



THE LEADERSHIP OF LINCOLN & DAVIS IN 1861

INTRODUCTION

Abraham Lincoln was president of the United States from March of 1861 till his assassination in April 1865. He led the nation through the Civil War, determined to preserve the Union. Lincoln opposed the spread of slavery, issuing the *Emancipation Proclamation* in 1863. He also wrote the *Gettysburg Address*, the most quoted speech in American history that clarified the purpose of the war to preserve government “of the people, by the people, and for the people.”

Jefferson Davis was selected to be president of the Confederate States of America in February 1861, as Southern states seceded from the Union. A former senator from Mississippi, he did not support secession, but did believe each state was sovereign and had a right to secede from the Union. He failed to come up with a strategy to defeat the Union in the Civil War.

Both men faced enormous challenges and difficult decisions during the war that tested their leadership skills.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- Analyze primary source documents
- Describe the roles of Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis
- Explain the similarities and differences of the two men

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How did important leaders influence the outcome of the Civil War?

LEARNING STANDARDS

This lesson is compatible with:

- *Virginia Standard of Learning USI.9d*—The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes, major events, and effects of the Civil War by describing the roles of Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis, in events leading to and during the Civil War.
- *College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards D2.His.3.6-8*—Use questions generated about individuals and groups to analyze why they, and the developments they shaped, are seen as historically significant.

PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS

Resources:

- *Leadership of Lincoln & Davis in 1861* vodcast from the Battle of First Manassas Project <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tr9VyNcfoU0>

Equipment and Handouts:

- Equipment to screen vodcasts (computer, project, etc.)
- *Vodcast Analysis* worksheet
- *Letters From Abraham Lincoln* primary source worksheet
- *Letters From Jefferson Davis* primary source worksheet
- Lincoln/Davis Venn Diagram worksheet

VODCAST DESCRIPTIONS

- *Leadership of Lincoln & Davis in 1861*: Students from Stonewall Middle School in Manassas, VA examine Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis to answer the question: "How did these leaders view the Civil War in 1861?"

LESSON ACTIVITIES

Activity 1

Pretest/Warm up: Students will be formatively assessed on their knowledge of leaders of the Civil War. Teacher should have students answer the following question at the start of the lesson: "Who were some of the most important leaders of the Civil War?"

Activity 2

Vodcast Viewing: *Leadership of Lincoln & Davis in 1861*: Students will watch the vodcast, *Leadership of Lincoln & Davis in 1861*, which is an interpretation by students of primary source documents. Students will answer questions in the top three boxes on the *Vodcast Analysis* worksheet during viewing. Students should discuss with each other their impressions of the video before moving on to Activity 3.

Activity 3

Vodcast Analysis: Students may work individually or in pairs to answer the remaining questions on the *Vodcast Analysis* worksheet. Teacher leads whole class discussion of answers.

Activity 4

Primary Source Analysis: Divide students into two groups. Have half the students read and discuss the primary source correspondence by Abraham Lincoln. Have the other students read and discuss the primary source correspondence by Jefferson Davis. Then have students complete the half of the Lincoln/Davis Venn diagram worksheet that corresponds to the leader they read about. Bring students back together to help each other complete the rest of the diagram. Create a Venn diagram students can complete as a class either on a blackboard, overhead projector, or digital projection that can be typed into. Teacher or students may take turns listing facts about both of the men, then the entire class should discuss and generate the overlapping (similar) qualities of the two men in the middle of the Venn diagram.

Alternatively, the teacher can create mixed groups after students have studied one of the men so that students can share what they learned in small groups and help each other complete the Venn diagram. Overlapping qualities can be discussed in small group or large group at teacher's discretion.

Activity 5

Summative Assessment: Script a Conversation Between Lincoln and Davis: Students will be assessed on their understanding of the beliefs and leadership of Lincoln and Davis by writing an imaginary conversation between the two men. Students may choose to write a formal script or they could choose to illustrate a cartoon of the two men discussing their ideas.

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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Vodcast Analysis

Vodcast Viewing Directions: As you are watching the vodcast *Leadership of Lincoln & Davis in 1861*, answer the following questions in the boxes below.

What do you see?

What do you know?

What questions do you have?

Vodcast Analysis Directions: After having viewed *Leadership of Lincoln & Davis in 1861* vodcast, answer the questions in the spaces provided.

1. Explain what this vodcast is about:

2. What types of primary sources were used?

3. How do those sources corroborate (support) the story the students are telling?

4. Is the vodcast a good interpretation of history? Why or why not?

5. Do you think this vodcast is an effective way to learn about these two leaders? Why or why not?

6. How would you present the information differently?

Letters From Jefferson Davis

Jefferson Davis' Telegram to Samuel Cooper after First Manassas

Received at Richmond, VA

July 21 1861

By Telegraph from Manassas July 21

Night has closed upon a hard fought field -- Our forces have won a glorious victory The Enemy was routed & fled precipitately[sic] abandoning a very large amount of arms munitions Knapsacks and Baggige[sic]- The Ground was strewn for miles with those Killed & the farm houses and Grounds around were filled with his wounded- The Pursuit was continued along several routes towards Leesburg & Centerville until darkness covered the fugitives - We have captured several field Batteries & Regimental Standards & one US Flag Many prisoners have been taken -- Too high praise cannot be bestowed whether for the skill of the principal officers or for the Gallantry of all the Troops -- The Battle was mainly fought on our left, several miles from our field works--our force engaged there not Exceeding Fifteen thousand (15000) that of the Enemy Estimated at Thirty five thousand (35000).

~Jeff Davis

Jefferson Davis letter to Pius IX

Richmond, Va.

September 23, 1863

VERY VENERABLE SOVEREIGN PONTIFF:

The letters which you have written to the clergy of New Orleans and New York have been communicated to me, and I have read with emotion the deep grief therein expressed for the ruin and devastation caused by the war which is now being waged by the United States against the States and people which have selected me as their President, and your orders to your clergy to exhort the people to peace and charity. I am deeply sensible of the Christian charity which has impelled you to this reiterated appeal to the clergy. It is for this reason that I feel it my duty to express personally, and in the name of the Confederate States, our gratitude for such sentiments of Christian good feeling and love, and to assure Your Holiness that the people, threatened even on their own hearths with the most cruel oppression and terrible carnage, is desirous now, as it has always been, to see the end of this impious war ; that we have ever addressed prayers to Heaven for that issue which Your Holiness now desires ; that we desire none of our enemy's possessions, but that we fight merely to resist the devastation of our country and the shedding of our best blood, and to force them to let us live in peace under the protection of our own institutions, and under our laws, which not only insure to every one the enjoyment of his temporal rights, but also the free exercise of his religion. I pray Your Holiness to accept, on the part of myself and the people of the Confederate States, our sincere thanks for your efforts in favor of peace. May the Lord preserve the days of Your Holiness, and keep you under His divine protection.

~Jefferson Davis

Jefferson Davis letter to James M. Howry

Richmond, Va.

Aug 27, 1863

Dear Sir:

Your letter of the 25th ult., brought by Col: Looney, was laid before me a few days ago. I am glad to have received such full information as to your views concerning the affairs of the country, and shall always be gratified to hear from you.

The disasters in Mississippi were both great and unexpected to me. I had thought that the troops sent to the State, added to those already there, made a force large enough to accomplish the destruction of Grant's army. That no such result followed may have been the effect of mismanagement, or it may have been that it was unattainable. An investigation of the causes of the failure is now in progress; though, as the misfortunes have already come upon us, it would afford me but little satisfaction to know that they resulted from bad Generalship and were not inevitable.

Recent events near their own homes have been calculated to produce in some minds the feeling of gloom you speak of. But I have not yet seen cause to waver in the conviction to which I have frequently given expression, that, if our people now show as much fortitude as we are entitled to expect from those who display such conspicuous gallantry in the field, we shall certainly beat the enemy and secure our independence. As some weeks have elapsed since your letter was written, and the progress of the enemy has not been such as was apprehended, I trust that the people of the State have in a measure recovered from their depression.

The recital of your losses during the war pains me. But the firmness with which you bear them-, and the zeal in the country's behalf which characterizes you and all the members of your family, are what I had expected -- as well as the loyalty & true-heartedness of the women of the land, upon which you remark.

I beg you to present my compliments to Mrs Howry, with assurances of my admiration for her patriotic devotion. With many thanks for the kind & friendly tone of your letter, and with the best wishes for your welfare, I am, very respectfully & truly your friend & fellow citizen

~Jefferson Davis

Letters From Abraham Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln's letter to Horace Greeley

August 22, 1862

From *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* edited by Roy P. Baster

Executive Mansion,

Washington, August 22, 1862.

Hon. Horace Greeley:

Dear Sir.

I have just read yours of the 19th addressed to myself through the New-York Tribune. If there be in it any statements, or assumptions of fact, which I may know to be erroneous, I do not, now and here, controvert them. If there be in it any inferences which I may believe to be falsely drawn, I do not now and here, argue against them. If there be perceptible [sic] in it an impatient and dictatorial tone, I waive it in deference to an old friend, whose heart I have always supposed to be right.

As to the policy I "seem to be pursuing" as you say, I have not meant to leave any one in doubt.

I would save the Union. I would save it the shortest way under the Constitution. The sooner the national authority can be restored; the nearer the Union will be "the Union as it was." If there be those who would not save the Union, unless they could at the same time save slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that. What I do about slavery, and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union. I shall do less whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause, and I shall do more whenever I shall believe doing more will help the cause. I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors; and I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views.

I have here stated my purpose according to my view of official duty; and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men everywhere could be free.

Yours,

A. Lincoln.

Source: Family Tales: Abe Lincoln Letters for the years 1838 thru 1865

<http://www.familytales.org/results.php?tla=abl>

Abraham Lincoln's Unsent Letter to Major General George G. Meade*

Washington, July 14, 1863

From "The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln" edited by Roy P. Baster

Executive Mansion,

Washington, July 14, 1863

Major General Meade

I have just seen your dispatch[sic] to Gen. Halleck, asking to be relieved of your command, because of a supposed censure of mine. I am very--very--grateful to you for the magnificent success you gave the cause of

the country at Gettysburg; and I am sorry now to be the author of the slightest pain to you. But I was in such deep distress myself that I could not restrain some expression of it. I had been oppressed nearly ever since the battles at Gettysburg, by what appeared to be evidences that yourself, and Gen. Couch, and Gen. Smith, were not seeking a collision with the enemy, but were trying to get him across the river without another battle. What these evidences were, if you please, I hope to tell you at some time, when we shall both feel better. The case, summarily stated is this. You fought and beat the enemy at Gettysburg; and, of course, to say the least, his loss was as great as yours. He retreated; and you did not, as it seemed to me, pressingly pursue him; but a flood in the river detained him, till, by slow degrees, you were again upon him. You had at least twenty thousand veteran troops directly with you, and as many more raw ones within supporting distance, all in addition to those who fought with you at Gettysburg; while it was not possible that he had received a single recruit; and yet you stood and let the flood run down, bridges be built, and the enemy move away at his leisure, without attacking him. And Couch and Smith! The latter left Carlisle in time, upon all ordinary calculation, to have aided you in the last battle at Gettysburg; but he did not arrive. At the end of more than ten days, I believe twelve, under constant urging, he reached Hagerstown from Carlisle, which is not an inch over fifty-five miles, if so much. And Couch's movement was very little different.

Again, my dear general, I do not believe you appreciate the magnitude of the misfortune involved in Lee's escape. He was within your easy grasp, and to have closed upon him would, in connection with our other late successes, have ended the war. As it is, the war will be prolonged indefinitely. If you could not safely attack Lee last Monday, how can you possibly do so South of the river, when you can take with you very few more than two thirds of the force you then had in hand? It would be unreasonable to expect, and I do not expect you can now effect much. Your golden opportunity is gone, and I am distressed immeasurably because of it.

I beg you will not consider this a prosecution, or persecution of yourself. As you had learned that I was dissatisfied, I have thought it best to kindly tell you why.

Abraham Lincoln

**This letter was written on July 14, 1863, the day that Lincoln learned that Lee's Army of Northern Virginia had escaped back across the Potomac and had successfully avoided further battle with Meade's army. Frustrated with the events, Lincoln penned this letter to Meade but never sent it. Even though Meade never read the letter, it does clearly show how Lincoln felt about Meade's actions after the battle of Gettysburg.*

Source: <http://www.civilwarhome.com/lincolnmeadeletter.htm>

Comparing and Contrasting to Civil War Leaders

Directions: Read the primary source documents containing correspondence by Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis. List the personal qualities, characteristics, and types of decisions each man had to make in the spaces provided. Then consider how the two men were alike or may have faced similar situations.

