



Lincoln Lesson Plans

Grade Level:
8-12

Materials

- Student Assignment: Candidate/Party Summaries
- Student Handout: Results of the Election of 1860
- Student Handout: Map of Election Results by Kentucky County
- Rubric for Political Rally

Technology

- DVD player or computer
- still and video cameras (optional)
- computers with Internet access for research

Vocabulary

abolition
campaign
Electoral College
platform

A Political Rally: The Election of 1860 in Kentucky

Length

Varies, with a minimum of two 50-minute class sessions for preparation, one or two 50-minute class session for presentations, and additional time at home or in class for research.

Concepts/Objectives

- Students will better understand the political, social, economic, and cultural differences among sections of the U.S. and how these differences resulted in the Civil War.
- Students will understand the prevailing attitudes about slavery in the 19th century and why slavery was such an issue in the election of 1860.
- Students will understand how and why Kentucky voted as it did in the 1860 election.

Activities

- Students will analyze issues involved in the 1860 presidential election, in both the U.S. and Kentucky, by conducting election campaigns for the four candidates. Voters will represent the Kentucky county in which the students now live.
- Students will compare the result of the classroom vote with the real county-by-county election results in Kentucky.

Lincoln Resource

KET documentary, *I, too, am a Kentuckian*:
• Segment 13: Slavery and the Formation of the Republican party
• Segment 14: The Cooper Union Speech
• Segment 15: Lincoln Wins the Presidency

Instructional Strategies and Activities

Before beginning this lesson, students should have some knowledge about the major political, social, and economic issues that divided the country in the mid-19th century.

Introducing the Lesson

Write this on the board:

Never was the United States more divided than in the months before the Election of 1860. Why? What were some of the issues that divided the country?

Allow for students to respond in their journals or discuss with a partner for a few minutes. Then call for responses and write them on the board.

Slavery should be mentioned. Tell students this was a major issue in the election — in Kentucky and nationwide.

Show video segments 13 (Slavery and the Formation of the Republican Party) and 14 (The Cooper Union Speech) from the KET documentary *Lincoln: I, too, am a Kentuckian*.

Ask a student to summarize Abraham Lincoln's position on slavery. (*He wanted to keep the Union together but opposed any extension of slavery.*) Why did he feel so strongly about this? (*Lincoln hated slavery and wished the country to operate on the principles of the Declaration of Independence, but he recognized that slavery was the law of the land. By prohibiting its extension, he believed it would, after a period of time, come to an end on its own in the states where it existed.*)

The Assignment

Write this on the board:

How did other candidates in the election of 1860 propose to solve the problems with slavery?

Students can respond in their journals or discuss briefly with a partner. After a few minutes, ask for students' ideas. Students may suggest that abolition of slavery was proposed by other candidates. Remind the students that, as the documentary stated, it's hard for us to imagine how many people supported slavery. A candidate who promised to abolish slavery would have had no chance of being elected. As students suggest other ideas, group them so that they match the platforms of the four political parties who won electoral votes in the election: the Republicans, two Democratic parties (northern and southern factions), and the Constitutional Union party. (Do not mention the names of the candidates at this point.)

1. Strong denunciation of slavery. No extension of slavery into the new territories could be allowed. (Students should recognize this as Lincoln's party.)
2. Strong support for popular sovereignty, i.e., states should decide the legality of "domestic relations" for themselves.
3. Strong support for slavery and for obedience to the laws that protected it.
4. Wants no changes. The Constitution and the laws that already exist should be strongly enforced. (In other words, the problem might go away if it was ignored.)

Now introduce the four candidates by dividing the class into four groups; each group will represent the supporters of one of the four candidates: Abraham Lincoln of the Republican party, Stephen Douglas of the Democratic party (Northern faction), John C. Breckinridge of the Democratic party (Southern faction), and John Bell of the Constitutional Union party. Tell the students that each candidate has been invited to speak at a political rally to be held in their hometown (that is, the students' hometown), and that they are in charge of planning and conducting the rally.

Discuss the 2008 election. What do students remember about the campaigns? How did the candidates get information about their view on the issues to the voters? (*TV commercials and appearances, rallies, debates, speeches, the Internet, etc.*) What did each candidate do to get votes? You can also draw comparisons to the school's own elections for student council.

Kentucky Academic Content

Academic Expectations 2.20

Program of Studies

Understandings

SS-8-HP-U-1

SS-8-HP-U-3

SS-8-HP-U-4

Skills and Concepts

SS-8-HP-S-1

SS-8-HP-S-2

Core Content

SS-08-5.1.1

SS-08-5.1.2

SS-08-5.2.4

A Note on Strategy:

Tell the students that their goal is to attract the most votes and that they cannot afford to alienate any segment of society. For this reason, no campaign can address slavery as either good or evil. (Lincoln's campaign did not address slavery to attract voters.) It focused on saving the Union and included provisions about opening the American West by giving away land and creating a cross-country railroad system. To the South, the election was not about slavery; it was about the vast political, social, economic, and cultural differences between the two regions. Slavery was the catalyst for secession; however, many Southern political leaders deplored slavery, such as the Speed family, who owned slaves.

Writing for the Lesson

Students will complete Candidate/Party Summaries for each of the four candidates. They are to finish a summary for their own candidate before the presentations and turn in the other three after the presentations.

Each presentation must consist of, at minimum:

- a speech of at least three minutes, to be delivered by the candidate
- a campaign poster, with a slogan
- a campaign flyer or brochure
- a performance, e.g., skit, song, interview

Performances can be “creatively anachronistic,” that is, students can apply modern technology to the 1860 campaign to make a commercial, a newscast, a TV interview show, or a short movie. Encourage any other ideas: e.g., students might want to make campaign buttons or badges.

Have the students select one person in each group to act the part of the candidate. Assign two others to work with him/her as speechwriters. Work with the rest of each group to divide the tasks fairly and in accordance with individual skills and abilities.

Share the rubric with the students before they begin to work.

Give the students some time to research their party's candidate and to work on their ideas in class. (This can also be done, or completed, as a take-home assignment.) Each student should be required to complete the Candidate/Party Summary for his/her candidate as a homework assignment before the rally. They should complete the other three after the rally.

The Rally

If possible, conduct the rally for another class. Arrange the schedule beforehand, giving each candidate 10 to 15 minutes for the speech and performance. Campaign posters can line the hallways; copies of flyers, buttons, and any other election material can be handed out as students come to class.

Before you begin, tell your audience that they are playing roles, too. In 1860, only white males aged 21 or older could vote. If they want to vote, therefore, students must play the roles of white men living in Kentucky 150 years ago. Unless they live in the bigger cities, most of them are farmers. They must vote for the person they believe is best for the country, not necessarily for the candidate whose supporters conducted the best campaign. (If your students cannot perform for another class, give this instruction to your own class.)

Concluding the Lesson

Count the votes and put the totals on the board. (Lincoln will probably win. Ask the students if they are surprised by the results.) Now show the election results as they are reported in the beginning of video segment 15 (Lincoln Wins the Presidency) from the KET documentary.

Distribute the two student handouts (chart and the map) detailing the results in Kentucky. Tell students to find their own county. Ask: Even though John Bell won the Electoral College votes, what do the numbers tell you about Kentucky? (*Even though the state did reject Mr. Lincoln and his “radical” Republican party, it was still very divided.*)

Ask: Why did the Kentuckians in 1860 vote as they did? (*Mr. Bell's party wanted everything to remain as it was: Kentucky was afraid that if the war came and the Union divided, it would be the battleground between North and South, given its strategic and vulnerable location.*)

Ask: What do the results foreshadow about Kentucky's participation in the Civil War. (*Kentucky will remain in the Union.*)

Discuss: What would the United States be like now if Bell had won the national election rather than Mr. Lincoln?

Support/Connections/Resources

Web Sites:

Political Party Platforms

The American Presidency Project

www.presidency.ucsb.edu/platforms.php

Links to full text of platforms of all parties receiving electoral votes (1840-2008), including the 1860 Republican Party, Democratic (Douglas) Party, Democratic (Breckinridge) Party, and the Constitutional Union Party.

Election of 1860

Interactive Maps in U.S. and Illinois History

University of Northern Illinois Libraries

http://atlas.lib.niu.edu/Website/Election_1860/viewer.htm?Title=1860%20Presidential%20Election

The 1860 presidential election map on this site allows students to see the voting results by county, state, or region for the entire United States, plus information on 1860 demographics. Maps are also available for other demographic data including elections from 1840-1864.

Getting the Message Out: National Political Campaign Materials, 1840-1860

Abraham Lincoln Historical Digitization Project

<http://dig.lib.niu.edu/message/>

Examines national popular political culture and includes histories of the presidential campaigns from 1840-1860; links to many primary source materials, including campaign biographies and campaign songbooks.

A House Divided: America in the Age of Lincoln

The Chicago Historical Society

www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/ahd/exhibit_menu.html

Online exhibit focusing on Lincoln and his times, organized into eight blocks: Introduction; Lincoln's America; Slavery; Slavery Debate; The Impending Crisis; the Civil War; War, Politics and Society; and Aftermath. Each is told in succinct paragraphs illustrations or video. Great site for students as an introduction to the era. For teachers there are classroom handouts, learning modules, lesson plans, and resource guides.

Applications Across the Curriculum

If this lesson is taught in collaboration with the language arts teacher, a number of opportunities arise e.g.:

- Students can write and deliver speeches on political issues (either contemporary or 19th century).
- Students can participate in a mock Lincoln-Douglas debate.
- Students can take on the roles of Kentuckians in 1860 and write letters to family or friends expressing their opinions of the issues and the candidates.

Adaptations for Diverse Learners/Lesson Extensions

- The group nature of this activity allows for flexibility in the assignment of tasks. Assignments can be made in accord with individual interests and abilities.
- Students who are especially interested in the politics of the period will enjoy the American History Online exhibit, "Lincoln in the Media." The exhibit presents political cartoons appearing in newspapers of the 1850s and 1860s and interprets them for a modern audience. There are slideshows on "War," "Politics," and "Slavery and Emancipation." Access it at http://www.historynow.org/12_2005/interactive.html. As an enrichment activity, you can assign students to create their own political cartoon on an important issue leading up to the election.

Open Response Assessment

Prompt: Slavery was a major issue in the U.S during the decade leading up to the Civil War.

Directions: Answer each of the following, elaborating your answer with pertinent details.

- What did each of the four political parties in the 1860 election propose to do about slavery?
- How did Kentucky vote in the 1860 election?
- Why did most Kentuckians select this candidate?
- What does this imply about their participation in the Civil War?

Open Response Scoring Guide

4	3	2	1	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student answers each of the questions fully and completely. • Details are insightful and relevant, demonstrating extensive knowledge of the issue of slavery in the U.S. and in Kentucky as well as Kentucky's position in the Civil War. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student answers each of the questions thoroughly. • Details are relevant and demonstrate broad knowledge of the issue of slavery in the U.S. and in Kentucky as well as Kentucky's position in the Civil War. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student answers each of the questions. • Details show a basic understanding of the issue of slavery although a few facts may be incorrect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student fails to answer all the questions or answers two or three incorrectly. • Any details demonstrate that the student's understanding of the issue of slavery is unclear. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No answer or irrelevant answer.

Multiple Choice Questions

- Which of the four presidential candidates in 1864 captured Kentucky's electoral votes?
 - John Bell, Constitutional Unionist
 - John Breckinridge, Northern Democrat
 - Stephen Douglas, Republican
 - John Bell, Southern Democrat
- Why did so many Kentuckians vote for John Bell?
 - They were afraid Lincoln would abolish slavery.
 - They were afraid that if the Union divided, Kentucky would be the battleground between North and South.
 - They were in favor of the doctrine of popular sovereignty.
 - They were in favor of stronger laws.

3. Which of the following is not true about the Election of 1860?

- A. The election of 1860 is a pivotal turning point in the history of the nation.
- B. Abraham Lincoln won the election with less than half of the popular vote.
- C. The Cooper Union address and the Lincoln-Douglas debates made Lincoln a household name.
- D. The Southern states had made the decision to secede before Mr. Lincoln was elected president.

4. In the election of 1860, which candidate hoped to end the extension of slavery?

- A. John Bell
- B. John Breckenridge
- C. Abraham Lincoln
- D. Stephen Douglas

5. Which political party promised free land for people who moved into the Western territories?

- A. Republican Party
- B. (Northern) Democratic Party
- C. (Southern) Democratic Party
- D. Constitution Union Party

**Answer Key for
Multiple Choice
Questions**

- 1. A
- 2. B
- 3. D
- 4. C
- 5. A

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RESULTS OF THE ELECTION OF 1860

In Kentucky							
Abraham Lincoln Republican		Stephen Douglas Northern Democrat		John Breckinridge Southern Democrat		John Bell Constitutional Union	
# votes	% votes	# votes	% votes	# votes	% votes	# votes	% votes
1,364	.09	25,651	17.5	53,143	36.3	66,058	45.2
No Electoral Votes		No Electoral Votes		No Electoral Votes		12 Electoral Votes	

• John Bell was awarded all 12 Electoral College votes from Kentucky

In the United States							
Abraham Lincoln Republican		Stephen Douglas Northern Democrat		John Breckinridge Southern Democrat		John Bell Constitutional Union	
# votes	% votes	# votes	% votes	# votes	% votes	# votes	% votes
1,865,908	39.8	1,380,202	29.5	848,019	18.1	590,901	39
180 Electoral Votes		12 Electoral Votes		72 Electoral Votes		39 Electoral Votes	

• The voter turnout rate in 1860, at 81.2%, was the second-highest ever recorded. (1876 was the highest.)

• Abraham Lincoln wasn't even on the ballot in nine Southern counties; he won only two of the 996 counties in the South. In slaveholding states where all four major candidates were on the ballot, he consistently placed fourth.

The Election of 1860

THE CANDIDATE

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

PARTY

BIOGRAPHY

PLATFORM

The Election of 1860

THE CANDIDATE

STEPHEN DOUGLAS

PARTY

BIOGRAPHY

PLATFORM

The Election of 1860

THE CANDIDATE

JOHN C. BRECKINRIDGE

PARTY

BIOGRAPHY

PLATFORM

The Election of 1860

THE CANDIDATE

JOHN BELL

PARTY

BIOGRAPHY

PLATFORM

RUBRIC FOR POLITICAL RALLY

	Excellent	Good	Acceptable	Unacceptable
Content	Content accurately and thoroughly portrays the party's and the candidate's point of view. There are no errors.	Content accurately portrays the candidate's point of view. There are no or very few errors.	Content is not as thorough as it should be or contains several errors.	Content does not exist or contains multiple errors.
Elements	All four of the required elements are present.	All four of the required elements are present.	One or two required elements are not included.	Three or more of the required elements are not included.
Written Materials (flyer, poster)	Written materials are informative, very neat, and attractive. Illustrations are appropriate and enhance understanding.	Written materials are informative and neat. Illustrations add to understanding.	Written materials are short or contain errors. Important information is missing. Illustrations add very little.	Written materials either do not exist or reveal little information about the candidate.
Presentation	The presentation was well organized and well-paced. It conveyed important information in a way that clearly engaged the audience.	The presentation was organized. It contained important information conveyed in such a way that it engaged the audience.	Although an effort was made to convey important information, the presentation was confusing and the audience's interest wandered.	The presentation did not interest the audience at all.
Work Habits	The students made excellent use of time in class and cooperated extremely well with each other.	The students made good use of time in class and cooperated with each other well.	Students were occasionally off task. There was some bickering within the group.	The students did not focus on the task at all and made little or not effort to work as a group.