



Teacher Guide:

Did Everyone Cry at the Assassination of President Lincoln? Student Activity

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Overview

This self-contained student activity uses first-person, primary-source documents to explore how differently people around the country responded to the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln.

Each section can stand on its own. Teachers may choose to use the entire lesson or use one or more activities separately. They can but do not have to build upon one another.

This is a student-directed version of a classroom lesson: <https://www.fords.org/for-teachers/teaching-lincolns-assassination-legacy/the-assassination-of-president-abraham-lincoln/>

Lesson Formats

This lesson is available in one format (with more formats coming in the future). The content and question structure of each will be 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.

Common Core Standards

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.1:** Write arguments focused on *discipline-specific content*.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.9:** Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Learning Objectives

- Students will become familiar with the events of April 14 and 15, 1865
- Students will summarize John Wilkes Booth's motivations for killing the president
- Students will synthesize and adapt primary source content to develop an original argument

Guiding Questions

- How can seeing an event from multiple points of view change our understanding?

Activity Outline

1. **Timeline:** Students review the events that led up to the Lincoln assassination on a timeline, drawing arrows between them to show cause and effect and highlight what events they think were most important leading up to Booth's assassination of Lincoln.
2. **John Wilkes Booth's Diary:** Students read diary entries John Wilkes Booth wrote during his attempted escape after assassinating Lincoln, highlighting what they see as Booth's motives. They then use the S.O.A.P.S.Tone Analysis Guide to help determine how Booth justified his actions. Then, they identify in writing two to six motivations that Booth mentioned in his diary.
3. **Responses to Lincoln's Assassination:** Students read four perspectives on Lincoln's assassination, annotating them using the Annotation Symbol Guide.
4. **Writing About the Assassination of Abraham Lincoln:** As a concluding activity, students write their own diary entry or letter as if they were hearing about the event in real time. Includes a pre-writing exercise.