



Teacher Guide: “Reacting to Lincoln’s Assassination” Student Activity

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Webpage: <https://www.fords.org/for-teachers/digital-programs/student-activity-reactions-to-lincoln-s-assassination/>

Overview

This self-contained student activity uses primary source documents to examine how people around the United States responded to the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. Each primary source gives some insight, as well, into how the United States moved from the Civil War into Reconstruction.

The lesson features a selection of documents from the Ford’s Theatre *Remembering Lincoln* website, which includes over 850 primary sources about how people responded to Lincoln’s assassination:

<https://rememberinglincoln.fords.org/>

This activity is designed to be flexible; teachers may want to assign parts of it to students or may want students to complete the entire activity in small groups, rather than individually. Ideas for customization can be found at the end of this document.

Formats of Lesson

This lesson is available in three formats. The content and question structure of each is adapted to the format’s strengths.

- **Printable PDF:** A printable activity that your students can use on paper or can follow along on a screen.
- **Sutori:** An interactive lesson using the Sutori platform.
 - It includes multiple-choice questions to do on the webpage, along with free-response questions for students to do on their own paper.
 - This can be added to your Learning Management System (like Google Classroom, Schoology and Canvas) following instructions on this page: <https://www.sutori.com/story/sutori-works-with-your-lms--ngiEu4x4d6NHCpYw1oDSNEM4>
- **Google Form:** An interactive lesson using a Google Form.
 - It includes multiple-choice questions and 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: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1DtQnVU1D59XbfInYjvvY7XJM9DP9nrQAVI73Ps3gj-4/copy?usp=sharing>

Common Core Standards

- **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).

Learning Objectives

- Students will determine the central ideas in a primary source.
- Students will perform close readings of letters, newspapers, and diaries.
- Students will examine how people of different walks of life, in different regions, reacted to the same event.

Guiding Questions

- How did people from different walks of life, in different regions of the United States, react when they learned of Lincoln's assassination?
- What can we learn about what was happening in the United States as it moved from the Civil War to Reconstruction through these responses?
- What can we learn about how a country moves forward following a traumatic event like a civil war and assassination of a leader?
- How did people in 1865 deal with grief and uncertainty for the future? How was this different from or similar to today?

Activity Outline

1. Context: Brief setup of aftermath of Lincoln's assassination.
2. Primary sources from different cities. Each includes:
 - a. Map with location of city
 - b. Source document, with transcription if needed
 - c. Combination of multiple-choice and free-response questions
3. Conclusion

Extension & Customization

- **Wrap-Up Activity:** Teachers might assign a writing assignment or facilitate a discussion to help students synthesize their analysis. For example, students could compare responses from different parts of the country and analyze what these different responses say about the state of the United States as it moved from Civil War into Reconstruction.
- **Customization:** This activity contains a large number of primary sources. Teachers can pick and choose which they would like their students to complete.
 - In the PDF, teachers can remove pages before distribution to their students.
 - In the Google Form, teachers can remove sections before they distribute the form to their students. Currently all questions are listed as "required," but a teacher or caregiver can remove this before distributing to students.