

CHAPTER FIVE

Was **John Wilkes Booth's** Conspiracy Successful?

Jake Flack and Sarah Jencks
Ford's Theatre

Ford's Theatre is draped in mourning, 1865.



MIDDLE SCHOOL INQUIRY

WAS JOHN WILKES BOOTH'S CONSPIRACY SUCCESSFUL?		
C3 Framework Indicator	D2.His.1.6-8 Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts.	
Staging the Compelling Question	Students will analyze primary source documents related to the Lincoln assassination to construct an argument on the success or failure of Booth's plan.	
Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3
What was the goal of Booth's conspiracy?	What were the the immediate results of that plot?	How did Booth's actions affect Reconstruction and beyond?
Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task
Create a list of reasons of why Booth might have first wanted to kidnap and then decided to kill Lincoln and other key government leaders.	Write a one-paragraph news report describing what happened immediately after Lincoln's death.	Make a claim about the effect of Booth's actions on Reconstruction.
Featured Sources	Featured Sources	Featured Sources
Source A: Excerpts from Booth's diary Source B: Excerpts from Lincoln's final speech Source C: Events of April, 1865 Source D: Conspirator biographies and photos	Source A: Overview of the assassination aftermath Source B: Excerpt from a letter from Willie Clark Source C: Excerpt from a letter from Dudley Avery	Source A: Overview of Reconstruction Source B: "President Johnson Pardoning the Rebels"— <i>Harper's Weekly</i> 1865 Source C: "Leaders of the Democratic Party"—Political Cartoon by Thomas Nast Source D: Overview of Lincoln's legacy
Summative Performance Task	ARGUMENT: Was John Wilkes Booth's conspiracy successful? Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, essay) that discusses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from historical sources while acknowledging competing views.	
	EXTENSION: Ask each student to deliver an oral argument defending or condemning one of the conspirators, as though he or she were an attorney in the military tribunal. Students should build their presentations using claims and evidence found on the Ford's Theatre website.	
Taking Informed Action	UNDERSTAND: Identify an instance of political violence in recent history and explore its motives and effects. ASSESS: Create a list of alternative strategies (marches, sit-ins, strikes, op-eds) for responding to one of these instances. ACT: As a group, ask the class to create a plan of constructive action to respond to a political crisis today.	

INQUIRY DESCRIPTION

This inquiry is designed to examine the motives and results of John Wilkes Booth's conspiracy to assassinate Abraham Lincoln and other top leaders of the United States Government at the end of the Civil War. Through close examination of primary source material and subsequent events in American history, students will make an informed argument as to whether John Wilkes Booth's conspiracy was a success or failure. By investigating the compelling question "Was John Wilkes Booth's Conspiracy Successful?" students evaluate the immediate and long-term consequences of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. The formative performance tasks build on knowledge and skills through the course of the inquiry and help students identify Booth's motive. Students create an evidence-based argument about the success or failure of Booth's plan.

It is important to note that this inquiry requires knowledge of historical events and ideas. Thus, students should have already studied the events of April 1865, including the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.

Note: This inquiry is expected to take three 40-minute class periods. The inquiry time frame could expand if teachers think their students need additional instructional experiences (i.e., supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources). Teachers are encouraged to adapt the inquiries in order to meet the needs and interests of their particular students. Resources can also be modified as necessary to meet individualized education programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans for students with disabilities.

STRUCTURE OF THE INQUIRY

In addressing the compelling question, "Was John Wilkes Booth's Conspiracy Successful?" students work through a series of supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources in order to construct an argument supported by evidence while acknowledging competing perspectives.

STAGING THE COMPELLING QUESTION

In staging the compelling question, "Was John Wilkes Booth's Conspiracy Successful?" teachers may prompt students with the question: Is political violence (e.g., assassination) an effective way to make political change? By examining the featured sources, students will begin to consider issues related to both the motives and effects of Booth's conspiracy.

Supporting Question 1

The first supporting question—"What was the goal of Booth's conspiracy?"—has students uncover the motivation for Booth's actions.

Why would one of the country's most successful actors risk everything and murder a president?

Raised in Maryland, where slavery was legal until November 1864, John Wilkes Booth was a white supremacist, meaning someone who believed that people of African descent were destined to be subordinated to white people. In his view, it was worth fighting to support race-based slavery, and he was strongly opposed to the extension of voting rights to African Americans. He translated these beliefs into a deep hatred of President

Excerpts from the Diary of John Wilkes Booth

John Wilkes Booth scribbled his thoughts in this 1864 appointment book while he hid in southern Maryland after he murdered President Abraham Lincoln. How did he justify his actions? Read what he wrote about the assassination below.

April 13-14, 1865 Friday the Ides

Until today nothing was ever thought of sacrificing to our country's wrongs. For six months we had worked to capture, but our cause being almost lost, something decisive and great must be done. But its failure was owing to others, who did not strike for their country with a heart. I struck boldly, and not as the papers say. I walked with a firm step through a thousand of his friends, was stopped, but pushed on. A colonel was at his side. I shouted Sic semper before I fired. In jumping broke my leg. I passed all his pickets, rode sixty miles that night with the bone of my leg tearing the flesh at every jump. I can never repent it, though we hated to kill. Our country owed all her troubles to him, and God simply made me the instrument of his punishment. The country is not what it was. This forced union is not what I have loved. I care not what becomes of me. I have no desire to outlive my country. The night before the deed I wrote a long article and left it for one of the editors of the National Intelligencer, in which I fully set forth our reasons for our proceedings. ...

Friday, April 21, 1865

After being hunted like a dog through swamps, woods, and last night being chased by gunboats till I was forced to return, wet, cold and starving, with every man's hand against me, I am here in despair. And why? For doing what Brutus was honored for—what made Tell a hero. And yet I, for striking down a greater tyrant than they ever knew, am looked upon as a common cut-throat. My action was purer than either of theirs. One hoped to be great himself, the other had not only his country's but his own wrongs to avenge. I hoped for no gain. I knew no private wrong. I struck for my country and that alone. A country that groaned beneath this tyranny, and prayed for this end, and yet now behold the cold hand they extend to me.

Source: <https://www.fords.org/lincolns-assassination/material-evidence-john-wilkes-booth>

Abraham Lincoln, who he felt had extended his executive power far beyond what was allowed by the Constitution.

In early 1865, as the imminent defeat of the Confederacy became apparent, Booth and a group of pro-Confederate co-conspirators devised a plot to take down the U.S. government. At first, they planned to kidnap President Lincoln on his daily commute from the Soldiers Home to the White House. They would then exchange Lincoln for captured Confederate soldiers being held in a Maryland prison. After their initial plan to kidnap Lincoln failed, and Lincoln endorsed limited voting rights for African Americans in a speech on April 11, Booth himself chose to assassinate the president at Ford's Theatre on April 14, 1865. Others were assigned to kill Vice President Andrew Johnson and Secretary of State William Seward on the same night.

The formative performance task asks students to create a list of reasons why Booth first wanted to kidnap and then kill Lincoln. In addition to the formative task, students may also examine the conspirators' biographies and write a paragraph about their roles in the conspiracy and why they might have joined the plan.

The featured sources for this question are writings of Lincoln and Booth. Featured Source 1A is Booth's diary (see Sidebar 1). Students can read the excerpts from Booth's diary and create a list of his motives. Featured Source 1B consists of excerpts from Lincoln's final speech (see Sidebar 2). Featured Source 1C is an overview of the events of April 1865, and Featured Source 1D is a set of biographies of the conspirators. Both sources are accessible at <http://www.fords.org/lincolns-assassination>.

Excerpt from Lincoln's Final Public Address

Washington, D.C.

April 11, 1865

By these recent successes the re-inauguration of the national authority--reconstruction--which has had a large share of thought from the first, is pressed much more closely upon our attention. It is fraught with great difficulty. Unlike a case of a war between independent nations, there is no authorized organ for us to treat with. No one man has authority to give up the rebellion for any other man. We simply must begin with, and mould from, disorganized and discordant elements. Nor is it a small additional embarrassment that we, the loyal people, differ among ourselves as to the mode, manner, and means of reconstruction.

We all agree that the seceded States, so called, are out of their proper relation with the Union; and that the sole object of the government, civil and military, in regard to those States is to again get them into that proper practical relation. I believe it is not only possible, but in fact, easier to do this, without deciding, or even considering, whether these States have ever been out of the Union, than with it. Finding themselves safely at home, it would be utterly immaterial whether they had ever been abroad. Let us all join in doing the acts necessary to restoring the proper practical relations between these States and the Union; and each forever after, innocently indulge his own opinion whether, in doing the acts, he brought the States from without, into the Union, or only gave them proper assistance, they never having been out of it.

The amount of constituency, so to speak, on which the new Louisiana government rests, would be more satisfactory to all, if it contained fifty, thirty, or even twenty thousand, instead of only about twelve thousand, as it does. It is also unsatisfactory to some that the elective franchise is not given to the colored man. I would myself prefer that it were now conferred on the very intelligent, and on those who serve our cause as soldiers. Still the question is not whether the Louisiana government, as it stands, is quite all that is desirable. The question is, "Will it be wiser to take it as it is, and help to improve it; or to reject, and disperse it?" "Can Louisiana be brought into proper practical relation with the Union sooner by sustaining, or by discarding her new State government?"

The colored man too, in seeing all united for him, is inspired with vigilance, and energy, and daring, to the same end. Grant that he desires the elective franchise, will he not attain it sooner by saving the already advanced steps toward it, than by running backward over them? Concede that the new government of Louisiana is only to what it should be as the egg is to the fowl, we shall sooner have the fowl by hatching the egg than by smashing it? Again, if we reject Louisiana, we also reject one vote in favor of the proposed amendment to the national Constitution. To meet this proposition, it has been argued that no more than three fourths of those States which have not attempted secession are necessary to validly ratify the amendment. I do not commit myself against this, further than to say that such a ratification would be questionable, and sure to be persistently questioned; while a ratification by three-fourths of all the States would be unquestioned and unquestionable.

Source: <http://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/speeches/last.htm>

Supporting Question 2

For the second supporting question—"What were the immediate results of that plot?"—students write a one-paragraph article describing what happened immediately after Lincoln's death.

Immediately after firing the fatal shot, John Wilkes Booth escaped out of the back of Ford's theatre and mounted a waiting horse. Over the next several hours, as the president lay dying, Booth rode south through Maryland, heading for Virginia. Since there was no means of rapid communication beyond the telegraph, the guard at the Navy Yard bridge let Booth and his fellow-conspirator and fugitive David Herold cross into southern Maryland. Throughout the night, Lincoln's cabinet and other decision-makers gathered at the Petersen house across the street from Ford's Theatre, from which Secretary of War Edwin Stanton began an investigation into the conspiracy, considering it an act of war.

Overview of Lincoln's Assassination

Where should one take a dying president?

That dilemma faced the doctors who made it into the Presidential Box at Ford's Theatre. Dr. Charles Leale knew Lincoln would not survive, and many people at the time felt a theatre was no place for a president to die.

Why not just take him to the White House?

The White House was only six blocks away—but Washington's streets were not paved. A bumpy carriage ride might kill Lincoln immediately.

Soldiers carried Lincoln down the stairs of the theatre, and out onto Tenth Street.

Where to go from there?

Standing on a stoop across the street, Henry Safford had heard the commotion. He knew that Willie Clark, a fellow boarder at the Petersen family's house, was out for the night—and his room vacant.

"Bring him in here!"

At Safford's direction, the soldiers carried Lincoln into the house and laid him in Clark's bed.

Doctors tended to Lincoln in that back room, trying to make him as comfortable as they could.

But that was not the only business to tend to. The government needed to find out what was happening—and fast.

Were there other targets? How far did the conspiracy go?

Secretary of War Edwin Stanton arrived and set about investigating answers to those questions. He interrogated witnesses to the assassination. He quickly learned that Booth had carried out the act.

James Tanner, a War Department clerk and disabled soldier who lived next door, wrote down the witness statements.

Outside, thousands of people crowded onto Tenth Street and kept vigil through the night. Were the people who came in and out of the Petersen House suspects?

Mary Lincoln initially remained with the president, but Stanton, horrified by her cries, ordered her to the front parlor. She only occasionally returned to see her husband.

Would Lincoln awaken and speak some last words?

More than 40 people came in and out of the room, hoping to hear the president's famed wit and wisdom one final time, but in vain.

President Abraham Lincoln died at 7:22 a.m. on April 15, 1865. Mary Lincoln was not in the room with him.

Soldiers quickly removed his body to the White House for an autopsy and to prepare for a funeral.

Source: <https://www.fords.org/lincolns-assassination/>

At the same time, people from throughout Washington City gathered on Tenth Street, between Ford's Theatre and the Petersen house, to confirm in person that their president was indeed dying. There was fear as well as sadness, for it was unclear how far the conspiracy went—were Confederate troops marching on Washington?

On April 15, soon after Abraham Lincoln died, the nearly unknown Andrew Johnson was sworn in as president. A poorly educated tailor from Tennessee, Johnson had been chosen as vice president in the 1864 election because he was considered more appealing to those in the Border States than former vice president Hannibal Hamlin of Maine. Cabinet members knew little about him, beyond their much-documented concern that he had been drunk while delivering his inaugural address six weeks before. For this reason and others, they dominated his administration over the following years, though Johnson's racism and support for states' rights permeated his time in office.

After twelve days on the run, U.S. Army troops surrounded Booth and Herold in a tobacco barn in Virginia. Herold ran out of the barn when the troops set it ablaze, but a sergeant named Boston Corbett shot Booth, and he died a few hours later. Conspirators Herold, Atzerodt, and Powell, along with many other innocent suspects, were arrested and held prisoner aboard the monitors *Montauk* and *Saugus* at the Washington Navy Yard. Even the actors in *Our American Cousin* and Harry Ford, who ran the theatre, were arrested and held for many days.

Over the weeks that followed, people across the country and around the world learned of Lincoln's assassination and death. Those in cities with telegraphs, like far-away Salt Lake City, Utah, heard the news the next day; however Boise, Idaho, not much farther but without a telegraph, didn't learn the news until many days later when a stagecoach arrived with the mail. In some cases, it took months for the news to reach U.S. ambassadors in other parts of the world, for the transatlantic telegraph was not yet running reliably. Once they heard, though, people from around the globe sent their condolences. [See <http://www.rememberinglincoln.org>.]

Secretary of War Stanton took up with somber zeal his investigation into the presidential assassination and the rest of the conspiracy, and it proceeded amazingly quickly by today's standards. In June and July, a group of generals held a military tribunal at the Washington arsenal, as a result of which four people—Lewis Powell, David Herold, George Atzerodt and Mary Surratt—were hanged on July 7, 1865, and four others were sent to prison.

Some questions for discussion are:

- ▶ Was Stanton right to consider the conspiracy and its results acts of war? Why or why not?
- ▶ How did technology shape the aftermath of the assassination? How does that compare to what might happen with a similar event today?

In addition to the resources from the previous supporting question, the featured sources provide students with additional materials that allow them to gain an understanding of reactions to Lincoln's death. Featured Source 2A is an overview of Lincoln's assassination from the Ford's website (see Sidebar 3 on page 68). Featured Source 2B consists of excerpts from a letter written by Willie Clark, the renter of the room at the Petersen boarding house where Lincoln died (see Sidebar 4 on page 70). Featured Source 2C is an excerpt from a letter written by Dudley Avery, a Louisiana planter, expressing concerns about the likely policies of Andrew Johnson, Lincoln's successor as President (see Sidebar 5 on page 70). Students can compare his concerns with the actual policies carried out by Johnson as well as with what Lincoln proposed in his April 11 speech.

SIDEBAR 4

Letter from Willie Clark to His Sister, April 19, 1865

Dear Sister Ida.

Today the funeral of Mr. Lincoln takes place, the streets are being crowded at this early hour. (9 A M) and the procession will probably not move for 3 hours. We are moved back into the old building. It having been repaired. Ladies are thronging in here now, I have moved my desk close to my window to secure its use for myself and friends.

The past few days have been of intense excitement. Arrests are numerous made, of any party heard to utter secesh [secessionist] sentiments. The time has come when people cannot say what they please, the people are awfully indignant. Leineny [sic] is no longer to be thought of. A new code must be adopted.

They talk of the tyrannical [sic] administration of Mr. Lincoln, but we have a man now for a president who will teach the south a lesson they will know well how to appreciate.

Since the death of our president hundreds daily call at the house to gain admission into my room....

Everybody has a great desire to obtain some memento from my room so that whoever comes in has to be closely watched for fear they will steal something.

I have a lock of his hair which I have had neatly framed, also a piece of linen with a portion of his brain, the pillow and case upon which he lay when he died and nearly all his wearing apparel but the latter I intend to send to Robt Lincoln as soon as the funeral is over, as I consider him the one most justly entitled to them.

The same mattress [sic] is on my bed, and the same coverlet covers me nightly that covered him while dying.

Enclosed you will find a piece of lace that Mrs. Lincoln wore on her head during the evening and was dropped by her while entering my room to see her dying husband It is worth keeping for its historical value

The cap worked by Clara and the cushion by you, you little dreamed would be so historically connected with such an event.

Source: <http://rememberinglincoln.fords.org/node/707>

SIDEBAR 5

Excerpt from a letter from Dudley Avery, May 12, 1865

Dudley Avery, the son of a Louisiana plantation owner and a former Confederate soldier, wrote to his father (who had relocated to Texas when Union troops occupied their plantation earlier in the Civil War) to express his thoughts on the Lincoln assassination.

My dear Papa,

The perusal of your kind letter forwarded by Mr. Weeks gave me much pleasure, but I was distressed at the same time to find you had received so few of my letters. Uncle Henshaw returned from New Orleans some three weeks since and immediately wrote you a long letter which I forwarded by way of Shreveport. He brought us the news of Lee's surrender and wrote advising your immediate return home. In a few, short weeks all of our bright hopes for the future of our Country have been blasted: the most gigantic struggle of any people for their independence has proved unsuccessful and our Government has crumbled to the dust, burying in its fall the only remnants of liberty left this distracted country. As a mighty Ship with fair winds, her port almost in sight, her crew filled with hope and expectation, is sent by a squall, to the bottom, with all sails set, so have we gone down. It behooves us to await with patience and hope, whatever the future may bring forth, to bear with fortitude and resignation what God's will may ordain and to battle manfully with the world for a position, and a support.

Although the future is dark, it may not be as dark as we anticipate and should the States be allowed to come back with their sovereignty intact, we have much yet to hope for. Uncle Henshaw, with many others, thinks this will be the case. He has been among the Yankees and his judgement is probably more correct than either yours or mine. The Yankees have not recognized the bogus government of Welles and it is probable that the whole people of the state will be allowed to choose their executive officer. My views in regard to the assassination of Lincoln are the same as yours. I think that in the present condition of the Country it is a misfortune to the South. Johnson seems to be a man void of principle and honor and if he is not restrained by the Conservative party at the North, he will out Herod, Herod. Next to our being subjugated I regard his being raised to supreme command our greatest calamity.

Source: <http://rememberinglincoln.fords.org/node/696>

Supporting Question 3

The third supporting question—“How did Booth’s actions affect Reconstruction and beyond?”—asks students to make a claim with supporting evidence about the effect of Booth’s actions on Reconstruction.

On the evening of April 11, 1865, joyful crowds “serenaded” Abraham Lincoln on the White House lawn. In response, he came onto the balcony and delivered a speech. While the speech was not as poetic as his Second Inaugural and Gettysburg addresses, it was important nonetheless. Lincoln spoke about the coming months, addressing how former Confederate states might re-enter the Union. He specifically addressed the question of Louisiana, which had been occupied by the U.S. Army since 1862. Lincoln’s proposal was that Louisiana could regain its right to representation in Congress if just 10% of its people pledged loyalty to the country. Lincoln also suggested that black men who had served their country in the U.S. Colored Troops or who were considered “especially intelligent” might gain the vote (see Sidebar 2 on page 67). This was the first time that he publicly broached the subject of people of color voting, and it was enough to set off John Wilkes Booth, who was in the crowd that night. At the trial of the conspirators, he was quoted saying in response, “That means ‘n---r’ citizenship. Now, by God, I’ll put him through!” and “That’s the last speech he’ll ever make!”



Andrew Johnson, like Lincoln, wanted to make it easy for the southern states to return to the Union. But unlike Lincoln, Johnson wanted a return to a pre-war United States, where states’ rights took precedence over racial justice. Johnson allowed some of the same Confederate leaders who rebelled against the United States to lead state governments in the South. At the same time, the U.S. Army remained a visible presence in many former Confederate states in order to guarantee that federal laws were followed. In 1866 and the following years, Congress passed laws that resulted in greater black representation in federal and state governments. However, after more than a decade of Reconstruction, the military occupation of the South ended as part of a political deal to elect Rutherford B. Hayes president in 1876. Over the next decades, southern states—and some northern states, too—passed laws allowing racial segregation in public spaces and stripping African Americans of equal rights under the law.

Some questions for discussion are:

- ▶ Would Reconstruction have gone better for the country if Lincoln had lived? Why or why not?
- ▶ Was army occupation of the southern states necessary? Was it sustainable? Can you think of other times in our history that the president and Congress have deployed American troops inside the United States?

In addition to the previous featured sources, the sources for this task explore events that occurred after Lincoln’s death. Featured Source 3A is a concise overview of Reconstruction from the Ford’s website (see Sidebar 6 on page 72). Featured source 3B is an 1865 edition of *Harper’s Weekly* titled “President Andrew Johnson Pardoning the Rebels at the White House” (see the image on page 73). Featured Source 3C is a political cartoon by Thomas Nast in the election year of 1868, titled, “Leaders of the Democratic Party.” (see the image on page 74). The Democratic Party was a major obstacle to the

Overview of Reconstruction

Lincoln's assassination after four years of Civil War posed some of the most significant challenges the country had ever faced, and left many questions unresolved. John Wilkes Booth's assassination of Lincoln offered a glimpse of what was to come: a white backlash against progress toward African-American equal rights.

How were North and South to be reunited? What was to become of four million formerly enslaved people? Would they become citizens of equal standing? Where was the balance of power between the federal government and the states?

For the next 12 years after Lincoln's assassination, through a period called Reconstruction, the reunited country fought bitterly over these questions.

On April 11, 1865, Lincoln publicly proposed—for the first time—giving African-American soldiers the right to vote. Three days later, Booth murdered him.

Andrew Johnson, like Lincoln, wanted to make it simple for Southern states to return to the Union. But unlike Lincoln, Johnson wanted a return to a pre-war United States, where states' rights took precedence over racial justice. Johnson talked of Restoration rather than Reconstruction.

In 1865 and 1866, Johnson allowed some of the same people who had rebelled against the United States to establish state governments throughout the South. Most of these new regimes passed Black Codes that demoted freedmen to a permanent second-class status.

In response, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1866, which ensured full citizenship rights for African Americans. Johnson vetoed the legislation. But after they swept the 1866 Congressional elections, Radical Republicans wasted no time in dividing the South into five separate military districts with military governance.

Under Congressional Reconstruction, states seeking to rejoin the Union had to guarantee African-American men the right to vote. They also had to ratify the 14th Amendment, which extended the benefits of citizenship to all men.

The seeds of a multiracial South were thus planted. Starting in 1867, a diverse electorate elected an estimated 1500 African Americans to office. The restrictive Black Codes passed by state legislatures were abolished. By July 1870, all of the former Confederate states were back in the Union.

Ulysses S. Grant, elected president in 1868, supported the 15th Amendment, guaranteeing all male citizens the right to vote. White Southern resistance flared up, with violence directed against Republican officeholders. Grant used military force against terrorist groups like the Ku Klux Klan.

But over time Northern interest in African-American rights faded. Sectional reconciliation took precedence over racial justice.

The election of a Democratic Congress in 1874 stalled Reconstruction policies and quickened the decline of federal protection of African-American civil rights. State governments in the South increasingly barred African Americans from voting.

The disputed presidential election of 1876 then gave white supremacists the leverage to make a deal: Democrats would permit Republican Rutherford B. Hayes to assume the presidency. In return, Hayes would end military occupation in the South.

The violent backlash that Booth began had triumphed, at least for the moment. Over the next decades, Southern states passed laws segregating the races and stripping African Americans of equal rights.

Source: <https://www.fords.org/lincolns-assassination/>

Reconstruction envisaged by radical Republicans, as the cartoon illustrates. It depicts leading Democrats as supporters of the Confederate cause: Horatio Seymour, former Governor of New York and the Democratic candidate for President in 1868, is accused of instigating the New York riots against the draft in 1863, while three leading southern Democrats (Nathan Forrest, a founder of the Ku Klux Klan; Raphael Semmes; and Wade Hampton) are linked to atrocities committed by the armed forces of the South during the Civil War. Featured source 3D is an excerpt from an essay on Lincoln's legacy and his influence on presidents who came after him (see Sidebar 7 on page 74).



President Johnson
Pardons Rebels

SOURCE:
HARPER'S WEEKLY,
OCTOBER 14, 1865

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2008680257/>

Lincoln's Legacy

Many depictions of Lincoln after his death commemorated him as The Great Emancipator. But as white Americans looked to bury the wounds of the Civil War, Lincoln took on a new significance: Savior of the Union.

This emphasis downplayed his advocacy for abolition of slavery and support, expressed for the first time in his final speech, for voting rights for a small number of African-American men.

As he anticipated the Confederacy's surrender in his Second Inaugural Address, Lincoln planned to "bind up the nation's wounds" and achieve "a just and lasting peace."

The country's first statue to Lincoln came three years to the day after his death, on April 15, 1868. This statue emphasized Lincoln's role in saving the union. Lincoln stands upright, with his left hand on a fasces, a bundle of wooden rods held together that symbolizes the unity of the country.

Today his legacy as the Savior of the Union is depicted in the Lincoln Memorial, dedicated in 1922. The Lincoln Memorial is widely considered a symbol of democracy and freedom. Since its opening, the Lincoln Memorial has served as a national stage for protests, political rallies, performances, and landmark speeches.

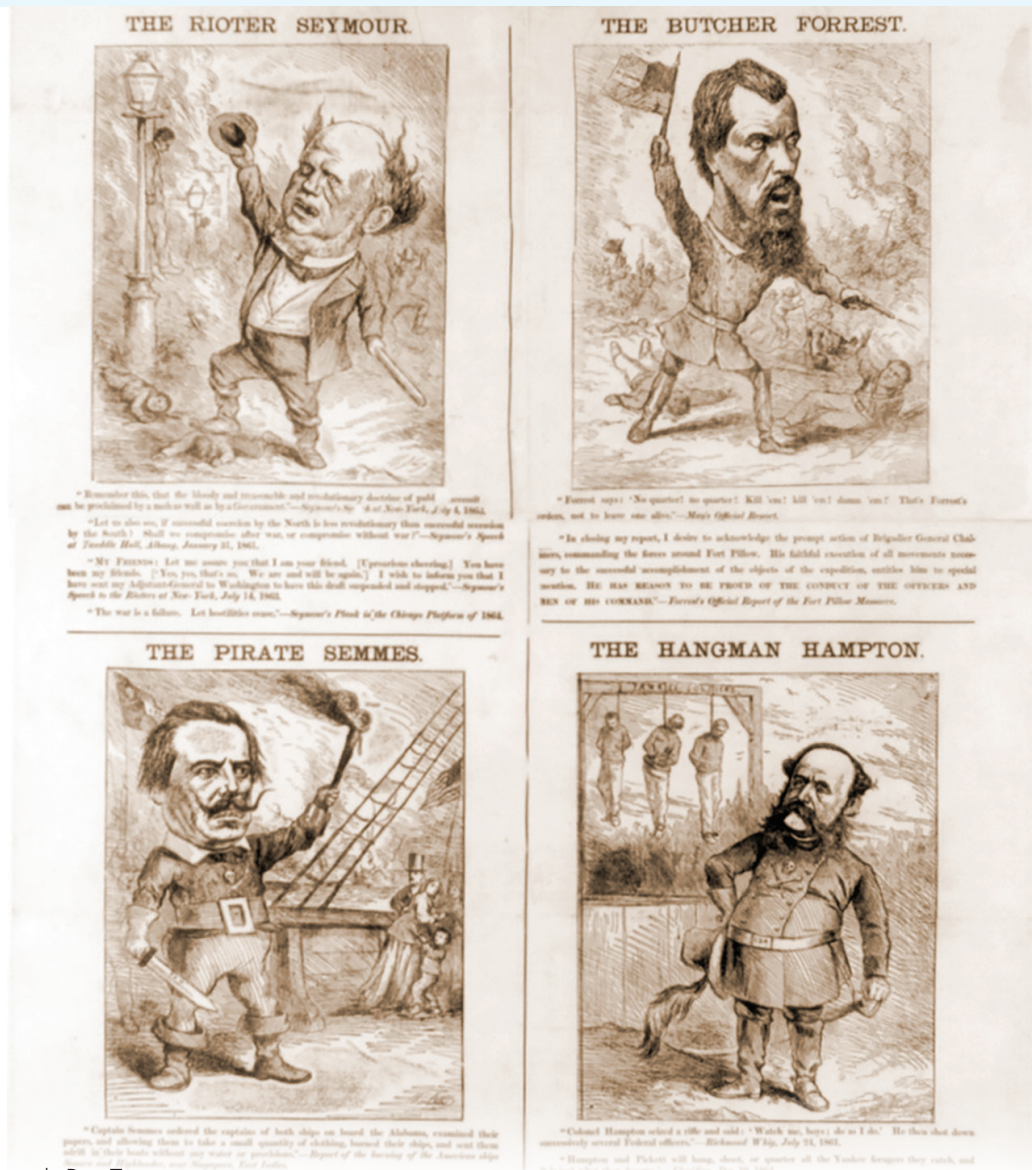
Lincoln's Memorial is connected to the Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial, by the Memorial Bridge, dedicated in 1932. Symbolically, it represents the binding of wounds between the white North and the white South.

Source: <https://www.fords.org/lincolns-assassination/>

Cartoon by
Thomas Nast

SOURCE: "LEADERS
OF THE DEMOCRATIC
PARTY", CARTOON BY
THOMAS NAST

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2008661705/>



SUMMATIVE PERFORMANCE TASK

Students should be expected to demonstrate the breadth of their understanding and their ability to use evidence from multiple sources to support their claims. In this task, students construct an evidence-based argument using multiple sources to answer the compelling question “Was John Wilkes Booth’s Conspiracy Successful?” It is important to note that students’ arguments could take a variety of forms, including a detailed outline, poster, or essay.

Students’ arguments will likely vary, but could include any of the following:

- ▶ ARGUMENT STEM 1: John Wilkes Booth’s conspiracy was not successful because two of the three intended targets survived and it did not throw the U.S. Government into chaos, thus allowing the Confederate States to continue fighting.
- ▶ ARGUMENT STEM 2: John Wilkes Booth’s conspiracy was successful because Lincoln was assassinated and his plans for Reconstruction were never realized, leading to a long period of discrimination against African Americans.

To extend their arguments, teachers may have students create PowerPoint presentations using images to illustrate their arguments.

Students have the opportunity to take informed action by drawing on their understandings of the effects of political violence. To understand the issue, students can identify an instance of political violence in recent history and explore its motives and effects. To assess the issue, students create a list of alternative strategies (marches, sit-ins, strikes, op-eds) for responding to one of these instances.

To act on the issue, students as a group create a plan of constructive action to respond to a political crisis today.

ABOUT FORD’S THEATRE

The mission of Ford’s Theatre Society is to celebrate the legacy of Abraham Lincoln and explore the American Experience through theatre and education. Ford’s Theatre National Historic Site in Washington, D.C., includes the restored theatre where President Abraham Lincoln was shot and the house where he died the next morning, as well as the Center for Education and Leadership, which opened in 2011. Operated jointly by the National Park Service and Ford’s Theatre Society, Ford’s Theatre is today an historic site, a working theatre producing four shows a year, and a museum.

Ford’s Theatre Society education initiatives explore the leadership and legacy of Abraham Lincoln and the world of Civil War Washington through engagement with performance and primary sources. In 2017, more than 400,000 young people benefited from Ford’s Theatre’s resources and programs. More than 235,000 students from around the nation visit Ford’s Theatre each school year. In addition to site visits, Ford’s Theatre offers online resources (www.fords.org), Summer Teacher Institutes, and Oratory Programs.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

The authors of this chapter are Jake Flack and Sarah Jencks. Jake Flack is the Associate Director of Museum Education at Ford’s Theatre, where he oversees historic site field trips and summer teacher institutes. Sarah Jencks is the Director of Education and Interpretation at Ford’s Theatre, which is operated by a public-private partnership between Ford’s Theatre Society and the National Park Service.

