

Election Year 1860  
Distance Learning Lesson Plan  
9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Social Studies

## BACKGROUND

In the 17 years Abraham Lincoln lived in his Springfield home, he experienced many changes, challenges, and victories that defined him as a family man, neighbor, lawyer, and politician. Between 1844 and 1861 he saw his family grow as Eddie, Willie, and Tad were born there. He also experienced the expansion of his house when in 1856 the second floor was completed. Unfortunately, he and his family went through a very difficult time when Eddie died in 1850. From the steps of this house they saw their first born, Robert, leave for college. It was the people of the neighborhood who saw first-hand the rise of Abraham Lincoln as the politician we all know and remember today.

## LESSON OVERVIEW

In May 1860, Lincoln was anxiously waiting in Springfield for news from Chicago. The newly formed Republican Party was holding its convention to nominate their presidential candidate for the upcoming election in November. After three days of suspense and political maneuverings, the Republican Party nominated Abraham Lincoln. The months that follow Lincoln's nomination became critical to secure a win to become the 16<sup>th</sup> president of the United States.

During this distance learning lesson plan students will analyze primary documents to understand the political and socioeconomic environment in the United States during the election year of 1860. With the aid of these documents, students will explore how Abraham Lincoln experienced his election process. Finally, this lesson plan will prepare students for their virtual visit with a Park Ranger to Lincoln Home National Historic Site.

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Analyze a political map of 1860 and political cartoons to learn about the political climate around Lincoln nomination and election.
- Determine how Lincoln lived through the nomination and election while living at his home in Springfield, Illinois.

- Reflect on Abraham Lincoln’s political ideology and how it shaped the United States before the Civil War.
- Analyze primary documentation to understand the socioeconomic environment in the United States in the 1860s and how that influenced the election.

#### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- *How can artifacts help us understand a person or time period?*

#### STATE AND NATIONAL STANDARDS:

##### Illinois Learning Standards for Social Science:

- SS.H.3.9-12. Evaluate the methods utilized by people and institutions to promote change.
- SS.H.4.9-12. Analyze how people and institutions have reacted to environmental, scientific, and technological challenges.

##### National Standards:

- D2.His.4.9-12. Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.
- D2.Hist.12.9-12. Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to pursue further inquiry and investigate additional sources.

#### MATERIALS:

- Analyzing Maps Worksheet (PDF)
- 1860 National Political Chart and Map of the U.S. (PDF)
- Analyzing Political Cartoons Worksheet (PDF)
- Dividing the National Map Cartoon (PDF)
- Analyzing Photographs and Prints Worksheet (PDF)
- Rally Photo (JPEG)
- Written Document Analysis Worksheet (PDF)
- Grace Bedell Letter to Abraham Lincoln (PDF)

## LESSON PROCEDURE

1. Introduce students to the essential question: *How can artifacts help us understand a person or time period?* Allow students to reflect on essential question to provide their own answer.
2. Educators may visit [“The Lincolns in Springfield 1837-1847”](#) and [“The Lincolns in Springfield 1849-1861”](#) to provide a brief background on Abraham Lincoln’s history in Springfield.
3. Educators may visit [“Political Career 1830-1860”](#) and [“The Making of a Candidate”](#) to provide a brief background on Abraham Lincoln’s political career leading up to his nomination and election in 1860.
4. Students will go over the 1860 National Political Chart and Map of the U.S.
5. Students will analyze Political Chart and Map using the Analyzing Maps Worksheet by the Library of Congress. Ask students to record findings on a separate sheet of paper.
6. Students will review political cartoon.
7. Students will analyze political cartoon by using the Analyzing Political Cartoons Worksheet by Library of Congress. Ask students to record findings on a separate sheet of paper.
8. Students will review Rally Photo.
9. Students will analyze Rally Photo by using the Analyzing Photographs and Prints Worksheet by the Library of Congress.
10. Students will read Grace Bedell Letter to Abraham Lincoln
11. Students will analyze letter by using Document Analysis Worksheet by the National Archives.
12. After going over both documents individually, students will then share their findings, thoughts, and questions with the rest of the group based on the questions found in analysis worksheets.
13. Ask students:
  - a. What can these artifacts tell us about Abraham Lincoln ?
  - b. What can these artifacts teach us about U.S. politics in 1860s?
  - c. What can these artifacts tell us about society in the United States leading up to the Civil War?

## ASSESSMENT

1. Lead a discussion based on the lesson and students' answers to the previous questions. Have students generate questions based on what they learned to ask Park Ranger during their virtual visit.