



## Says who? Points of view from the 1860s!

Teachers! The information and resources provided by Ford's Theatre can be used in a variety of ways in your classroom. In addition preparing for a Ford's Theatre visit, you can use the resources in classroom activities that support your curriculum and are meaningful to students, whether or not they travel.

**Activity Applicable to:** History and Language Arts, 8<sup>th</sup> grade

**Foundational Resource:** (from Ford's Theatre) <http://www.fordstheatre.org/sites/default/files/explore-lincoln.pdf>

**Purpose/Rationale:** This lesson is designed to invite students to explore materials related to President Lincoln, the Civil War, and several of the many viewpoints of the 1860s. Students will consider various perspectives of the time and work with materials that informed different groups about the pressing issues of the day.

### **Selected Common Core Standards:**

W8.2.b Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

W8.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

RI8.9 Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

SL8.2 Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g. visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g. social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.

(Other standards may apply in your state or district)



## Lesson Instructions

### Part I - Activation of Prior Knowledge

60 second brain explosion! Give students the brain explosion page (attached) and tell them that they will have 60 seconds to write as many words as they can that are related to the detonator word on the page. Students should try to write continuously for the 60 seconds without worrying about word organization, explanation, right/wrong words, or spelling.

The teacher should collect the pages, noting an occasional word and inviting a student to explain the association. Alternatively, the teacher could invite students to volunteer a word association and the explanation.

The object of the explosion is to wake up previous information related to Lincoln. Teachers will be able to obtain a glimpse into their students' minds, getting an idea of what students may remember from previous lessons or experiences.

### Part II – Contextualization/Connections

Select one of the following events (or create another!):

- A fight breaks out in the hallway between classes.
- School-wide benchmark test results come out
- A student wins the school spelling bee
- A new Assistant Principal is appointed to the school
- The cafeteria runs out of pizza before the end of lunch

Ask students to carefully consider the selected event. This can be done several ways: as a full class, individually, in pairs, or in groups. Ask students to think about each of the people/groups involved in the situations listed above and answer the following questions:

- How did the person/group hear about the event?
- What would the person/group do to get more information about the event?
- How does the person/group feel about the event?
- What will the person/group do about the event?
- Are there any long-term implications related to this event for this person/group?

During discussion, use student contributions to emphasize that there are different ways of perceiving the same event. Show that different people are often given different types of information about an event.



### Part III – New Material

Using students’ previous experiences with different points of view as a way to approach new material, this lesson explores the United States of the 1860s. Students will use resources from Ford’s Theatre. To begin, students will choose one item from each column; they do not need to work straight across a row—the choice in each column should be the one that interests the student most.

<b>ROLE</b> This is the point of view that you take when creating your assignment	<b>AUDIENCE</b> This is the person or people to whom you are writing or speaking	<b>FORMAT</b> This is what you are producing or making	<b>TOPIC</b> This is the subject you are investigating and addressing
Abraham Lincoln	Union Troops	Personal letter	Formation of U.S. Colored Troops
(Newspaper Editor) David Herbert Donald	(Female fugitive slave) Jenny Spencer	Poster	
(President of the Confederacy) Jefferson Davis	(Union commander) Major Robert Anderson	Dialogue	Abolition
(Plantation wife) Doris Gallagher	(Northern shopkeeper’s wife) Melanie Weston	Urgent, informative telegram	
Confederate Troops	(Plantation wife) Doris Gallagher	Newspaper editorial	Secession
(Northern shopkeeper’s wife) Melanie Weston	Confederate Troops	Song	
(Union commander) Major Robert Anderson	(President of the Confederacy) Jefferson Davis	Obituary	Presence of troops on land
(Female fugitive slave) Jenny Spencer	(Newspaper Editor) David Herbert Donald	Journal entry	Economic challenges
Union Troops	Abraham Lincoln	Poem	

Variation Suggestion: Ask students to complete two assignments based on choices from the table, keeping one and only one of the choices the same between the two. This thread of continuity between assignments supports the students’ consideration of various perspectives.

Determine the appropriate amount of time your students will need for this assignment. Consider in-class and out-of-class work time, access to resources, and opportunities for peer-review.



Provide a gallery walk for students to see everyone’s work and prepare a place for peer-to-peer feedback (adhesive notes work well.). Students can be grouped to take the gallery walk so that a group is presenting while another is touring.

If you have technology resources, consider uploading the assignments as files or as images and allowing students to post comments on a teacher-monitored forum. Invite students to post feedback as themselves or as one of the roles from the table.

Sharing these assignments is essential for helping students to recognize different perspectives.

**Recommendation for Assessment:**

In evaluating your students’ work, use a rubric that includes the elements of the aligned standards. Rubrics are most effective when they are given out alongside the assignment directions.

For example:

Element	Expected High Quality	Acceptable	Needs improvement
Four chosen elements ___ /40	Each element is reflected with detailed support. Up to 40 points	Not all elements are reflected and/or are not reflected with detailed support. Up to 30 points	Insufficient evidence that elements were considered during assignment. Up to 20 points
Writing ___ /40	Writing is clear and coherent; writing is consistently appropriate for task, purpose, and audience. Up to 40 points	Writing is mostly clear and coherent; writing is somewhat appropriate for task, purpose, and audience. Up to 30 points	Clarity and coherence of writing impedes understandability; writing does not show consideration of task, purpose, and/or audience. Up to 20 points
Resources ___ /20	Effective use of two or more resources; resources differ in facts and/or interpretation. Up to 20 points	Two or more resources may have been used; resources do not provide differing facts and/or interpretation. Up to 15 points	Assignment does not show evidence of use of multiple resources. Up to 10 points
Total points earned ___ /100			

Variation suggestion: students can use this rubric to give peer feedback prior to submission of the assignment.



## Brain Explosion!

You've got lots of ideas and thoughts. Let's see what you think of when you hear... oh, wait—let's not light the fuse yet! When the detonator word is given, let your ideas explode onto this page. Write as many words as possible—nothing is too weird, everything is right, and spelling doesn't count. You will have 60 seconds. Get ready!

DETONATOR WORD:

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