



A Nation Drifts Apart

Summary

Tour the Home and neighborhood where Abraham Lincoln lived in the 1850s. During this 45 minute program discuss the issues leading to the opposing positions Mr. Lincoln and Senator Stephen A. Douglas held on slavery during the 1858 U.S. Senate race.

Objectives

The students will be able to:

1. Identify two differences between the economy and the population of the North and South in the 1850s.
2. Compare and contrast the views of Mr. Lincoln and Senator Douglas as they debated in 1858 over whether new states should join the Union as free or slave states.
3. Identify and explain the main issue that divided the country in the 1850s.
4. Define vocabulary terms.
5. Identify and state the mission of the Lincoln Home National Historic Site.



What to Expect During Your Field Trip

1. Your group must arrive at the Lincoln Home parking lot 10 minutes before the scheduled program time.
2. This 45 minute program includes an interpretive tour of the Lincoln Home and Neighborhood, plus a lesson taught by a National Park Service Ranger.
3. Teachers and chaperones are expected to assist the Ranger with activities and control of students.

Setting: The Lincoln Home National Historic Site is a four-square block area in downtown Springfield with period homes that were occupied by Abraham Lincoln's neighbors. Two houses contain self-guided exhibits. The Lincoln home must be toured with a Park Ranger. The Lincoln home and the houses with exhibits are wheelchair accessible.

Grade: 4th and 5th grade students and organized groups with primarily 10 and 11 year olds.

Ratio of Students to Ranger: 17 to 1 for tours of the Lincoln Home. Please provide one adult chaperone for every seventeen students.

Safety Issues: Uneven, slippery (when wet) wooden boardwalks, steep stairs in the Lincoln Home and Education Center, and seasonal excessive heat or cold. Please contact the park if your class has any special needs or accommodations.

For More Information: See the parks's website at www.nps.gov/liho or call 217-492-4241.



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Themes:

In the middle 1850s the United States was one country divided into two parts: the North and the South. Their different philosophies about slavery caused serious conflicts which, in 1861, set off a civil war.

Specifically, this lesson will connect the 1850s political events to Mr. Lincoln's life and values.

Lincoln believed everyone should have the opportunity to improve their lives and have the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

People today, as they have since the time of Abraham Lincoln's death, visit his house as a place to memorialize his life, seek meaning from his struggles and achievements, and find inspiration for their own lives.

Purpose:

Interpreters will present this program using techniques, activities, and materials specially designed to meet the needs of the fifth grade curriculum and standards while furthering the mission of the Lincoln Home National Historic Site. The mission of the Lincoln Home National Historic Site is to preserve Mr. Lincoln's home and neighborhood for future generations to enjoy. This program meets the below Illinois learning standards.

5th grade-Social Studies

16D2 Describes the influence of key individuals in the historical eras of Illinois and the United States.

16D3 Describe the conflict between North and South over the spread of slavery.

5th grade-Language Arts

3B2a Generate and organize ideas in written form.

Objectives:

At the completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Identify two differences between the economy and the population of the North and South in the 1850s. (The North had more industry with more people working in factories while the South had large plantations and farms with more people living in small towns and working on the farms and plantations.)



Objectives: (Continued)

2. Compare and contrast the views of Mr. Lincoln and Senator Stephen A. Douglas expressed during their 1858 debates. (Lincoln thought all new states joining the U.S. should enter as free states, while Douglas thought the new states should vote whether to be free or slave.)
3. Identify slavery as the issue dividing the country, while the Lincolns lived in their home in Springfield. (Many Southerners thought slavery was legal and necessary for their way of life. Many Northerners thought slavery was morally wrong and no person should own another person.)
4. Explain and identify the following terms and names:
 - Popular Sovereignty
 - Senator Stephen A. Douglas
 - The U. S. Constitution
 - The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
5. Identify Lincoln Home National Historic Site in Springfield as a National Park that exists to preserve Mr. Lincoln's home for future generations to enjoy.

Pre-Program Classroom Activities:

Students will read pages 464-467 of the Scott-Foresman fifth grade social studies text, *The United States* or similar social studies text. This includes a section on the mood of the country in the late 1850s. Students will also read the background information in the Attachment and fill out its accompanying table to compare and contrast the beliefs of Lincoln and Douglas about the spread of slavery to new states. Discuss the students' answers. Explain the meaning and impact of the Dred Scott decision and Kansas-Nebraska Act on free men and slaves.

Student Activities:

The below are examples of activities that can be used and modified by teachers, educators, and park rangers to meet student needs and teacher goals. They will introduce the program's themes and Lincoln Home National Historic Site. These activities can be done in the classroom or at Lincoln Home.

Activity #1:

Introductory Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag Activity

Students will stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, which was written in 1892 for students to cite during the commemoration of the 400th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of America. Have a visual of the pledge for all students to see. Ask the students to identify and explain the meaning of the words "indivisible" and "with liberty and justice for all." Ask if these words described America in 1855. During this activity, explain the following terms: The U. S. Constitution and The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.



Activity #2:

For on-site programs, Lincoln Home Tour

A Park Ranger will take the students on a tour of the only home Lincoln ever owned. The ranger will identify Lincoln Home National Historic Site as a National Park that exists to preserve Mr. Lincoln's home for future generations to enjoy.

Alternate Activity #2:

For programs not held at Lincoln Home National Historic Site-Show the DVD *Abraham Lincoln: A Journey to Greatness*

Begin the program by showing the DVD, “Abraham Lincoln: A Journey to Greatness” or the PowerPoint program “Introduction to Lincoln Home.” Before or after the DVD, identify Lincoln Home National Historic Site as a National Park that exists to preserve Mr. Lincoln’s home for future generations to enjoy.

Activity #3:

Lincoln-Douglas Debates

Divide the students into two groups, one group representing Mr. Lincoln and the other Senator Douglas. The group representing Mr. Lincoln will divide into subgroups of 4 or 5 students. The same applies to the Senator Douglas group. Pose this question to the groups: Mr. Lincoln (or Senator Douglas), what are your views on admitting new states into the Union? Should the states be admitted as free states, slave states or should the residents of the states vote on whether their state should be a free or slave state? Each small group will respond by composing a letter that states their opinion on the slavery issue for new states. One member of each small group will read their letter to the entire class. Explain who Senator Douglas was and the term “popular sovereignty” (see page 5 for definition.)

Activity #4:

Slaves versus Plantation Owners

Break students into two groups by something as arbitrary as the color of their shirts. One group will represent plantation owners and the other slaves. Tell the “slave” group about the usual treatment of slaves: no freedoms, no rights, treated as property, families divided and sold, etc. Tell the “plantation owners” that people in their station of life felt their standard of living, their crops, and their farms would fail if slaves were not available. The owners felt owning another person was morally right. Many slave owners thought they were actually giving the slaves a better life than the life they had in Africa. Then ask each group if they feel slavery should have been continued or eliminated and why. Make the points about the basic unfairness of slavery and Lincoln’s feeling about basic freedom guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

Activity #5:

Conclusion

Many people agreed with Lincoln’s position on slavery and began to plan to have him be a candidate for the Presidency in 1860. Lincoln was asked to give a speech in New York in early 1860, which he did partly because it would give him a chance to visit his son Robert who was enrolled in boarding school in New Hampshire. The speech, given at the Cooper Union Hall in New York City, electrified the audience.

Lincoln gave several other speeches on the same topic up and down the East Coast. Lincoln expanded on his position that every new state admitted to the union should be free. And this position helped seal his reputation.



By the time the Republican National Convention was held in Chicago in May 1860, Lincoln was a serious contender. He was nominated on May 18. In the fall election, Lincoln beat three other candidates and was elected to be our 16th president.

Summarize what the students have learned by having them define in their own words the below terms:

Popular Sovereignty

Senator Stephen A. Douglas

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

The U. S. Constitution

Post-Program Activities:

After the program, have students compose a two-three paragraph report either on Abraham Lincoln's thoughts about slavery or on the mood of the country in the 1850s, with an emphasis on the differences between the Northern and Southern states in the 1850s.

Attachment

Background Information on the Lincoln-Douglas Debates

In 1858, seven political debates were held around the state of Illinois between Republican contender Abraham Lincoln and Democrat Stephen A. Douglas. Although Douglas was already a well known two-term Senator, these debates made Lincoln famous. The main issue in these debates was the extension of slavery into the western territories. Douglas believed in “popular sovereignty,” which gave the territories the right to choose to allow or outlaw slavery. Lincoln wanted to make all the territories free states and keep slavery confined only to areas where it already existed. Although many felt Lincoln won the debates, Douglas was elected. Lincoln felt he was done with politics and said, “I now sink from view and shall be forgotten.”

In summary, in 1858 Lincoln believed:

- The Kansas-Nebraska Act was a terrible wrong. The founding fathers wanted slavery to eventually die out.
- The Dred Scott decision was wrong.
- If slavery was allowed in a territory, it will become a slave state.
- Slavery is morally wrong. Lincoln said, “If slavery isn’t wrong, nothing is wrong.”
- All men have the “right to rise”. He said, “In the right to eat the bread, without leave of anybody else, which his own hand earns [a black man] is....the equal of every living man”.
- No one had the right to own another person. Lincoln believed blacks should have certain inalienable human rights, but not all rights whites had, such as voting rights. Lincoln’s beliefs evolved over the next few years.

Compared to Lincoln, Douglas believed:

- The Kansas-Nebraska Act was right and fair. It gave people the right to choose whether their territory would become a slave or free state.
- The Dred Scott decision was correct. Douglas said, “I do not regard the Negro as my equal. . .I am opposed to Negro citizenship in any and every form.”
- Slavery should be allowed in all territories until the people in the territories vote whether it will be slave or free.
- It didn’t matter whether or not slavery exists.

Have the students fill in the below table about what Lincoln and Douglas believed about slavery in new states. Then check the students’ responses.

Lincoln-Douglas Debates

Lincoln Believed	Douglas Believed

Program Evaluation

Please complete and return this evaluation
to your Ranger or mail it to the address at the bottom of this page.

Name of teacher _____ School _____ Ranger _____
Date of visit _____ Number of students _____ Number of adults _____

1. Were the program objectives easily identified and achieved?

Yes

No

2. How well did the program meet your school curriculum?

Very well Somewhat Not at all

3. Did the Ranger effectively summarize the program's major points?

Yes

No

4. Overall, how effective was today's program?

Very effective Somewhat effective Not effective

5. What did you like about today's program?

6. What would you change and how?

7. Other comments

Return evaluation to:
Chief of Interpretation
Lincoln Home National Historic Site
413 South Eighth Street
Springfield, Illinois 62701-1905