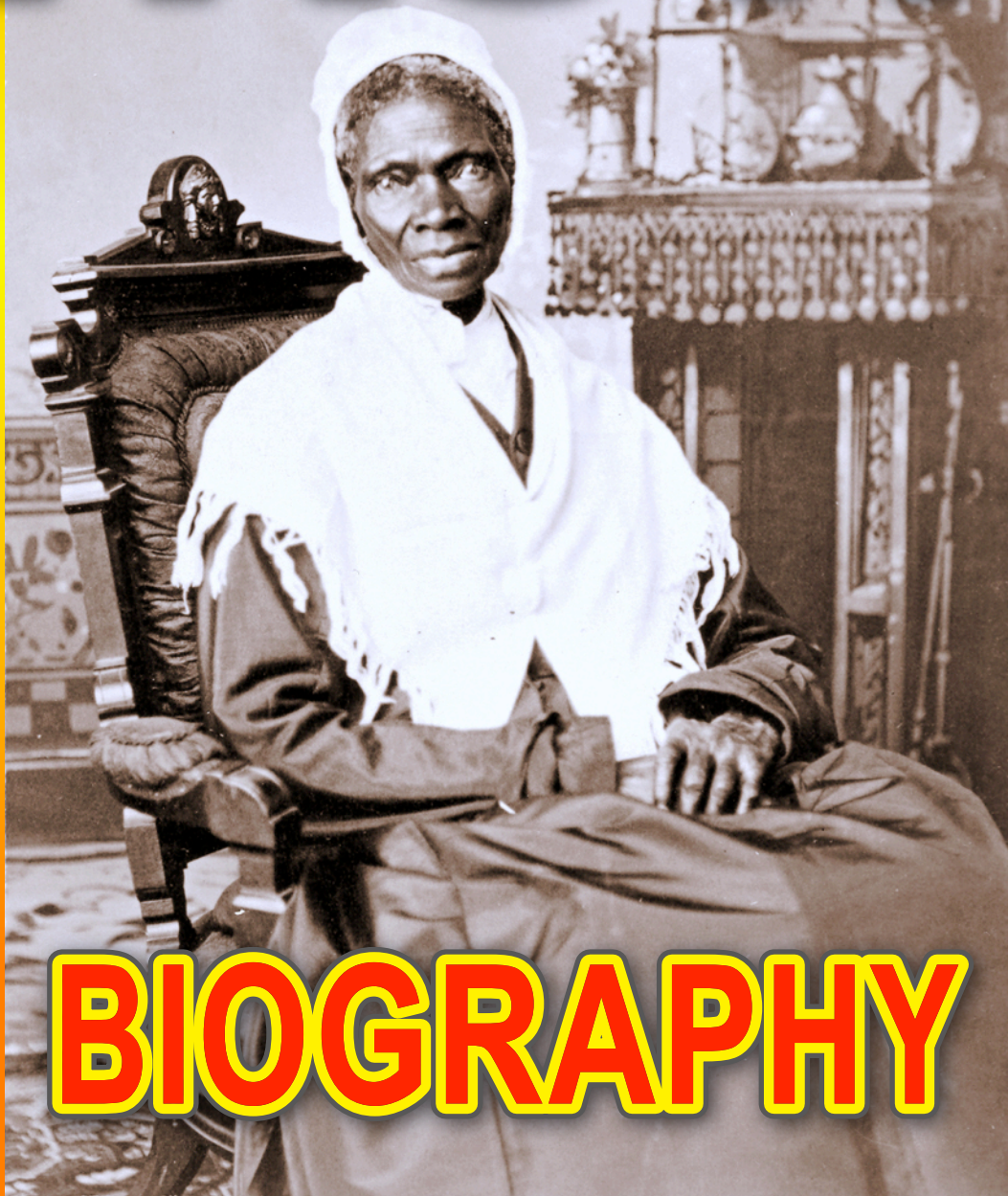


# SOJOURNER TRUTH



## BIOGRAPHY

# SOJOURNER TRUTH

Around the turn of the nineteenth century, Sojourner Truth was born a slave in New York state. She was originally called Isabella Baumfree, and the first family who owned her were Dutch-speaking. She was later sold to other owners who were English-speaking, and she learned English by being around them.

When she was older, Truth had two daughters and a son. In 1826, Truth escaped from slavery with one of her daughters. This was less than a year before all slaves in New York state were freed by law. It was then also against the law to sell people from New York to another state where slavery was still allowed. This did not stop Truth's son being illegally sold to a slave owner in Alabama. When Truth found out about it, she went to court. She won the case, and had her son returned. It was unusual at the time for a black woman to win against a white slave-owner in court.

In the 1840s, Truth spent time in Massachusetts. She became a devout Christian, and supported causes like women's rights and the abolition of slavery across America. She worked with other abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass. After publishing a memoir about her experiences in slavery, Truth began speaking in public all over the country. She was soon well-known for her powerful speeches, and engaging speaking style.

One of her most famous speeches about equal rights for black people and women was given at the Ohio Women's Rights Convention in May 1851. During the Civil War, Truth encouraged black men to join the Union Army, and her grandson signed up in Massachusetts.

Later on, Truth settled in Battle Creek, Michigan. She continued to use her powerful public-speaking skills to promote equal rights. In Michigan, she pushed for better conditions in prisons too. She died in 1883, and is buried at the Oak Hill Cemetery in Battle Creek.

# Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'freed'.

b From that sentence, suggest what 'freed' means.

c Write a new sentence using the word 'freed'.

d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'freed'.

e Draw a small picture showing what you think 'freed' means.

# Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

Key word	Synonym (similar word)
Example: escaped	fled

# Sequencing

Sequencing means getting the events in the right order. Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense.

In the 1840s, Sojourner took up causes like equal rights, and the abolition of slavery.

One of Truth's most famous speeches was given in Ohio in 1851.

In 1826, Truth escaped from slavery with one of her children.

After publishing her memoir about slavery, Truth started speaking in public.

Then Truth found out that her son had been illegally sold, so she went to court to have him returned.

Sojourner Truth was born a slave in New York state.

During the Civil War, Truth helped the Union side.



# Get to the facts

1 What was Sojourner Truth originally called?

2 When did Truth escape from slavery?

3 What did Truth do after publishing her memoir?

4 When did Truth speak in Ohio?

5 What did Truth do during the Civil War?

# Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.

## Hear Sojourner Truth speak!

Imagine Sojourner Truth was coming to speak in your town in the mid 1800s. Write a poster advertising the event.

**Below is a plain text version for printing:**

## Understanding words:

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- b From that sentence, suggest what 'freed' means.
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## Finding key words:

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym).

For example:

Key word – escaped                      Synonym – fled

## Sequencing:

Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense:

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One of Truth's most famous speeches was given in Ohio in 1851.

In 1826, Truth escaped from slavery with one of her children.

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