

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

A P R E S I D E N T ' S V I S I O N

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES, ASSIGNMENTS, AND FURTHER RESOURCES

POSTER PROJECT

Ask students what they would change if they could redesign the poster. Pose questions such as: What images of Lincoln would you choose? What programs or legislation passed during Lincoln's administration would you represent? What images or primary sources would you choose to reflect important issues?

Divide students into teams and have each team develop a new poster on Lincoln to be included in the *President's Vision* series. Use the class textbook, the *President's Vision* website, and other outside sources to find images and primary sources to create the new poster.

The following list contains additional issues not addressed in the poster. As an alternative assignment, you might give the students this list and have them construct arguments to support substituting one of them for an issue addressed on the poster.

- The growth of northern industry during the war
- Wartime changes to women's roles in society
- Sherman's march to the sea
- The New York draft riots
- Lincoln's treatment of dissenters and Copperheads

DEBATE

Divide the class into the following groups:

- "Great Emancipator"
- "White Man's President"
- "Enlightened Pragmatist"
- "Conservative Revolutionary"

Explain that each of these labels has been applied to Lincoln. Provide a definition for each label. Ask each group to defend its label as the best description of Lincoln. Students should use primary sources, the *President's Vision* website, and their textbook for evidence. At the end of the activity, have each group choose a spokesperson to make a final case for that group's label. At any point during the final arguments, students can vote by changing groups. The group with the most people at the end of the class wins the debate. A discussion can follow about why so many students support that particular label over others.

CURATING A MUSEUM EXHIBITION

In groups of four or five, students should prepare a museum exhibition using the primary sources available on the *President's Vision* website and on the poster.

The exhibition should focus on Lincoln's time in office. It should examine the ways in which his ideas and values influenced the nation's development, using selected quotes from speeches, letters, and other sources, as well as images.

Groups can present their exhibitions as PowerPoint presentations or by printing out images and creating physical exhibitions.

For related educational resources, visit www.presidentsvision.org



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COMPARING OTHER POSTERS IN THE *PRESIDENT'S VISION* SERIES

Have students compare and contrast the Abraham Lincoln poster with other posters in the *President's Vision* series. Questions to address either in discussion or as an individual or group assignment:

- Which other president's vision do you feel most closely aligns with Lincoln's? Explain why.
- Which other president's vision do you feel is most different from Lincoln's? Explain why and explain what factors might account for the difference.
- Looking at the images on the Lincoln poster, do you find any images with similar or contrasting themes on other posters?
- Using one Lincoln image of your choice, identify a similar image on a different poster and explain what the images have in common in terms of their appearance and/or message.
- Using one Lincoln image of your choice, identify a contrasting image on a different poster and explain what differences exist in their appearance and/or message.

ASSIGNMENT PROMPTS

- During the Civil War, there were many competing views of the war and its purpose, even among Union supporters. How would a poster describing Lincoln's presidential vision differ from this one if Texans in 1865 had created it? What would they exclude and what would they include?
- Using the images and text on the Lincoln poster and the primary source documents in the Humanities Texas Digital Repository, write a short essay that explains Lincoln's presidential vision and how it sought to address the problems the nation faced when he became president. To what extent did he achieve his vision?
- Ask students to rate Lincoln on a scale of 1–10 as a moral president and on the same scale as a pragmatic president, with 10 as the top score. Ask students to do this privately at first and then see what the class range is by putting their answers on the board. Use this activity to generate discussion and to introduce and define the term “enlightened pragmatist,” a person who considers moral issues and is enlightened about issues of justice but who is likely to act on his or her ideals only to advance a goal.
- Consider Lincoln's personal history as well as the decades during which he was raised and established his political career. Name at least three personal and/or societal factors that shaped the development of his presidential vision. Explain your answer.
- Using your textbook or the web as a resource, find additional images of President Lincoln. Compare the images you find with the images featured on the poster. What new information do these images reveal about Lincoln?
- Identify an issue or event significant to Lincoln's presidency that you feel should have been addressed in the poster but is not. Why should this issue or event have been included on a poster addressing Lincoln's presidential vision? Using your textbook and other print and online resources, find an image that best represents this particular issue or event. Provide a brief description of the image and explain why you chose this particular image.
- Using your textbook and other print and online resources, identify another quotation from Lincoln that you feel best represents his presidential vision. Explain your choice.
- To what extent did President Lincoln's exercise of executive leadership build on previously established ideas and to what extent did he fundamentally change Americans' understanding of the government's role?

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- Why was Grant able to offer a successful resolution to President Lincoln's search for effective military leadership? How was his approach to battle distinct from that of General McClellan and other Union commanders?
- To what extent did Lincoln's death elevate him from a political leader to a martyr? For what cause was he most readily seen as a martyr?
- In your opinion, did Lincoln's death end a swift movement toward Reconstruction, or were the Radical Republicans strong enough to take charge of the process even if Lincoln had survived?

FURTHER RESOURCES

- Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln: Three Great Presidents Primary Source Set:
<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/presidents/>

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