

# LESSON 2: VIEWPOINTS LINCOLN, SLAVERY, & RACE

GRADE LEVEL: 7-12

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Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum

## Objectives

- Examine primary sources to determine multiple viewpoints.
- Look at historical context to understand multiple points of view.
- Increase understanding of the influence of race on society, culture and politics in the antebellum era.
- Synthesize source materials to arrive at conclusions about the past.

## INTRODUCTION

Slavery played a prominent role in America's political, social, and economic history in the period leading up to the Civil War. Slavery impacted every discussion from the future of the nation's economy to Western expansion and the admission of new states into the Union. The public discourse in the first half of the nineteenth century exposed the nation's conflicting ideas about slavery and race. Politicians were increasingly pressured to make their opinions known, and Abraham Lincoln was no exception. In this lesson, students will explore multiple viewpoints on the issues of slavery and race through the examination of primary sources in order to better understand the historical context of the times and to increase awareness of the impact of race on people living in the antebellum era.



## PROCEDURE

### Part 1: Human Graph

1. Identify 2 areas of the classroom with the following signs: "I Strongly Agree" and "I Strongly Disagree."
2. Ask students to "Take A Stand" in the appropriate area in response to the statements below. Discuss why students stood where they stood in response to each statement.
  - Abraham Lincoln believed in equality among blacks and whites.
  - The relationship between slave and master was one of fear and hate.
  - Abraham Lincoln's goal in the Civil War was to free slaves.
  - Slaves who had the chance to run away did.
  - Abolitionists were radicals.
  - Lincoln was an abolitionist.

### Part 2: Viewpoints

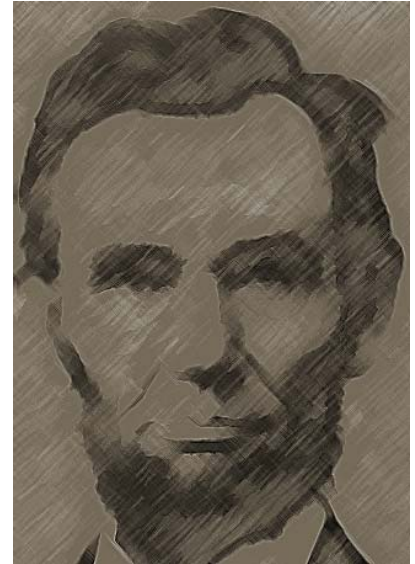
1. Divide the class into four groups and assign the following identities to each group: Abraham Lincoln, slave

holders, slaves, and abolitionists.

2. Provide each group with the corresponding primary sources.
3. Have each student analyze a primary source using the "Viewpoints Primary Source Analysis Worksheet."
4. Working in their groups, have students discuss their findings with each other.
5. Based upon their discussions have each group write a "text-book" paragraph on the identity they represent and their assigned view point on the issues of slavery and race. For example, "Abraham Lincoln believed that slavery was wrong, but didn't agree that blacks were equal to whites. In fact he encouraged colonization."

### Part 3: Class Discussion

1. Have each group present their "text book" account of the viewpoints of slaves, slave holders, Lincoln and abolitionists. Consider the following in your class discussion.

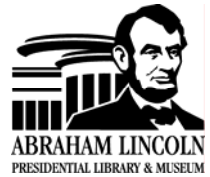


- Did your sources present multiple viewpoints? What were they? Was this surprising? Why or why not?
- Was it difficult to reconcile these viewpoints?
- How did the viewpoints expressed differ from your own ideas about how people in the past felt or behaved?
- Does the past seem more complex? Explain.

### Part 4: Repeat Human Graph

## Materials

- Viewpoints folders of primary documents found on this CD
  - Abraham Lincoln
  - Abolitionists
  - Slaves
  - Slave Holders
- "Viewpoints Primary Analysis Worksheet" (in this lesson plan)

**LESSON 2: VIEWPOINTS****VIEWPOINTS PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS SHEET****Step 1: First Impressions**

*Examine your primary source. If it is a document, read it over once. If it is a photo hold it and look it over. Record your thoughts as they come to you, no matter how simple or strange they may seem. Say what's on your mind. Don't try to defend or justify your thoughts. Don't worry about complete sentences.*

**Thought #1** \_\_\_\_\_

**Thought # 2** \_\_\_\_\_

**Thought # 3** \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 2: Identify Vocabulary**

*Reexamine your primary source. Identify unfamiliar words, terms you don't understand, or names you don't recognize. Record them below.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 3: Explain Content**

*Ask yourself "What is this primary source telling me?" List 3 important points this source makes.*

**Point # 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Point # 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Point # 3:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 4: Ask Questions**

*Identify at least three questions this primary source raises in your mind.*

**Question #1:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Question #2:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Question #3:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 5: Final Impressions**

*How does this primary source make you feel? Does it challenge prior thoughts you may have had? Does it clarify your opinion or confuse it? Record your final impressions below.*

**Step 6: Take A Stand**

*Based on your analysis of this source write a definitive statement about the group or individual whose viewpoint you are analyzing (slaves, Lincoln, abolitionists, slaveholders).*