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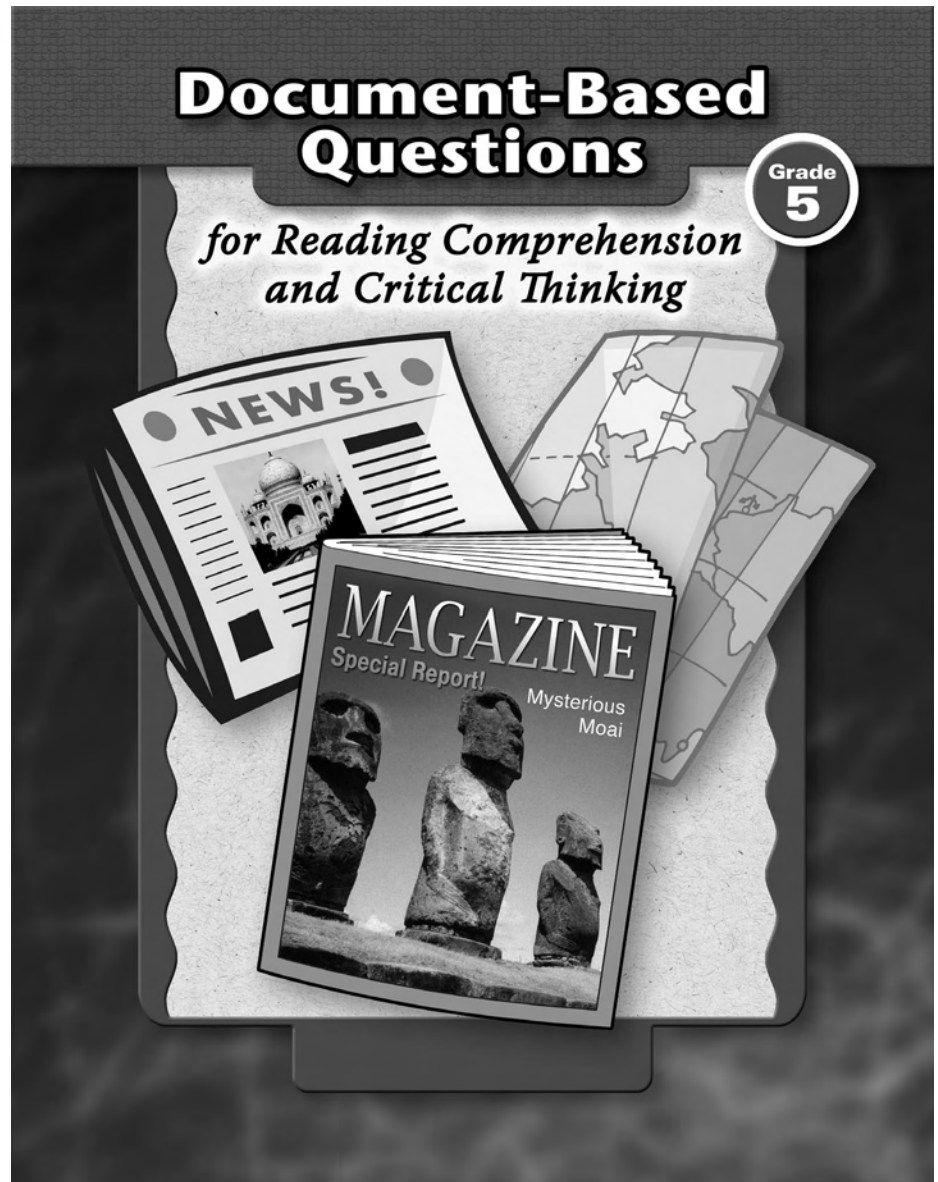
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# The Female Moses

Born a slave on a Maryland plantation around 1820, Harriet Tubman was the sixth of 11 children. Her family lived in a one-room hut with a dirt floor and no windows. By the time she turned five, she worked in the fields. At the age of eight she cared for a white infant 24 hours a day.

Harriet discovered how brave she could be as a young teen. She saw a slave running from his owner. Runaway slaves who were caught were beaten, sometimes to death. To give him time to escape, Harriet stepped between them. The angry master threw a flat iron. It hit her in the head and almost killed her. From then on, Harriet decided that she would one day be free.

In 1844 Harriet married John Tubman, a free man, and told him of her desire to be free. He told her to forget about it. And when she told him about her plans to run away, he said he would tell her owner! One night in 1849 she did escape with three of her brothers, but the men were terrified. All four turned back. Two nights later she escaped alone to the home of a white woman who had offered her help. The woman was a member of the Underground Railroad. This was a secret network of people who helped escaping slaves reach the north. To avoid capture, Harriet hid at their homes or in barns during the day. She traveled only at night until she reached Pennsylvania.

Over the next ten years she returned 19 times to lead more than 300 slaves on the Underground Railroad. Posters offering money for her capture dead or alive appeared all over the South, but nobody caught her. She cleverly disguised herself as a man or an elderly woman.

Running away was a terrifying experience. Sometimes the people had to hide in swamps that had alligators and poisonous snakes. But once slaves started north, Harriet would not let them go back. She knew that under torture they might give up information about the Underground Railroad. That would ruin the escape route. If a runaway wanted to turn back, Harriet would point a gun at the person and say, "Go on or die." Fortunately, she never had to pull the trigger, and she never lost a single person to slave catchers. People called her Moses because she led her people out of slavery.

During the Civil War, Harriet served as a nurse and a spy for the Union Army. All the slaves were set free at the end of the war. She went to Auburn, New York. There she opened a home for sick, poor, or homeless blacks. She also worked for women's right to vote. When she was about 90 years old, she died in her sleep.





# The Female Moses

1. How did Harriet get a head injury?
  - a. She was hit in the head with a flat iron.
  - b. Her master beat her after she was caught escaping.
  - c. She was in a battle while serving as a Union spy during the Civil War.
  - d. A slave catcher attacked her.
2. The Underground Railroad was
  - a. the main rail line connecting the North and the South.
  - b. a secret escape route for slaves.
  - c. a group of people who kidnapped others and sold them into slavery.
  - d. a group of people who kidnapped slaves and then smuggled them to safety.
3. What did Harriet demonstrate over and over again?
  - a. joy
  - b. anger
  - c. courage
  - d. sorrow
4. Harriet spent the last years of her life in New York state. True or False? Explain.

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5. What was the amount of money offered for Harriet's capture and why was the sum so large?

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6. Did Harriet do the right thing by threatening to kill any runaways who wanted to turn back? Defend your stance.

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