



Looking for Lincoln's Views on Slavery

GRADE LEVEL

Grades 5-8

TIME ALLOTMENT

Two 45-minute class periods

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students will examine Abraham Lincoln's views on slavery and race, which evolved both throughout his early life and throughout his presidency. The lesson will begin with students examining how aspects of American society and life have changed over the course of their lifetimes, as well as the reasons for change in their own personal lives. Students will then review how Lincoln's stance on slavery shifted over the course of his political career. Through an examination of historical quotations and primary source documents, students will learn that the Emancipation Proclamation was the result of a complex and sometimes contradictory interplay of circumstances – some political, some personal, and some societal. Students will view segments from the PBS film *Looking for Lincoln*, read and analyze quotations from different historical figures on slavery and race, and utilize an online timeline interactive, before creating a position paper outlining a response to a historian's perspective on Lincoln and slavery. This lesson is best used before, during, or following a unit on the American Civil War. Students should have a basic familiarity with Lincoln's presidency and the Emancipation Proclamation prior to embarking on this lesson.

SUBJECT MATTER

Social Studies; U.S. History

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Articulate causes of change at the personal and societal level;
- Summarize Lincoln's changing views on slavery and race;
- Analyze historical quotations and appreciate historical perspectives;
- Synthesize a response to a historian's perspective addressing Abraham Lincoln's changing views on slavery.

STANDARDS

History Standards for Grades 5-12

Historical Thinking Standards



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Standard 1: Chronological Thinking

- E. Interpret data presented in time lines and create time lines.
- F. Reconstruct patterns of historical succession and duration; explain historical continuity and change.

Standard 2: Historical Comprehension

- B. Reconstruct the literal meaning of a historical passage.
- F. Appreciate historical perspectives.

Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation

- A. Compare and contrast differing sets of ideas.
- B. Consider multiple perspectives.
- C. Analyze cause-and-effect relationships and multiple causation, including (a) the importance of the individual in history; (b) the influence of ideas, human interests, and beliefs.
- F. Compare competing historical narratives.

Standard 5: Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-Making

- A. Identify issues and problems in the past.
- E. Formulate a position or course of action on an issue.

United States History Standards

Era 5

Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877)

STANDARD 1: The causes of the Civil War

Standard 1A: The student understands how the North and South differed and how politics and ideologies led to the Civil War.

- Explain the causes of the Civil War and evaluate the importance of slavery as a principal cause of the conflict. [Compare competing historical narratives]

STANDARD 2: The course and character of the Civil War and its effects on the American people.

Standard 2A: The student understands how the resources of the Union and Confederacy affected the course of the war.

- Identify the turning points of the war and evaluate how political, military, and diplomatic leadership affected the outcome of the conflict. [Assess the importance of the individual in history]
- Evaluate provisions of the Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln's reasons for issuing it, and its significance. [Examine the influence of ideas]





MEDIA COMPONENTS

Looking for Lincoln, selected segments

Clip 1: Lincoln's views on slavery early in his presidency.

Clip 2: Lincoln's views on racial equality.

Clip 3: Strategic and moral arguments for emancipation.

Clip 4: Lincoln's capacity for growth.

Web sites:

The Life of Lincoln Interactive Timeline

[<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/lookingforlincoln/interactives/timeline/timeline-lincoln-over-time/260/>]

This interactive timeline game challenges students to place Lincoln images, documents, and quotations into the correct chronological order.

MATERIALS

For the class:

- Computers with internet access
- Computer, Projection screen, and speakers (for class viewing of online/downloaded video segments)
- "Who Said It?" Answer Key
- "Looking for Lincoln's Views on Slavery" Video Organizer Answer Key

For each pair of students:

- "Who Said It?" Student Organizer

For each student:

- "Looking for Lincoln's Views on Slavery" Video Organizer

PREP FOR TEACHERS

Prior to teaching this lesson, you will need to:

Preview all of the video segments and the Web site used in the lesson.

Download the video clips used in the lesson to your classroom computer, or prepare to watch them using your classroom's Internet connection.



Learn more at <http://www.pbs.org/lookingforlincoln>



Bookmark the Web site used in the lesson on each computer in your classroom. Using a social bookmarking tool such as del.icio.us or diigo (or an online bookmarking utility such as portaportal) will allow you to organize all the links in a central location.

Print out and make copies of the “Who Said It?” Student Organizer for each pair of students, and the “Looking for Lincoln’s Views on Slavery” Video Organizer for each student.

Familiarize yourself with the “Life of Lincoln” interactive timeline activity, which you will be leading for the class in Learning Activity 3.

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

- 1) Ask the class to think about the past year, and how life in the United States has changed over the past 12 months. Get the students to describe changes in the U.S. economy, politics, music, technology, or other areas of change. You may want to record students’ responses on the board.
- 2) Review the list the class developed of changes that occurred over the last 12 months. Next, the students will think about how things have changed over the course of their entire lifetimes.
- 3) Divide the students into five groups. Assign one of the following topics to each group:
 - Clothing and hairstyles
 - Foods you enjoy
 - Ways of communicating (such as the Internet and telephones)
 - Language and Popular Expressions
 - Favorite music
- 4) Ask each group to jot down ideas about how their specific topic has *changed* or *evolved* over the course of their lifetimes. How are things different now than they were earlier in their lives? Does anything from the past seem funny or strange now, and if so, what? Ask students to come up with as many specific examples as possible.
- 5) Ask each group to report out on the changes and developments for their topic. Encourage the other groups to share additional ideas for each topic. After each group has reported out, turn the discussion to an examination of why these changes occurred. For example, were they the result of improving technology, trends taking off from movies and TV shows, the students’ growing older, the influence of advertising, or something else?
- 6) Now the students will think specifically about changes in their own lives. Each student will consider how he or she has changed as an individual from the person they were five years ago, especially in terms of preferences, attitudes, and opinions. Ask each student to



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write down several sentences reflecting on how they have personally changed in the last five years.

7) When everyone is done writing, ask a few students to share their responses. Also ask these students, and the class, to discuss some of the reasons the changes may have occurred. You may also want to share some of the changes you have experienced over the course of the last 5 years or your entire life.

8) Explain that, as this activity demonstrates, people's opinions, viewpoints, positions, and preferences commonly evolve and change over time. In the next activities, the students will examine how an individual's evolving viewpoints influenced American history.

LEARNING ACTIVITY 1

1) Have the class brainstorm what they know about Abraham Lincoln. For what is he remembered? What do they know about his life? You may wish to record class responses on the board.

2) Ask the class to decide which of Lincoln's actions or decisions have had the most enduring impact on American history? Guide your students to realize that two of Lincoln's most significant contributions to American history are a) the abolition of slavery and b) the saving of the Union.

3) Review the major events and activities pertaining to the abolition of slavery during Lincoln's lifetime - specifically highlighting the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 and the subsequent passage of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution (signed by Lincoln in 1865).

4) During Lincoln's lifetime, there were numerous different viewpoints and attitudes toward slavery. There were many critics of slavery's abolition. The students will next examine a variety of historical quotations from Lincoln and others who lived at the same time, illustrating a wide variety of perspectives.

5) Divide the students into pairs. Distribute the "Who Said It?" Student Organizer to each pair. Ask the students to identify the speaker of each quote. Some individuals may be associated with more than one quote. This is not a quiz and students will not be graded, however, they should use the information and clues presented in the quotes, as well as their knowledge of history, to make their best guess as to each quote's speaker or writer.

6) Once the students have completed the organizer, review each quote one at a time. Poll the class on their guesses for the speaker/writer of each quote and record the most popular answer on the board. Once you've tallied all the student answers, reveal the actual speakers and writers, from the provided Answer Key. Ask the students if there





were any surprises, and point out some of the unexpected associations (*Confederate leaders who spoke against slavery, racism in the quotes by abolitionists, and Lincoln's varied and conflicting viewpoints on slavery and race*).

7) Ask the students to circle all the quotes from Abraham Lincoln. Do all these quotations agree with each other? Gather student opinions on why the quotes might be so different. The students will next view video segments from the PBS film *Looking for Lincoln* to determine how Lincoln's views on slavery evolved over the course of his lifetime.

LEARNING ACTIVITY 2

- 1) Distribute the "Looking for Lincoln's Views on Slavery Video Organizer" to each student. Frame the upcoming video segments by explaining they show Lincoln's changing views on slavery.
- 2) Provide your students with a FOCUS FOR MEDIA INTERACTION, asking them to watch each video segment, note facts they learn about Lincoln's views on slavery in the second column of their organizer, and write a complete-sentence summary of Lincoln's viewpoint as expressed in each video segment in the third column.
- 3) Play Video Segment #1, "Early Views," for your students. After the segment, give your students a few minutes to complete section 1 of the organizer. Ask your students what facts they learned about Lincoln's views on slavery early in his administration (*refer to the "Looking for Lincoln's Views on Slavery Video Organizer Answer Key" for possible student answers*).
- 4) Frame the second segment: since his death, Lincoln has served a symbolic role in American history as the liberator of slaves. As we saw in the first video segment, Lincoln's views on slavery were a bit more complex, and subject to changing interpretations over the years. In this segment, the students will see how different African Americans have regarded Lincoln's attitudes towards slavery and race.
- 5) Remind students to complete section 2 of the organizer as they watch the segment. Play Video Segment #2, "White Supremacist?" for your students. After giving your students a few minutes, review their answers.
- 6) Ask students why Lincoln might have changed his views on ending slavery. What do they think was the decisive factor in the creation of the Emancipation Proclamation? Play Video Segment #3, "The Road to Emancipation." After the segment has finished, give your students a few minutes to complete section 3.
- 7) Explain to the students that between 1862-1865, Lincoln's views on slavery and race had greatly changed. Play Video Segment #4, "Growth and Change." After the segment has finished, allow your students to complete section 4 of the organizer.





- 8) As a follow-up to the viewing of the video segments, review with your students what they've learned about Lincoln's changing views on slavery and race. Ask your students if they think it is better to maintain one viewpoint or perspective, or to allow your viewpoints and perspectives to change and grow as you gain experience and knowledge. Remind students that recent politicians have been referred to as "flip floppers" when they change their opinions on key topics. Would Lincoln be viewed as a "flip flopper" if he was alive today? Why or why not? How has learning about Lincoln's changing views on slavery influenced your ideas about politicians who change their minds or shift their viewpoints?

LEARNING ACTIVITY 3

1) Project the "[Lincoln Over Time](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/lookingforlincoln/interactives/timeline/timeline-lincoln-over-time/260/)" [timeline interactive](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/lookingforlincoln/interactives/timeline/timeline-lincoln-over-time/260/) [http://www.pbs.org/wnet/lookingforlincoln/interactives/timeline/timeline-lincoln-over-time/260/]. Provide the students with a focus: based on their knowledge so far, the class will try to place six different quotations Lincoln made about race and slavery in the correct chronological order. As a class, go through the "Lincoln's Views on Slavery" section of the interactive. Point out to students that Lincoln's views did not progress in a clear evolution towards emancipation – his progression toward freeing the slaves took many twists and turns.

2) Once the "Lincoln's Views on Slavery" section has been completed, direct the students to computers, where they will complete the other sections of the timeline in small groups. Provide them with a focus, asking them to think about how Lincoln changed physically, professionally, and morally during his lifetime.

3) Once everyone has completed all sections of the timeline, hold a discussion in class about some of the changes Lincoln underwent in his lifetime – professionally, physically, and morally.

CULMINATING ACTIVITY

- 1) Write the following two quotations on the board:
- "You can't defend Abraham Lincoln without defending slavery." – Lerone Bennett
 - "Remembering is always about some degree of forgetting... The task is to keep reminding ourselves what is worth remembering." – David Blight
- 2) Remind the students that these are statements made by two historians featured in LOOKING FOR LINCOLN (both are drawn from Segment 2, "White Supremacist?"). Ask the students what they think each historian meant in his statement (*Lerone Bennett is disillusioned with the vision of Lincoln as the "Great Emancipator," and feels that Lincoln's views on racial inequality and his inactivity during the abolitionist period should be remembered. David Blight's statement acknowledges the conflicting views Lincoln held on the slavery issue, but suggests*





that his early views might not be as important a legacy as his later actions to free the slaves).

- 3) Assign your students the following task:
- Choose one of the two quotations on the board around which to frame a position paper. Using your chosen quote as a frame, write a 1-2 page essay supporting a position on how Abraham Lincoln's views on slavery should be remembered today.
 - In your essay, be sure to include a comprehensive discussion of Lincoln's changing and conflicting views on slavery. Incorporate a minimum of *three* concrete examples supporting your position, such as quotations made by Lincoln (from the "Who said it" or timeline activities), events during Lincoln's lifetime (from the timeline or video segments), and/or other facts about Lincoln you have learned from the activities completed in this lesson.
- 4) If desired, you may direct students to conduct further research into Lincoln's views on slavery prior to completing their assignment. Two useful sources of documents pertaining to Lincoln and slavery are below.

Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/alhtml/malhome.html>

[Note – entering terms such as “free slave” into the keyword will help refine the students' search]

Teaching American History Document Library – Lincoln Collection
<http://www.teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?subcategory=4>

- 5) Collect the students' position papers for an assessment of the lesson.



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Looking for Lincoln's Views on Slavery - Video Organizer

Complete Column 2 as you watch each segment. Once the segment is over, complete the third column, summarizing Lincoln's viewpoint on slavery during that segment.

Video Segment	What You Learned About Lincoln and Slavery	Summarize this segment in 1-2 complete sentences
1. Early Views		
2. White Supremacist?		
3. The Road to Emancipation		
4. Growth and Change		



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LOOKING FOR LINCOLN



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WITH DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN

Looking for Lincoln's Views on Slavery - Video Organizer Answer Key

Complete Column 2 as you watch each segment. Once the segment is over, complete the third column, summarizing Lincoln's viewpoint on slavery during that segment.

Video Segment	What You Learned About Lincoln and Slavery	Summarize this segment in 1-2 complete sentences
1. Early Views	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The idea that the Emancipation Proclamation immediately freed slaves across the South is nonsense. Frederick Douglass, an abolitionist openly criticized Lincoln, calling him a "slave catcher" and "slave hound." The Lincoln administration returned fugitive slaves to the South and did not want to make war over slavery. Lincoln supported paying slave owners for the slaves, and voluntary emigration of slaves to Panama or Liberia. 	<p>Potential summary sentence: At the beginning of his presidency, Abraham Lincoln returned fugitive slaves to their owners, and he did not want war with the South over slavery. He supported a plan of voluntary emigration of freed slaves to Panama or Liberia.</p>
2. White Supremacist?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lincoln did not think blacks should vote, sit on juries, or hold public office. Stubbornly supported colonization. Lincoln could not imagine making the freed slaves politically or socially equal to whites. During the three decades from 1830-1860, though there was a vigorous abolitionist movement, Lincoln did nothing to end slavery. 	<p>Potential summary sentence: Lincoln did not believe in the equality of the races, and was largely inactive during the height of the abolitionist movement.</p>
3. The Road to Emancipation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The poor progress of the war influenced Lincoln's views of slavery. Lincoln realized that he couldn't win the war without destroying slavery, a key asset in the South's economy. He feared that emancipation would lead Union soldiers to desert the army. Upon issuing the Emancipation Proclamation, he felt he was doing right, and his "whole soul [was] in it." The Proclamation only freed slaves in rebelling states. It did not free all the slaves. 	<p>Potential summary sentence: The Emancipation Proclamation was partially a strategic political and military move in the midst of the Civil War, but it also illustrated Lincoln's changing views on the morality of slavery.</p>
4. Growth and Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frederick Douglass grew to appreciate Lincoln's growth and change on the issues of slavery and race. He said, "when he could no longer withstand the current, he swam with it." Lincoln changed dramatically between the outbreak of the war and his assassination. By the time of his death, he thought about slavery and the war very differently. It's unknown how Lincoln would have impacted American history further if he lived. Following Lincoln's death, progress for black Americans came to a standstill after Reconstruction. 	<p>Potential summary sentence: Lincoln let experience shape his views, and showed great personal growth during his presidency, especially regarding the topics of slavery and race.</p>



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Who Said It? Student Organizer

Make your best guess as to who said each of the quotations below, choosing from the possible speakers at the bottom of the page. Some names may be used more than once.

Quotations	Who Said It?
1. "The white man's happiness cannot be purchased by the black man's misery."	
2. "I am rejoiced that slavery is abolished."	
3. "Free them, and make them politically and socially our equals? My own feelings will not admit to this."	
4. "[W]here two races of different origin, and distinguished by color, and other physical differences, as well as intellectual, are brought together, the relation now existing in the slaveholding States between the two, is, instead of an evil, a good—a positive good."	
5. "I have no purpose...to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists."	
6. "[I]f it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life, for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children, and with the blood of millions in this slave country whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments – I say let it be done."	
7. "If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong."	
8. "If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it..."	
9. "The African race evidently are made to excel in that department which lies between the sensuousness and the intellectual...these require rich and abundant animal nature such as they possess."	
10. "Whenever I hear anyone arguing for slavery, I feel a strong impulse to see it tried on him personally."	

Possible Speakers



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Abraham Lincoln

16th President of the United States, Writer of the Emancipation Proclamation

Jefferson Davis

President, Confederate States of America, 1861-1865

Frederick Douglass

Former slave, prominent Abolitionist

Harriet Tubman

Conductor on the Underground Railroad

Robert E. Lee

General, Confederate States of America

Ulysses S. Grant

United States Civil War General and 18th President of the United States

Harriet Beecher Stowe

Abolitionist and author of Uncle Tom's Cabin

Susan B. Anthony

Women's rights advocate

John C. Calhoun

United States Senator from South Carolina, 1832-1843

John Brown

Abolitionist, leader of an anti-slavery revolt



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Who Said It?
Student Organizer ANSWER KEY

Make your best guess as to who said each of the quotations below, choosing from the possible speakers at the bottom of the page. Some names may be used more than once.

Quotations	Who Said It?
1. "The white man's happiness cannot be purchased by the black man's misery."	Frederick Douglass
2. "I am rejoiced that slavery is abolished."	Robert E. Lee
3. "Free them, and make them politically and socially our equals? My own feelings will not admit to this."	Abraham Lincoln
4. "[W]here two races of different origin, and distinguished by color, and other physical differences, as well as intellectual, are brought together, the relation now existing in the slaveholding States between the two, is, instead of an evil, a good—a positive good."	John C. Calhoun
5. "I have no purpose...to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists."	Abraham Lincoln
6. "[I]f it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life, for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children, and with the blood of millions in this slave country whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments — I say let it be done."	John Brown
7. "If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong."	Abraham Lincoln
8. "If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it..."	Abraham Lincoln
9. "The African race evidently are made to excel in that department which lies between the sensuousness and the intellectual...these require rich and abundant animal nature such as they possess."	Harriet Beecher Stowe
10. "Whenever I hear anyone arguing for slavery, I feel a strong impulse to see it tried on him personally."	Abraham Lincoln

Possible Speakers:





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