They Changed Their Names and Changed Humanity

From Enslavement to the Foundations of Women's Suffrage

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Date _____ Class _____

Grade 6 interdisciplinary RST | Five day inquiry

NJSLS Social Studies

6.3.8.CivicsPI.4 Investigate how civic and political organizations shape lives.

NJSLS ELA

RI.CR.6.1 Support analysis with textual evidence. W.AW.6.1 Write supported arguments.

CCLS

RH.6-8.1 Cite evidence. RH.6-8.9 Compare sources. WHST.6-8.1 Write arguments.

Interdisciplinary connections

CCSS 6.RP.A.3 Use ratios and percentages. NGSS MS-ETS1-1 Define a design problem with criteria and constraints.

Amistad alignment

Examine African American agency, resistance, institutions, and contributions to democracy.

Essential question

How did Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman turn their journeys toward freedom into leadership for human dignity and women's political rights?

Read each passage, complete the Do Now and Quick Write, compare sources, show calculations, and write a RACE argument. Use source letters and day numbers as evidence.

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Day 1 Names, personhood, and self determination

Do Now

What is the difference between choosing a name and gaining a legal right?

Inquiry introduction Names in historical context

Isabella Baumfree became Sojourner Truth. Araminta Ross became Harriet Tubman. Both were born enslaved and became powerful public actors. Their chosen names belong within larger histories of decisions, work, resistance, and community support.

Truth adopted her new name in 1843, years after she left enslavement. Tubman adopted Harriet around her 1844 marriage to John Tubman, before her escape in 1849. Changing a name and gaining freedom were therefore different events. A name could express identity or purpose, but it did not by itself remove an enslaver's claim or create voting rights. Sources A, B, and C establish this chronology.

The claim that they changed humanity invites investigation. What actions changed other people's opportunities? Which institutions did they challenge? What evidence shows influence? Their public work helps answer those questions without reducing either woman to a symbol alone.

Civics lens Agency and recognition

Agency means making choices and acting within real constraints. Enslavement imposed legal and physical restrictions on human beings; it did not erase their personhood. Recognizing agency means studying planning, resistance, family commitments, and collective action. It does not mean blaming people who could not escape or suggesting that every person faced the same choices.

Quick Write

Explain why the two name changes should not be treated as the dates when the women became free. Use the chronology.

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