

Structured Academic Controversy: Abraham Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, making abolition a Union goal of the Civil War. *Your job is to determine whether you think he was racist.*

During today's class, you will work in teams to discuss arguments convicting and defending Abraham Lincoln. Your goals for today should include looking at all the issues, seeing both sides, and finding common ground.

SAC QUESTION: Was Abraham Lincoln racist?

Team A will argue: YES, Abraham Lincoln was racist.

Team B will argue: NO, Abraham Lincoln was not racist.

PROCEDURE

30 minutes With your teammate, read the documents in the Lincoln document set. Find four pieces of evidence that support your side.

10 minutes Team A presents. BOTH PARTNERS MUST PRESENT!!!
Team B writes down Team A's arguments and then repeats them back to Team A.

10 minutes Team B presents. BOTH PARTNERS MUST PRESENT!!!
Team A down arguments of Team B and then repeats them back to Team B.

10 minutes Everyone **CAN ABANDON** their positions. Groups of 4 attempt to develop a consensus.

Name _____

Document A:

1. (*Close reading*) What are two things that Douglas warns will happen if Lincoln is elected?

2. (*Close reading*) Based on this document, what do you think Douglas's views were on African Americans?

Document B:

1. (*Contextualization*) Try to picture an outdoor debate in 1858. These debates lasted 3 hours (!) with each candidate speaking non-stop for at least an hour. Do you completely trust what either candidate will say in this setting? Why or why not?

2. (*Close reading*) Carefully read Lincoln's response to Douglas. On what points is Lincoln willing to agree with Douglas? On what points does he differ from Douglas?

Document C:

1. (*Sourcing*) This document is a personal letter from Lincoln to a friend. Does that make you trust the document? Why or why not?

2. (*Close reading*) What amazes Lincoln about the scene he sees on the boat?

Document D:

1. (*Corroboration*) How do Lincoln's views on slavery compare with John Bell Robinson's?

ORGANIZING THE EVIDENCE

Name _____

Use this space to write your main points and the main points made by the other side.

Abraham Lincoln was racist: List the 4 main points/evidence that support this side.

1) From Document _____:

2) From Document _____:

3) From Document _____:

4) From Document _____:

Abraham Lincoln was not racist: List the 4 main points/evidence that support this side.

1) From Document _____:

2) From Document _____:

3) From Document _____:

4) From Document _____:

Coming to Consensus

STARTING NOW, YOU MAY ABANDON YOUR ASSIGNED POSITION AND ARGUE FOR EITHER SIDE.

Use the space below to outline your group's agreement. Your agreement should address evidence and arguments from both sides.

