June 19 called Juneteenth. This colorfully illustrated story takes kids on an exciting journey through all the events that led up to the first Juneteenth, the day itself, and the impact it had on the future of the United States.[2022]

[Juneteenth by Shasta Clinch](#). (Upper Elementary/Middle School)

History of the holiday and how it is celebrated today[2024]

[Juneteenth by Kevin P. Winn, Kelisa Wing](#) (Upper Elementary/Middle School)

The Racial Justice in America: Histories series explores moments and eras in America's history that have been ignored or misrepresented in education due to racial bias. Juneteenth explores the history around the celebration in a comprehensive, honest, and age-appropriate way. [2022]

[The real history of Juneteenth by Elliott Smith](#) (Middle School/High School)

Juneteenth is the celebration of the day enslaved people in Texas were were told they were freed. This book explores Juneteenth's little-told history, from the first Jubilee to the making of a national holiday. [2023]

[The Juneteenth cookbook: recipes and activities for kids and families to celebrate by Alliah L. Agostini with Chef Taffy Elrod](#)

The Juneteenth Cookbook introduces the history of Juneteenth to kids through vibrant recipes, activities, and games drawn from Black American cultural traditions. [2024]