



# SECESSION, STATES' RIGHTS, & ABRAHAM LINCOLN

## INTRODUCTION

Between 1860 and 1861, eleven states, which supported slavery, seceded from the United States. These events led to the Civil War. Talk of secession began in the 1840s as anti-slavery sentiment in the north continued to grow. Concern over whether new territories in the West should permit or prohibit slavery increased sectional tensions, which continued through the 1850s and reached their tipping point following the election of Abraham Lincoln.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this lesson plan middle school students will be able to:

- Explain what issues were dividing the nation
- Describe how Northerners and Southerners may have felt about secession

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How did the issues of states' rights and slavery increase sectional tension between the North and the South?

## LEARNING STANDARDS

This lesson is compatible with:

- *Virginia Standard of Learning US1.9b*—The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes, major events, and effects of the Civil War by explaining how the issues of states' rights and slavery increased sectional tensions.
- *College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards D2.His.12.6-8*—Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to identify further areas of inquiry and additional sources.
- *C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards D2.His.16.6-8*—Organize applicable evidence into a coherent argument about the past.

## PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS

Resources:

- *Lincoln Lately, 1861* vodcast from the Harpers Ferry Project  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1GrOH5w-9oQ&list=PLBBDD053923F8C9DA&index=5&feature=plpp\\_video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1GrOH5w-9oQ&list=PLBBDD053923F8C9DA&index=5&feature=plpp_video)

Equipment and Handouts:

- Equipment to screen vodcast (computer, project, etc.)
- Overhead projector
- *A House Divided* overhead
- *Secession* worksheet

## VODCAST DESCRIPTIONS

- *Lincoln Lately, 1861*: Students from Harpers Ferry Middle School present a new twist on modern talk shows: interviews from the past! Hear Abraham Lincoln, Robert E. Lee, Harpers Ferry citizens, and soldiers on the battlefield of Manassas tell their stories of 1861.

## LESSON ACTIVITIES

### **Activity 1**

**Pre-Assessment/Warm Up:** Students will be formatively assessed on their understanding of the issues dividing the nation prior to the Civil War. Teachers should display Abraham Lincoln’s quote on a House Divided to introduce the concept of sectionalism.

Ask students the following questions:

1. What is the issue that is dividing the nation?
2. What does Lincoln foresee happening when the house ceases (stops) to be divided?
3. What do you think, or know, actually happened?

After students have answered these questions, ask them to consider what it would have been like to be on opposing sides of this debate over slavery.

### **Activity 2**

**Vodcast Viewing: *Lincoln Lately, 1861*:** Students will watch the vodcast *Lincoln Lately, 1861*, which is in the style of a news broadcast that features interviews and live coverage of unfolding events. Special emphasis is given to interviewee’s opinions on their state’s secession or why they are fighting for a particular side of the war. It will give students a fuller understanding of the issues surrounding secession.

### **Activity 3**

**Creating a Political Cartoon:** Distribute the *Secession* worksheet. Ask students to create two political cartoons—one cartoon should represent a Southerner’s point of view on secession, while the other should represent a Northerner’s. Encourage students to consider opinions and reasoning that they heard in the vodcast. When students have completed their work, be sure to allow time for them to share, whether it be in small group or whole class setting.

### **Extending the Lesson**

The Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership’s educational program, Of the Student, By the Student, For the Student®, offers additional student-created content on the Civil War at the YouTube channel “Take the Journey.” <http://www.youtube.com/user/TakeTheJourney/videos?view=1>

Extended content includes student created vodcasts for:

- Battle of First Manassas
- Battle of Second Manassas
- Battle of Balls Bluff
- Harpers Ferry
- Battle of Antietam
- Chesapeake and Ohio Canal
- Battle of Gettysburg
- Battle of the Wilderness and the start of the Overland Campaign

For additional information on the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership’s educational programs and resources, please contact us at:

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## A House Divided

Excerpt from Abraham Lincoln's speech accepting the Illinois Republican Party's nomination as that state's United States senator:

*A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure, permanently, half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved — I do not expect the house to fall — but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward, till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new — North as well as South.*

*June 16, 1858  
Springfield, Illinois*

## Secession

**Directions:** In the spaces below, create two (2) political cartoons in response to secession in the United States. One of the cartoons should be in favor of seceding, and one should be against secession. Make sure your cartoons clearly represent each perspective for an uninformed audience. Include a title and a caption for each cartoon.

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