



## Teacher Guide:

### “Can You Hear Me Now?” Voices of Civil War Washington: A Student Activity

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#### Overview

This self-contained student activity uses primary source documents to examine how people of different walks of life responded to two key events during the Civil War in Washington, D.C.: Congressional debates about enlisting Black Americans in the U.S. Army in 1863 and the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln in 1865.

This activity can be used in conjunction with the video *Exploring Civil War Washington Through the Eyes of Mary Henry* (<https://youtu.be/EETFPrfWepk>), or it can be completed independently.

There are two versions of this activity, designed for middle school and for high school students. The core activities are similar, with the addition of more analytical questions for high school students.

#### Formats of Lesson

This lesson is available in two formats. The content and question structure of each is adapted to the format's strengths, though they are very similar.

- **Printable PDF:** A printable activity that your students can use on paper or follow along on a screen.
- **Google Form:** An interactive lesson using a Google Form.
  - It includes free-response questions that students can fill out in the form directly.
  - The link provided will allow you, as the teacher, to copy the form directly into your own Google Drive installation; you can then share this with your students via email, Google Classroom, or any other LMS.
  - Link for middle school version:  
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1rSAi94fWi7oYbiHGMBRp581UskZAHuR81JVxz7xTt1M/copy?usp=sharing>
  - Link for high school version:  
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1sftRIX1t8Vb7q4pPWHZG06V1Zxxz2gt8Gx6-sURJ6Cg/copy?usp=sharing>

#### Common Core Standards

*Middle School:*

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2:** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.6:** Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.8:** Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

### *High School:*

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1:** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.6:** Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.9:** Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.6:** Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.8:** Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Students will determine the central ideas in a primary source.
- Students will perform close readings of primary sources from different points of view.
- Students will express their understanding and analysis in writing.
- Students will apply their skills in evaluating the same event from different points of view.

### **Guiding Questions**

- How did people from different walks of life in Washington react to the formation of the United States Colored Troops and to President Lincoln's assassination?
- What can we learn about how people in Washington saw the events of the Civil War unfolding around them?
- How can examining different points of view help us gain a deeper understanding of events in the news?

### **Activity Outline**

1. Context: Brief set-up of Civil War Washington, each event covered in the lesson, and the people featured.
2. Primary sources from each event. Each event section includes:
  - a. Context of the event
  - b. Source documents
  - c. Free-response questions to help students process the primary sources
3. Concluding activity, asking students to think about people who may have had different points of view about a recent event, then writing a letter, news article or diary entry from each person's perspective.