

LINCOLN AND FT. SUMTER



A Re-creation of One of Lincoln's Pivotal Decisions



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PURPOSE

The resolution of the Fort Sumter crisis had obvious implications for the impending Civil War. President Abraham Lincoln had to decide whether to surrender or to reinforce the fort against the demands of the rebels. The situation at Sumter will provide a sounding board for the participants to examine the spectrum of frustrations, jealousies, and divisions on both sides of the conflict. The re-creation, moreover, will enable the participants to identify and analyze the complexity of this difficult presidential decision. Through participating in this re-creation students should be able to master the following:

Knowledge

1. Explaining the social, political, and economic divisions which developed between North and South before the Civil War
2. Understanding how Lincoln's election influenced the South to secede
3. Discussing the significance of Lincoln's decision about the Fort Sumter crisis
4. Analyzing the arguments Lincoln weighed while choosing whether to defend or to surrender Fort Sumter

Attitudes

1. Appreciating the validity in differing points of view
2. Understanding the role of leadership in decision-making

Skills

1. Hypothesizing about the possible implications of a presidential decision
2. Summarizing the main issues in the readings
3. Writing paragraphs comparing positions of participants
4. Defending and questioning opposing opinions orally
5. Analyzing components of a decision



Students will analyze the arguments Lincoln weighed while choosing whether to defend or to surrender Ft. Sumter.

OVERVIEW



Interact's re-creations
take only a few hours
of class time.

During three days of instruction, students become aware of the issues in the Fort Sumter crisis, participate in a re-creation of Lincoln's decision-making session, and take part in a debriefing on Lincoln's decision.

Day 1

You, as teacher, motivate and introduce the re-creation, have students read the Student Guide, assign roles/responsibilities for the actual re-creation.

Day 2

Students in their roles as moderator, President Lincoln, and his advisers/critics meet to discuss whether Fort Sumter should be surrendered to the Confederacy or secured and defended against them. After the president announces his decision, the audience questions Lincoln and discusses his reasons for his choice.

Day 3 (and maybe an extra day)

As teacher you have two recommended final options—*debriefing* and *testing*. In cooperative learning groups students debrief by examining and prioritizing a list of considerations Lincoln might have weighed as he made his Fort Sumter decision. Next groups compare and discuss their choices. In the testing period groups first examine a 25-question test and then break apart to take the test individually.

SETUP DIRECTIONS - 1

1. **Handouts** Duplicate the number in parentheses, using the masters in this Teacher Guide.
 - MODERATOR (one: two pages, back to back)
 - PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN (one: three pages, back to back)
 - MONTGOMERY BLAIR (one: two pages, back to back)
 - STEVEN HURLBUT (one: two pages, back to back)
 - WILLIAM SEWARD (one: three pages, back to back)
 - GENERAL WINFIELD SCOTT (one: two pages, back to back)**Optional:**
 - * UNIT TEST (class set: two pages, back to back)

2. **Assigning roles** Only six real roles exist in this recreation—five if you decide to assume the moderator role yourself.

Remember: *Interact's hope and expectation is that you and your students will use other of these 25 American history re-creations during this school year. If you do, each of your students, regardless of ability, should have had the opportunity to have played at least one speaking role during this history course.*

Of course, randomly assigning roles is not recommended. Key roles must have capable students. Roles with lesser demands, however, can certainly be filled by less capable students who either you or their classmates help along the way. One of the real satisfactions in using Interact's *participatory* materials, we believe, is that students grow as persons as well as historians!



Helping students grow...

*as persons
as well as
historians ...*

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Consider seeing your friendly school librarian so that she/he will set up a LINCOLN AND FT. SUMTER RESERVE SHELF just for your class.

Certain students—the one playing Lincoln, for example—just might go to scholarly works such as Benjamin Platt Thomas' biography in order to "flesh out" his/her character.

Catton, Bruce, *The Coming Fury*, Doubleday and Company, Garden City, 1961. Catton, an eminent Civil War historian, offers a well-drawn overview of events and circumstances of the approaching Civil War.

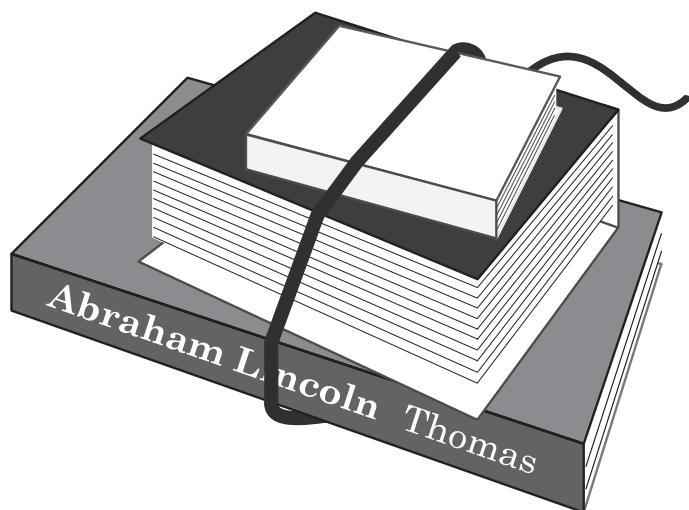
Current, Richard N., *Lincoln and the First Shot*, J.B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, 1963. This fine work is a detailed description of the specific Fort Sumter crisis. It clearly draws the issues for examination and spends considerable energy discussing various interpretations of the crisis by schools of historiography.

Staudenraus, P.J., ed., *The Secession Crisis, 1860-1861*, Rand McNally, Chicago, 1963. The editor presents a wide assortment of documentary sources discussing several dimensions of the entire secession issue. The selections enable the reader to gain perspective on the motives and viewpoints of Civil War contemporaries.

Swanberg, W.A., *First Blood, the Story of Fort Sumter*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1967. This more scholarly and detailed description is particularly valuable in its description of specific personalities involved in the Fort Sumter problem.

Thomas, Benjamin P., *Abraham Lincoln*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1952. Thomas' book is a good scholarly single volume biography of Lincoln. It provides good information about his political career and vividly describes the currents and controversies churning around Sumter.

Werstein, Irving, *Abraham Lincoln versus Jefferson Davis*, Crowell, New York, 1959. Werstein's book is an interesting comparison of the backgrounds, careers, and leadership of the two opposing heads of government during the Civil War.



DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 1



Be certain you have carefully planned how to integrate this re-creation with the pre-Civil War history chapters you have had your students read in their textbooks.

Before Day 1 Be sure you have thoroughly examined this Teacher Guide, the Student Guide, and the various handouts.

Day 1

1. As in any lesson, teaching becomes easier when you have first used a “hook” to capture the class’ initial attention. Locate a filmstrip or movie about the Civil War, or prepare a lecture to introduce the material.
2. Possibly you may wish to challenge the class with a concrete situation with questions such as the following:
 - a. Can this class secede from the rest of the school?
 - b. What arguments could you use to keep this classroom independent from the school?
 - c. Would the principal accept any such secession?
 - d. What kinds of actions might you expect the principal to take?

If your principal is willing, you might even prearrange this “confrontation” with him and have the class draft a letter of secession to him for his reaction.

3. Link your interest catcher with the re-creation by distributing the Student Guide. Have the students read the Purpose and Background Essay
4. Assign the roles.
5. Insure that all students understand their tasks. Separate the pupils playing the moderator, president, and advisers/ critics so they can begin preparation. Assist the audience in preparing their note-taking forms as described in the Student Guide. Circulate among the role-players so that you can speak to and assist individuals in understanding their duties.
6. For homework, assign students to complete reading the Student Guide and the pertinent pages from their text about Fort Sumter. Remind advisers and critics to write their paragraphs, expressing their character’s opinions to use during the decision-making session.

Day 2

1. The moderator begins the day by setting the tone of the simulation. Assist him/her by checking the physical arrangement of the room and by reviewing his/her introductory paragraph.

DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 2



Encourage your students to speak passionately. Work to get them truly involved in their characterizations.

If you have a quality class and you are considering using this re-creation next year, video tape the presidential decision so that you can show portions next year to stimulate students' performance. (Such a video is also useful for open house when you want parents to see the participatory nature of your instruction.)



2. After the moderator begins the session, the re-creation follows the sequence found in the President Lincoln's handout.
 - a. The president reviews the differences between the North and South and discusses how Fort Sumter represents this division.
 - b. The group assesses the specific political and military situation at Sumter.
 - c. The group discusses and analyzes the four alternatives as described in the Student Guide.
 - d. The president announces his decision to the class.
3. The audience, with the moderator acting as chairperson, asks questions of the president, probing for explanation or challenging his position.
4. The moderator conducts a reaction to the president's decision. The moderator may ask those students who favored a specific alternative to go to one corner of the room (one corner for each of the four alternatives); the undecided students to the room's middle area. The moderator then might interview one person from each subgroup about his/her choice in light of the decision-making session.
5. The moderator collects the advisers' and critics' paragraphs.
6. Your role in Day 2 should be as unobtrusive as possible. If your work to prepare students for Day 2 was successful, the re-creation will run itself. Avoid coming to the rescue in an awkward moment as much as you can.
7. Your key role is watching the clock to be certain that all stages of the discussion get adequate time. (You may want to have prearranged some signals with the president to slow down, speed up, ask for more explanation, etc.)
8. Before Day 2 ends, inform the students of your expectations for Day 3. Possible options:
 - **Option 1:** Review notes for tomorrow's objective exam.
 - **Option 2:** Have students review their notes and study the Debriefing description in the Student Guide.
 - **Option 3:** Give your students no overnight assignment.

DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 3



Having students speak about the activity they have experienced will intensify their learning. Such speaking experiences also help students' personal growth.

Day 3—and possibly another day

Note: You may choose to use both the debriefing and the testing discussed in the Student Guide on page 8. If you use both, two days may be required.

1. Divide your class into activity groups of about five to six members each. Insure that the students who played the key roles are split equally among the groups.
2. Have your groups form circles. Group members next choose a chairperson and a recorder.
3. Begin the debriefing by having group members read the Debriefing on page 8 of the Student Guide.
4. Insure that each group's recorder writes down its list of priorities with the first being the most important; second item, the next most important, etc. Also stress that the recorder must write down the reasons the group has established for each choice.
5. End the activity with a chairperson's panel in the front of the room where chairpersons can compare and discuss their lists. If time permits, poll the entire class for a possible consensus on the most important priority.
6. If you are going to test your students over the re-creation, consider using this procedure:
 - a. Have the debriefing groups circle up once more.
 - b. Give each student an objective test which group members may discuss among themselves. **Note:** Only their notes and the test sheets may be on their desks. Make sure all Student Guides and writing instruments have been put away.
 - c. Have students return to their regular seats and individually take the test without any aid from their notes.
 - d. Finally, have students exchange papers, score them, and have the groups reform and calculate their average scores.
 - e. Give a bonus to the group members with the highest score.
 - f. Here is a key to the UNIT TEST: 1. d, 2. c, 3. b, 4. d, 5. c, 6. a, 7. d, 8. a, 9. d, 10. c, 11. b, 12. d, 13. b, 14. d, 15. b, 16. b, 17. d, 18. d, 19. b, 20. d, 21. a, 22. d, 23. c, 24. a, 25. d.

MODERATOR HANDOUT - 1

You are responsible for a smoothly run decision-making session. Think of yourself as the “glue” holding together all the parts.

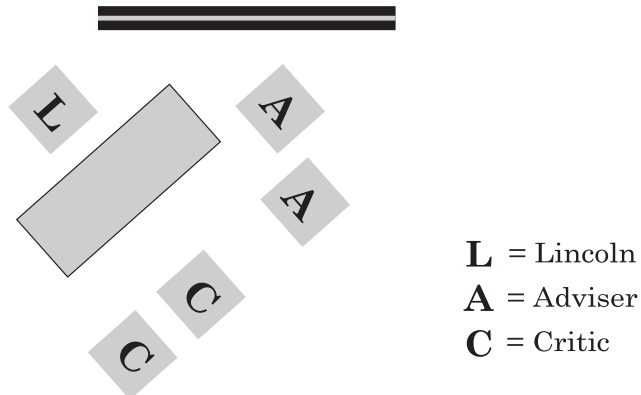
Before the re-creation

Role players:

Abraham Lincoln
William Seward
Montgomery Blair
Steven Hurlbut
General Winfield Scott

1. Meet with the role-players and insure that they all feel comfortable in their tasks and that they are prepared.
2. Make suggestions to the role-players so that they understand how to act their roles. Emphasize that they should strive to talk and act like the persons they are portraying. For example, Seward looked down on Lincoln and thought he should be president. Blair and Seward intensely disliked each other while Scott and Seward were friendly to one another. Scott, a military man, weighed 300 pounds, was sickly and more than 70 years old. President Lincoln, although interested in his advisers' and his critics' viewpoints, clearly communicated his intention that he would maintain his right to make his own decision even in the face of unanimous dissent. (Advisers and critics alike soon learned that this president was not going to be a weakling.)
3. If time permits, obtain appropriate props to enhance the re-creation: a mock letter from Major Robert Anderson, a presidential seal, folded name slips to be set on desks in front of each role player.
4. Decide exactly how you are going to arrange the room so that every audience member can clearly see and hear the proceedings. Here is a possible room arrangement:

Map including the two forts



Note: You will move into and out of the scene as you moderate the re-creation.



Members of the audience taking notes

MODERATOR HANDOUT - 2



You will be more effective if you watch some individuals on TV who are moderating panel discussions.

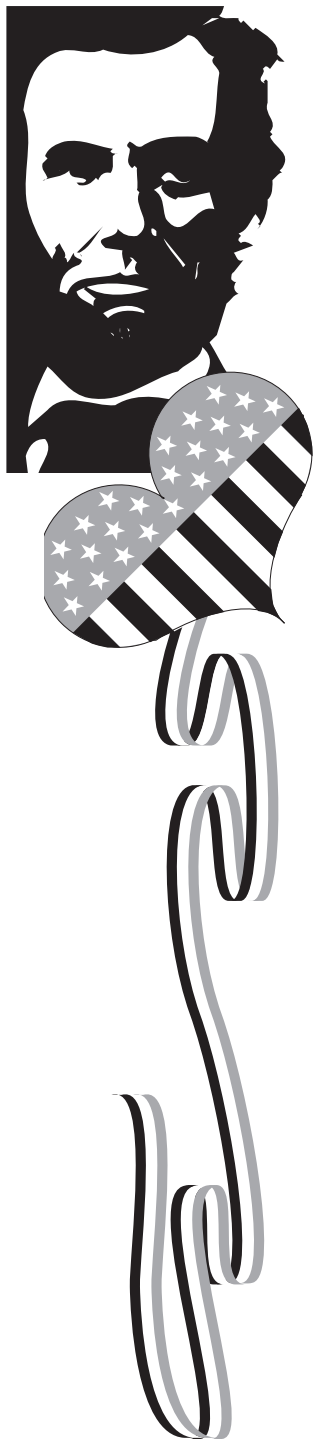
Note that the most effective ones are carefully prepared, speak forcefully and clearly, and communicate how interesting they think the subject of the program is. Therefore, strive to be prepared, forceful, clear, and enthusiastic!

5. Write your introductory paragraphs in order to set the scene dramatically and historically. Cover the following:
 - **Time** March 28, 1861—just after General Winfield Scott has suggested to President Lincoln that he forfeit both forts Sumter and Pickens and about two weeks before Anderson's supplies are scheduled to run out
 - **Place** The White House
 - **Participants** Lincoln, Seward, Scott, Blair, and Hurlbut (see Roles and Responsibilities in the Student Guide)
 - **Situation** The Confederates have demanded the surrender of Fort Sumter. If it is not surrendered, they have vowed to take it by force. President Lincoln must decide what action he should take about the forts.
6. Practice speaking your above introduction so that you will not read it in such a way that everyone falls asleep because you are speaking in a monotone.

The re-creation hour

1. Arrange the room, similar to the suggested arrangement on page 8.
2. Have the meeting in the president's office. After you introduce the situation with your opening paragraphs, the president will conduct the actual decision-making session, following the sequence in President Lincoln's handout.
3. Once President Lincoln has announced his decision, conduct a question-and-answer session. Call on students to question the president so that everyone clearly understands his reasoning. Allow students who were advisers or critics to slip out of their role-players' "hats" so that they, too, can ask or answer questions.
4. When the questioning is completed, conduct a poll to see the popularity of the president's decision. Ask students who support Alternative 1 to go to one corner of the room. Follow the same procedure for the remaining three alternatives. Put undecided students in the middle. If time permits, interview one student from each group to get more candid responses about the president's choice.
5. Assist the teacher in collecting the advisers' and critics' paragraphs and the audience members' alternative analysis sheets.
6. Turn over the class to your teacher, who will discuss whichever testing and debriefing activities he/she plans to follow.

PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN HANDOUT - 1



As the decision-maker, you are the focus of this re-creation. You have three general responsibilities:

- portraying Abraham Lincoln
- conducting the decision-making session
- making, announcing, and justifying your decision

Background information

To successfully carry out the above responsibilities, you must be familiar with your political career, your views about the extension of slavery, your convictions about the illegitimacy of secession, and your role in the Fort Sumter crisis. (Reviewing the Background Essay in the Student Guide will help you.) Here is a brief reiteration of some key points.

1. Your election in 1860 induced the Deep South to secede. You were a minority president whose election seemed to threaten the South's way of life. Despite your efforts to convince the South you meant them no harm, several Southern states decided to secede.
2. Prior to your inauguration most forts and federal holdings in these states were transferred to Confederate possession. This was true of all forts except three in Florida and Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina. These remaining four forts the Confederates demanded.
3. Both before and after your inauguration, you proposed compromise. However, you adamantly refused to discuss slavery's extension and vowed to hold all federal property.
4. With Sumter's fate in doubt, you had to consider a variety of questions: *Would surrendering the fort imply recognition of the Confederacy? What action must I take to uphold the authority of the federal government? Would strong Union action shake border state loyalty? Could I afford to have the Union labeled an aggressor in the world's eyes?*

Re-creation participants

You will convene a meeting of two advisers and two critics. Their suggestions will help you select the correct decision during this national crisis. William Seward, your secretary of state, will be one critic. Expect him to recommend that you proceed cautiously with the rebels. Your second critic will be General Winfield Scott. This close associate of Seward will likely question the military practicality of saving Sumter and advocate conciliation. Postmaster General Montgomery Blair, one of your advisers, is also your number one "hawk." He will press for decisive Union action to resolve the issue. A second adviser, your friend Stephen Hurlbut, who is a Charleston native, will return from that city to inform you of how much sympathy for the Union is now felt by South Carolinians.

PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN HANDOUT - 2



When asking questions, try some “wait time.” Teachers use this technique to elicit more thoughtful answers. See if it will work for you.

The re-creation begins

After the moderator introduces the re-creation, you will lead the decision-making session. Using the question guide provided below, conduct the discussion in an orderly, “presidential manner.” That is, avoid immediately responding to an adviser’s/critic’s initial answer. Just wait for the participant to continue. If you do, the role-player will often more deeply explain his/her ideas than if you had quickly replied to the initial response to your question.

If an adviser’s or critic’s reply seems too general, ask “why” or “how” questions. Point out differences and similarities between all participants’ viewpoints so that everyone understands all aspects of the issue being discussed.

After the initial discussion, analyze the alternatives available to you in order to decide what to do about the possible surrender of Fort Sumter. During this analysis segment, use the four alternatives provided in the Student Guide and systematically identify the strong and weak points of each. Question your participants so that you identify one or two pros and cons for each alternative. Figure out which option each adviser or critic supports while encouraging the participants to freely exchange opinions about each position



If you read the questions like a robot, you will sound stiff, formal, and boring.

Presidential questions

Here are suggested questions and a possible sequence to follow. At home practice saying these questions aloud so that you are familiar with the pacing and wording you will use. Be careful so that you do not memorize and recite the questions. You may want to put the questions into your own words. If you do, be sure you keep the specific intent of each question.

1. Gentlemen, perhaps we should begin by identifying the gravity of this crisis. How has Sumter come to represent all that is dividing North and South?
2. What is at stake at Sumter? For the Union? For the Confederacy?
3. General Scott, can you assess the military situation at Fort Sumter and at Fort Pickens?
4. Does everyone concur with that analysis?
5. Can anyone speculate on the South’s willingness to compromise about Sumter?

PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN HANDOUT - 3

6. Some have advised me that there is considerable Union sympathy in South Carolina. They stress that we may be able to use it to our advantage. Is this the case?
7. Let's summarize our situation by examining the pros and cons of each alternative. What about our first alternative? (State Alternative 1 on page 7 in the Student Guide.)
8. Repeat above, except concentrate on alternatives 2-3-4.
9. Which alternative does each of you prefer?



Approach your role seriously.

Above all: *Never leave any doubt that you are the president.*

You will be much better prepared if you go to a library and get some books on Lincoln to read. Figure out how you believe he would have acted under the circumstances. Try your best to "get into the role" and then "to stay in character."

Final suggestion: *If you have time, rent a video in which some talented actor plays Lincoln. You could pick up several acting tips!*

Making and announcing your decision

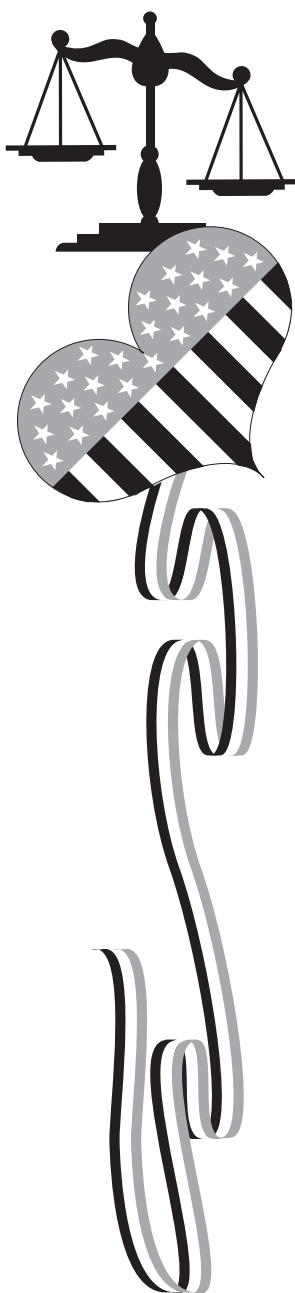
Despite the strong arguments for all the alternatives, you will choose Alternative 3:

- a. You will attempt to supply Fort Sumter with food only.
- b. You will use force only if the rebels resist this move.
- c. You will advise the Confederates that you mean only to bring supplies to the men there.

While announcing your decision, stand, face the class, and state it simply. Explain that this alternative permits you to demonstrate your resolve to retain federal property. At the same time if the Confederacy tries to fire on Union ships, you can rightly claim to the world that the South has fired on food, not weapons.

Finally, be prepared to field questions from the audience so that you can clarify misunderstandings and exchange opinions with them.

MONTGOMERY BLAIR HANDOUT - 1



As presidential adviser you have a vital role to play in helping President Abraham Lincoln analyze the issues surrounding the Fort Sumter crisis. You will give opinions to Lincoln as he struggles to determine the best plan to follow to solve the problem there.

To meet this responsibility you have several tasks to fulfill:

1. Know your background and political career.
2. Know your relationship with President Lincoln.
3. Write a paragraph summarizing your opinions about reinforcing and provisioning Fort Sumter.
4. Present these opinions to Lincoln and the group.
5. Be ready to answer questions about your views and to exchange opinions about other persons' positions.

Background information

You are a lawyer, statesman, and member of an important political family from two border states, Missouri and Maryland. Your career has already crossed the secession issue before. While working under President Andrew Jackson, you admired his forthright action when he dealt with the Nullification Crisis in South Carolina. You served as counsel for Dred Scott in the famous Supreme Court case; you also helped John Brown get a defense attorney after his raid at Harper's Ferry, Virginia. President Lincoln, seeking some political and geographic balance and giving in to considerable pressure from your father, appointed you postmaster general in his cabinet.

Although you are from a slave-holding border state, you are an ardent Unionist. Furthermore, you believe that you understand the Southern mentality and attitude well enough to influence the president about the kind of action he should take at this time.

You are sure that the Southerner believes he is vastly superior to a Northerner. Tell the president you have heard Southern blusters everywhere state that "any Southerner is equal to a half dozen Yankees." Therefore, you believe that only a show of force will catch Southern attention. You advocate a strong, visible, Union force to stop the secessionists. You must advise the president that in order for the Union to uphold the force of its laws the Union must convince the South that it is willing to go to war if it must.

You are intensely opposed to secession. Consequently, when you consider the Fort Sumter situation on March 28, 1861, you advise no quarter to the Confederates. At an earlier cabinet meeting on March 15 in which Lincoln had asked for advice about provisioning the fort,

MONTGOMERY BLAIR HANDOUT - 2

you were the only cabinet member to hold out for reinforcing and supplying Sumter. You even threatened to quit if Lincoln chose anything less. Your failure to sway the president angers you further when you realize that your arch enemy Secretary of State William Seward is recommending a much more peaceful handling of the crisis.

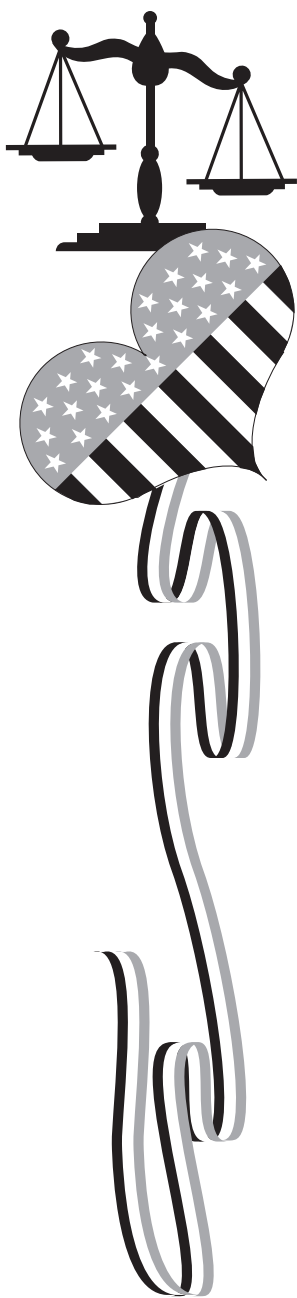


You are prepared to demonstrate that Fort Sumter can be saved. Your brother-in-law, Gustavus Fox of Massachusetts, who later became a secretary of the navy, has convinced you that he can command a naval force to aid Sumter. Here is his plan:

- First, put sufficient troops on a large transport.
- Second, put supplies on two rented New York tug boats.
- Third, convoy this fleet with heavily armed ships.
- Fourth, have the ships' and Ft. Sumter's guns silence the Confederate batteries.
- Finally, send the troops and supplies to the fort at night.

Your task, therefore, is very clear. Convince President Lincoln that he needs to demonstrate the Union's strength to the South. Also prove to Lincoln that it is possible to provision and reinforce Fort Sumter. Finally, perhaps your most important goal must be to cast doubts on what you think is weak, spineless advice of the heartless peacemakers who are calling for compromise at any cost.

STEVEN HURLBUT HANDOUT - 1



In your role as presidential adviser you must help President Abraham Lincoln assess the degree of pro-Unionist sympathy in South Carolina. You will also offer advice to the president as he struggles to choose the proper alternatives in the Fort Sumter question.

To meet this responsibility you have several tasks to fulfill:

1. Know your background and association with the president.
2. Know your own role in the Fort Sumter crisis.
3. Write a paragraph summarizing your opinions about Fort Sumter.
4. Present your opinions to Lincoln and to the group.
5. Be ready to answer any questions about your views and to exchange opinions about other persons' positions.

Background information

Your chief value to the president lies in the fact that you are a native of Charleston, South Carolina. When you moved to Illinois, you became Lincoln's friend because both of you were lawyers. Naturally Lincoln turned to you when he sought more information to substantiate William Seward's claim that there were strong pro-Union sympathies among silent citizens of South Carolina. So you agreed to travel to your sister's home in Charleston to view the situation there.

Having returned to Washington, you have several convictions about the situation in Charleston. First, you're certain that South Carolinians have no intention of returning to the Union. "Separate nationality is a fixed fact"; indeed, they have great expectations for the success of their venture. Only at Fort Sumter itself, for example, did you see the Stars and Stripes flying.

You also have military observations to contribute. You've discovered that ships sunk by the Confederates to obstruct the ship channel into Charleston harbor have floated away. Thus, it is possible to bring a fleet of Union ships into the harbor.

You also have clear opinions about the possibility of merely provisioning the men at Sumter. You have no doubt that even the more moderate among the rebels would open fire upon such an attempt. Moreover, you're certain that any conciliatory gesture Lincoln might offer the South will only bolster Southern confidence to demand Fort Pickens next. You are totally convinced that the seven seceding states are irrevocably committed to their cause. The president must be made to understand this basic point. Therefore, if Lincoln is to meet his responsibility as president of the United States, he must prepare for war.

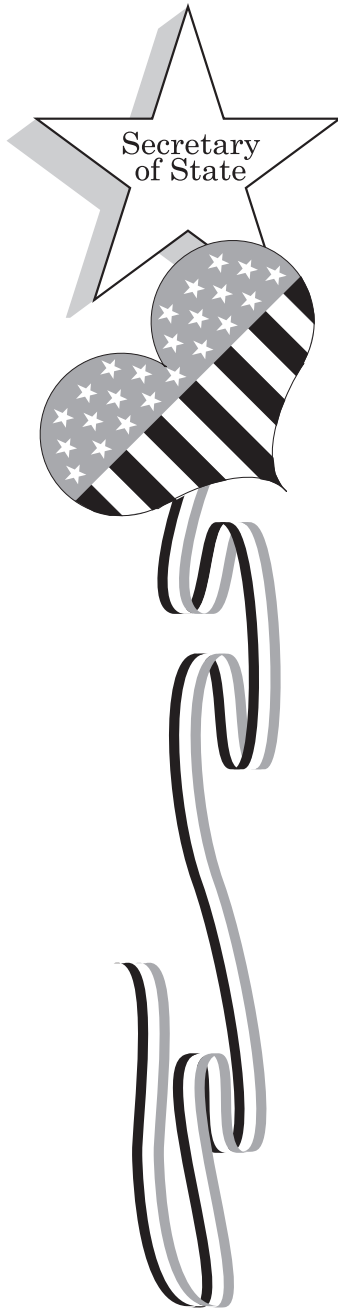
STEVEN HURLBUT HANDOUT - 2

In summary, as a presidential adviser, you must convince the president that you observed first-hand in Charleston no Southern sympathy for the Union. You should also communicate your feelings that the Confederates will react militarily to any Union move to aid Sumter. Drive home these points so that President Lincoln understands the gravity of the situation.



Remember as you play this role that you are both a native of Charleston and a friend of Lincoln. Since you used to be a Southerner, you may wish to practice a Southern accent to use during the re-creation. However, even though Lincoln is a personal friend, you must not act overly friendly with him. Why? He is the president of the United States—a leader who must always be treated with respect.

WILLIAM SEWARD HANDOUT - 1



As a presidential critic you will first assist President Abraham Lincoln in reviewing the circumstances leading to the crisis at Fort Sumter. But your main goal is to try to convince the president that he should surrender Fort Sumter.

To meet this responsibility you have several tasks to fulfill:

1. Know your background, your political career, and your relationship with President Lincoln.
2. Know your own role in the secession and Fort Sumter crisis.
3. Write a paragraph detailing your opinions about the best option Lincoln should choose.
4. Present your opinions to Lincoln and the group.
5. Be ready to answer any questions about your views and to exchange opinions about other persons' positions.

Background information

Your early career in your native New York was distinguished. You turned your law career into a political one, serving as state senator, as governor of New York, then as a senator in Washington. There you championed the abolitionist cause. In the Senate you vocally opposed any compromise with pro-slavery forces. A brilliant and fiery speaker, you are detested in the South as a symbol of all that is evil in the North.

Many believed you would be the Republican nominee for president in 1860. Others, however, fearful of your radical reputation, looked to other candidates. Eventually Abraham Lincoln upset your candidacy and gained the nomination. Deeply disappointed, you nevertheless campaigned hard for Lincoln. However, you still believed that you were the number one figure in the party.

Lincoln's election prompted the secession of seven Southern states. At this juncture you adopted an uncharacteristic stance concerning the South: You advocated conciliation with the South, and you sought to mitigate the crisis. In fact, you believed that only you were capable of helping America avert a civil war. To this end you played down the hot passions on either side and tried instead to work on what you believed to be considerable pro-Union sentiment in the Confederacy. You reasoned that if they were given enough time, these seven states would realize their mistakes and return to the Union.

With conciliation and compromise uppermost in your mind, you were not pleased by Major Robert Anderson's move to Fort Sumter. You regarded this move as an inflammatory and provocative act which could only further enrage the South.

WILLIAM SEWARD HANDOUT - 2



As a student you will find researching Seward's relationship to Lincoln very interesting. Try to spend some extra time in a solid Lincoln or Seward biography reading about how they related to one another.

If you do such research, you will definitely help yourself in finding out how you should act in Lincoln's presence.

When President-elect Lincoln offered you the secretary of state post, you tried to influence Lincoln's cabinet choices by recommending men who would all be moderates. When rebuffed by Lincoln, you even tried to resign because you felt you had not fully influenced Lincoln. You decided, however, that by staying on you would have a better chance to pursue your policies than you would if you were not a member of Lincoln's cabinet. Therefore, you remained and even convinced the president to revise his inaugural speech. You got Lincoln to avoid the hostile "hold or retake" passage about federal forts; instead, you talked him into using the less warlike "hold, occupy, and possess" phrase.

For the most part, however, you regard the new president as your intellectual and political inferior. Believing this, you decided to solve the Sumter crisis yourself. To this end, you began behind-the-scenes discussions with intermediaries. They have relayed your messages to the Confederate commissioners currently in Washington on how you wish to negotiate Sumter's fate. (Obviously, you have not dared to meet these commissioners face to face since this would imply diplomatic recognition of the Confederacy.) Your consistent theme with the commissioners has been compromise. You have communicated that you will convince Lincoln to surrender Fort Sumter. You expect this act to go far in soothing the South's passions.

The commissioners, through their intermediary Supreme Court Judge John Archibald Campbell of Alabama, have pressed you for a date by which Lincoln would forfeit Sumter. On March 15, 1861, you assured Judge Campbell that the South would have the fort within three days. However, on the same day Lincoln polled his cabinet whether Sumter should be provisioned. Such a question frightened you since agreement to supply and to provision Major Anderson and his men would thwart all your attempts to avert a crisis. Therefore, you strongly advised against any such move. The majority accepted your protest, and any action was temporarily delayed.

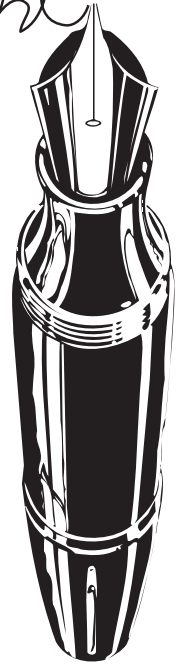
General Winfield Scott's March 28 suggestion to surrender *both* Fort Sumter and Fort Pickens hit Lincoln and the cabinet hard. In response, Lincoln ordered a naval expedition to prepare to relieve Sumter. Since you had promised that the fort would be surrendered, you rightly feared this move since it would expose you as a fraud to the Confederates. You feared that questioning would damage your credibility with both sides. In a face-saving move you wrote a memo to Lincoln which still advocated surrendering Fort Sumter. However, you recommended defending Fort Pickens. You even offered to begin preparations yourself.

WILLIAM SEWARD HANDOUT - 3

You have been considering writing another memo to the president.

Dear Mr. President

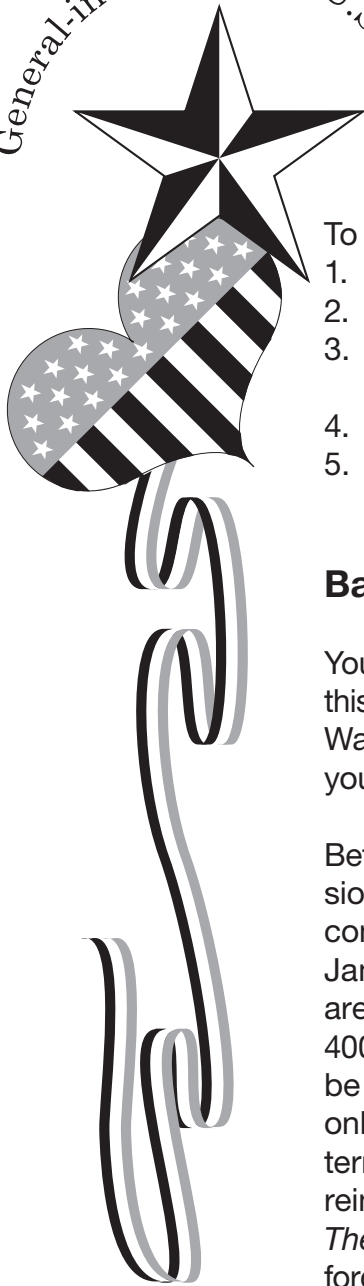
This time you would privately criticize Lincoln's inaction over the past month, and you would offer that you would take over the government. (You would imply that you were more capable of leadership at this time.) If you were to take over, your first action would be to divert national attention from the immediate crisis by contriving a foreign crisis such as a war with Great Britain or Spain. This external threat would galvanize the entire nation, North and South, to meet the common foe. Such leadership would avoid civil war and maintain your own stature as politician and statesman.



Your basic goal, therefore, is to convince the president that he can avoid civil war if he follows your advice and proposes conciliation with the rebels. Prudent, cautious acts will convince the South of the Union's good intentions. War will thus be averted. In conclusion, although you aren't pleased with arming and maintaining Fort Pickens, such an alternative represents a fall-back approach which is better than fighting to keep Fort Sumter.

GENERAL WINFIELD SCOTT HANDOUT - 1

General-in-Chief of the U.S. Army



Your role as a presidential critic is to assist President Abraham Lincoln in examining the military details surrounding the Fort Sumter crisis. You will also offer your opinions to the president so that he can determine the best solution to the situation there.

To meet this responsibility you have several tasks to fulfill:

1. Know your background and military career.
2. Know your own role in the secession and Fort Sumter crisis.
3. Write a paragraph summarizing your opinions about the best solution to the secession/Sumter problem.
4. Present your opinions to Lincoln and the group.
5. Be ready to answer any questions about your views and to exchange opinions about other persons' positions.

Background information

You are the leading military figure in the United States. You have earned this acclaim by heroic acts in two wars: the War of 1812 and the Mexican War. A presidential nominee in 1852 and general-in-chief of the army, you are a man of great national stature and influence in Washington.

Before Lincoln's election, you had recognized the possibility of secession. You had even suggested that the United States be split into four confederacies to avoid bloody war; you had also counseled President James Buchanan to strengthen United States forts in Confederate areas. After all, you pointed out to the president, there were scarcely 400 soldiers throughout the South. Therefore, more Union troops should be stationed there. (At this time the entire American army numbers only about 16,000 men, most of whom are stationed in the Western territories.) Moreover, you had specifically requested that Buchanan reinforce Fort Sumter. Buchanan belatedly ordered an unarmed ship, *The Star of the West*, to supply the fort; but Confederate cannons had forced the ship to return. Each day lost was worsening conditions there.

Prior to Lincoln's inauguration he had written to you that he wanted all federal forts in the South held or retaken in case they were seized by Confederate rebels. However, by Lincoln's inaugural you believed that Sumter could not be saved. You estimated that the task would require a fleet of ships and four months to raise and train the 25,000 men needed to retake the fort. By the end of four months, of course, Major Robert Anderson and his garrison would have starved. Consequently, you

GENERAL WINFIELD SCOTT HANDOUT - 2

ordered reinforcement of Fort Pickens, which you believed could be more easily defended than Sumter. You even had drafted an evacuation order to Major Anderson at Fort Sumter. Lincoln, however, refused you permission to send it.

By March 28 (1861) you had changed your mind. You added your political opinion to your military one by writing a memo to the president advocating surrender not only of Fort Sumter but also of Fort Pickens! This act, you argued, would recognize military reality that Sumter could not be saved and more importantly would likely help the seceding states decide to return to the Union.

In summary, therefore, your job is as follows: Advise the president of the hopelessness of the Sumter situation. Convince him that political and military reality dictates surrendering both Fort Sumter and Fort Pickens.



Remember as you play this role that you are considered the soldier who best understands your nation's military affairs; by contrast, President Lincoln has no real military background. Therefore, your attitude is that you must lead him to the truth regarding the Union's military situation.

Incidentally, read some books about this famous general so that you know more about this intriguing figure's personality. What did he weigh in spring 1861? What was the condition of his health? Would these factors influence how you portray your role?

UNIT TEST - 1

Your name: _____

Directions: Choose the best answer and write its letter in the space left of the number—or on your own paper.

- _____ 1. The outcome of the Fort Sumter crisis
a. was the chief cause of the Civil War
b. was no direct cause of the war
c. was the beginning of a decade of controversy between North and South
d. was an incident which started the Civil War
- _____ 2. By Lincoln's inaugural, Fort Sumter was
a. in danger of immediate attack
b. largely ignored by both sides
c. rapidly running short on supplies and ammunition
d. about to surrender
- _____ 3. Anderson's move to Fort Sumter
a. was ordered by President Buchanan
b. surprised and enraged the Confederates
c. angered President-elect Lincoln
d. none of the above
- _____ 4. Northern states generally favored a stronger central government than the South, which supported
a. anarchy
b. a monarchy
c. a powerful presidency
d. states rights
- _____ 5. Some historians have claimed that the South seceded because the United States evolved into two separate countries characterized by differences in all of the following except
a. customs
b. education
c. language
d. religion
- _____ 6. Economically, the South felt dominated by the North's support of
a. a tariff on manufactured goods
b. a Southern agricultural economy
c. states rights
d. the Homestead Act
- _____ 7. The Missouri Compromise was not designed to deal with the question of slavery's extension into
a. the Louisiana territory
b. Texas
c. Oregon
d. the Mexican Cession
- _____ 8. Supporters of popular sovereignty favored the premise that which person or group should decide whether a new state should be slave or free?
a. the citizens of a new state
b. the president
c. the Supreme Court
d. the federal government
- _____ 9. Stephen Douglas supported the Dred Scott decision. How did Abraham Lincoln feel about this decision?
a. He also supported it.
b. He disagreed with it, but said little publicly about it.
c. He had no opinion about it.
d. He used this difference with Douglas as one basis for challenging him for a Senate seat in 1858.
- _____ 10. Lincoln's election to the presidency in 1860
a. was a landslide victory with support from all corners of the country
b. was a result of strong support for his party's Democratic platform
c. was due in part to the Democratic split vote
d. went to the House of Representatives for the final decision
- _____ 11. The South believed that Lincoln
a. was a reasonable man
b. would free the slaves and destroy the South's way of life
c. was a Northerner who would yet try to accommodate the South's special interests
d. could be manipulated by shrewd Southern politicians
- _____ 12. Lincoln favored all of the following compromises except
a. an amendment allowing slavery where it already existed
b. a stronger Fugitive Slave law
c. slavery in Washington, D.C.
d. extension of slavery into the territories
- _____ 13. As far as federal property in the seceded states was concerned, Lincoln
a. had pledged to negotiate this issue with the Confederacy
b. had vowed to hold and possess all federal property
c. had decided to surrender all federal property immediately
d. had decided that each case should be decided individually

UNIT TEST - 2

Your name: _____

- ____14. Lincoln believed that a state's secession
- was justified in some cases
 - was provided for under the Constitution
 - was permissible with the Supreme Court's approval
 - was wrong and illegal
- ____15. By the time of Lincoln's inauguration, the border states
- had also seceded
 - remained uncommitted but were watching what Lincoln's further actions would be
 - had decided secession was wrong
 - negotiated with both sides to see who would offer them the better deal
- ____16. As Lincoln struggled with the Sumter crisis, all of the following were prime considerations except for
- his sworn presidential responsibilities
 - Jefferson Davis' friendship
 - the supplies at Fort Sumter
 - the degree of Union support in South Carolina
- ____17. Secretary of State Seward
- advocated firm resistance to Southern demands
 - placed himself at the president's command to enact whatever Lincoln wanted
 - believed that Fort Sumter could be saved by a military expedition
 - had proposed compromise with the secessionists
- ____18. General Scott believed that
- Fort Sumter could not be saved but Fort Pickens could
 - the United States should resolve to fight to maintain the forts at all costs
 - neither fort was particularly worth fighting for
 - both forts should be surrendered immediately
- ____19. Montgomery Blair
- agreed with Seward on most issues concerning Sumter
 - believed that the North had to teach the South a lesson
 - wasn't convinced that Scott's plan to save Sumter would work
 - reluctantly agreed that Sumter should be reinforced
- ____20. Blair's brother-in-law, Gustavus Fox,
- had concluded that Sumter could not be saved
 - believed there was considerable Union support in Charleston
 - had devised a plan to retake Fort Pickens
 - had devised a strategy to supply and reinforce Fort Sumter
- ____21. After Hurlbut had visited South Carolina for the president, he realized
- that there was no support for the Union in Charleston
 - that Seward was right to propose strong action against the Confederates
 - that a conciliatory gesture by Lincoln might persuade the Confederates to allow a supply ship into Sumter
 - that the president's best course was to remain silent
- ____22. Fort Sumter was not the only fort in Union hands. Three others, including Fort Pickens, remained under Union control. In which state was Fort Pickens?
- South Carolina
 - North Carolina
 - Texas
 - Florida
- ____23. Lincoln placed responsibility for starting a civil war
- with Northern businessmen
 - within his own presidential choices
 - in secessionists' hands
 - with Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
- ____24. Southern extremists saw all of the following implications of their secession except
- an eventual reunification with the United States
 - a Confederate empire
 - freedom from tariffs
 - preservation of the states rights concept
- ____25. Northerners saw all of the following implications for Southern secession except
- a weakening of the federal Constitution
 - loss of United States prestige
 - heavy economic loss for Northern industry
 - the possibility to annex Canada

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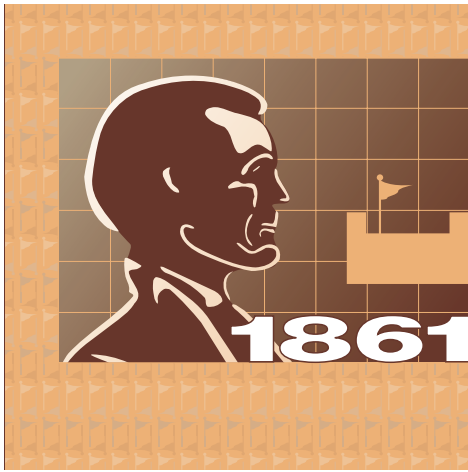
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LINCOLN AND FORT SUMTER

A re-creation of one of Lincoln's pivotal decisions

PURPOSE

This re-creation examines President Abraham Lincoln's struggle to resolve the crisis at Fort Sumter in 1861: the newly formed Confederate States of America is insisting that the Union surrender Fort Sumter or risk war. In participating you will identify with the attitudes, goals, and pressures upon President Lincoln as he makes up his mind whether or not to try to keep a United States fort that is physically within the confederate states. A group of you will adopt the roles of the president and advisers/critics as you discuss the president's various alternatives. Finally, all of you will evaluate the choice Lincoln makes.

BACKGROUND ESSAY

Note: *The author assumes you have read your history textbook chapters covering the differences between the North and the South leading up to the election of 1860. If you have not done so, please do so before proceeding with this essay.*

Lincoln's election to the presidency in November 1860 was a pivotal event in American history. It brought to a head all the poisons that had been festering between the North and South for years. His election prompted South Carolina to withdraw from the United States. Soon seven other Southern states followed suit. The Confederacy expected all federal forts and possessions in the rebel states to become part of their new government. Fort Sumter, however, led by Major Robert Anderson, refused to surrender and thereby caused Confederate threats of a civil war. Newly inaugurated President Lincoln had to decide which course to follow. Should he surrender the fort, fight, or seek a compromise?

The Election of 1860

First we need to examine the presidential election of 1860, which fanned the nation's divisive flames even higher. Unable to agree on a national platform about slavery's extension, the Democratic party split into Northern and Southern factions. Stephen A. Douglas, the chief exponent of popular sovereignty, was nominated by the Northern Democrats; John Breckinridge was chosen by the Southern Democrats to represent their ardent states rights viewpoints.

A small group of citizens formed a new party of moderates committed to compromise. This party, the Constitutional Union party, wished to preserve the Union—at all costs. The party selected John Bell as its standard bearer.

Another fairly new political party entered the political fray in 1860 with a vigorous platform; members strongly advocated a tariff and wanted a transcontinental railroad built. More importantly, this new party opposed the spread of slavery, states rights, and popular sovereignty. This group was the Republican Party, and the party nominee was Abraham Lincoln.

When the election was held, not one Southerner voted the Republican ticket. In fact, one million more popular votes were cast against Lincoln than for him. Despite this, Lincoln decisively captured the presidency. The answer to this apparent contradiction lies in our constitutional machinery to elect a president. Popular vote, the individual's ballot, does not directly select our presidents. Instead the electoral vote is what matters. The candidate who gains a majority of the total electoral vote wins the presidency. In this case Lincoln needed 149 out of 296 electoral votes. He received 173 and a plurality



**Questions
for you to
consider:**

*Do you
understand
what an
**historical
myth** is?*

*(An **historical
myth** is an idea
that persons
believe at a
certain moment
in history.)*

*When many
Southerners
heard the name
**Abraham
Lincoln** in
1860-61, what
historical myth
flashed into
their minds?*

(though not a majority) of the popular vote. Stephen Douglas, only about a half million votes behind Lincoln in popular vote, finished last among the four in the electoral vote with 12. Breckinridge, third in popular vote, was a distant second in the electoral ballot with 72. Similarly, Bell, who brought up the rear in the popular count, finished third in the electoral numbers with 39.

Analysis of the Republican victory strategy yields no secret formula. The Democratic split and the solid support of the North gave Lincoln the presidency. Remember that the industrial North had great superiority in population and thus more electoral votes in each state. This meant that one section of the United States had elected a president for all the sections.

Secession

The election of “Black Republican” Lincoln was too much for the South. All the fears Southerners held about economic and social upheaval in their beloved land seemed embodied in the prospects of Lincoln’s presidency. Lincoln protested that he was not an abolitionist; he stressed that he didn’t want to wipe out slavery but only to stop its spread. But Southerners persisted in their belief that he was at least under the abolitionists’ control. Therefore, plantation owners feared the economic loss they would suffer at emancipation. They also wondered what would happen to their lifestyle if blacks were freed and supported by the national government. Other Southerners were worried, too. Although a minority of Southern whites owned slaves, all whites, rich and poor, feared free black competition for jobs and markets. Even the new president’s control of patronage (federal offices and jobs) troubled concerned Southerners. Republican office holders, especially in the post office, might allow inflammatory literature to circulate throughout the South and thus foment slave uprisings. This new president would destroy all that the South cherished!

Seceding from the Union appealed to many Southerners as the only possible solution. They believed the federal government had become a Northern tool to dominate the South. The South’s cherished states rights doctrine no longer could protect their interests. Extremists argued, therefore, that secession was now justified to protect the rights and interests of the South.

Implications for the South Secession may seem nearly unthinkable today, but this idea had respectability in the South of 1860. Stephen Douglas had even accused Southern leaders of manipulating the Democratic party’s split in 1860 to assure a Republican victory and to add impetus to the entire secessionist movement. Regardless of this accusation, the idea of a separate country appealed mightily to many Southerners. For one thing, removing Northern control would eliminate the hated tariff. Not having tariffs would enable Southerners to buy quality English manufactured goods and to sell their cotton at top dollar abroad. Of course, slavery would continue unopposed and expand wherever the Confederates wished. In fact, expansion became an important part of the prospective new nation’s dreams. They felt they could dominate and incorporate the new western territories eventually. Others even dreamed of conquering and annexing Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean!

All these themes were based on the premise that the North could never force the seceded states back into the Union. A typical Southern joke was, “If I pointed a gun at a Northerner, he’d ask me how much I’d take for it.” In the South’s estimation the North had neither the will to fight nor the strength to defeat the morally and physically superior Southerners.

Implications for the North Southern secession obviously meant much to the North, too. Allowing the South to leave the Union would set the precedent for other states to leave whenever they saw fit. In effect, the Constitution and the Union would be a “rope of sand.” Federal power would evaporate; national prestige would fade. Northern businessmen feared heavy economic losses if Southerners took their business to foreign interests.

South Carolina secedes It fell to South Carolina, also the scene of the Nullification Crisis three decades earlier, to vote secession on December 20, 1860. Over the following several weeks Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas also seceded. Thus, the seven Deep South states were defying the laws and authority of the federal government.

Buchanan in power A “lame duck” president—that is, a president who had to wait from November to March before leaving office—was in power while these states were seceding. Nearly four months of inaction had to pass before President-elect Lincoln would take office. This lame duck president was James Buchanan of Pennsylvania, who sympathized with the South’s protests because he believed

that the North had provoked the South. However, he also believed that secession was unconstitutional, but that he had no power to stop it! Instead, in an attempt to avert the crisis he suggested a Constitutional amendment to protect slavery and strengthen the Fugitive Slave Law.

Despite Buchanan's efforts to compromise, the South seceded anyway. Federal forts and arsenals were transferred to secessionist hands. Judges, tax collectors, and federal marshals resigned their posts. The result? The president had no one authorized to enforce the federal government's laws in the seceding states.

Fort Sumter

Several federal forts had not surrendered to the rebels. Three were in Florida, most notably Fort Pickens in Pensacola. However, it was Fort Sumter in South Carolina's Charleston Harbor which brought the entire secession crisis to the breaking point.

One of four forts protecting Charleston Harbor, Ft. Sumter is found in the middle of the harbor on a man-made island. The fort was not even completely finished when the controversy around it broke.

General Winfield Scott, leader of the federal armies, had urged Buchanan to reinforce the forts in Confederate territories, but the president, fearing the South's reaction, had ignored the suggestion. Major Robert Anderson, the head of the tiny force in Charleston, had told Buchanan to strengthen Castle Pinckney—one of the other three forts protecting Charleston—but Buchanan, still seeking conciliation, refused. Nevertheless, on December 26, Anderson secretly moved his men to Sumter.

The rebels were enraged. Governor Francis W. Pickens of South Carolina demanded the fort's surrender. Although Buchanan was displeased with Anderson's actions, he refused. In January after some intra-cabinet haggling, Buchanan even sent an unarmed merchant vessel, *The Star of the West*, to give Anderson both re-enforcements and provisions. The rebels' cannon batteries opened fire on the vessel. Major Anderson, unaware that a Union ship had been sent to aid them, failed to use his cannons to cover the helpless ship. Consequently, the vessel returned without accomplishing its mission and left Sumter short on supplies, undermanned, and surrounded by increasingly heavy Confederate artillery.

As Buchanan's administration waned, Sumter's fate remained in limbo. The newly formed Confederate States of America viewed Fort Sumter's surrender as a symbol of its legitimacy as a legally recognized nation. Similarly, the North readily understood the significance of holding onto the fort. However, resolving this dilemma would now become President Lincoln's responsibility.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Lincoln's dilemma ...

*Sing a song of Sumter, a fort in Charleston bay;
Eight and sixty brave men, watch there night and day.
These men to succor, still no aid is sent;
Isn't James Buchanan, a pretty president!*

In contrast to Buchanan's apparent inaction stood the new president whose decision would determine the fate of Ft. Sumter and the Union. He was Abraham Lincoln.

Lincoln's contributions This tall man from Illinois had been a storekeeper, soldier, lawyer, legislator, and congressman. However, these vocations don't clearly reveal Lincoln's extraordinary skill as a politician. And he would need great political skill, decisiveness, and an iron will as he struggled to achieve his primary goal: saving the Union. But first you need to know his background.

Early life At first glance, Lincoln's humble origins from a backwoods Kentucky farm, to Indiana, to Illinois do not foretell a man destined for the presidency. However, further thought shows how the rigorous frontier life and largely self-taught education may have hewn the kind of character Lincoln displayed as he led America through her critical Civil War years.

Senate race After serving as a state legislator, congressman, and lawyer, Lincoln's national political career gained prominence after he joined the Republican party in 1856. The Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision disturbed many Northerners. The court had not only declared that because Dred Scott was a slave he was property and therefore not entitled to use the courts; it also stated that the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional. This decision meant that slaveholders could legally take slaves into any new

territory. Illinois Senator Douglas supported the court's decision. He also agreed that Negroes were inferior. Lincoln disagreed and called for the decision's reversal. This difference set the stage for Lincoln's attempt to win the Senate seat from Douglas in 1858.

The resulting campaign gave rise to the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates which not only clearly discussed the essential issues of the day, but also gave Lincoln national notoriety. During the debates, Douglas accused Lincoln of being an abolitionist. Lincoln countered by labeling Douglas a pro-slavery conspirator. Douglas accused Lincoln of practicing sectionalism. Lincoln hammered at the immorality of slavery and claimed that Douglas was indifferent to America's "peculiar institution." Douglas won reelection, but Lincoln's debating skills and compelling logic gained him national support and attention.

1860 presidential election Lincoln had become a dark horse candidate seeking the Republican nomination for the presidency behind other famous Republicans such as William Seward of New York. Through shrewd maneuvers Lincoln snatched the nomination on the third ballot. As mentioned, Lincoln's election in 1860 sparked the secession movement which led to the Fort Sumter Crisis.

Lincoln and Fort Sumter Before being inaugurated, President-elect Lincoln used his influence carefully. He said little publicly out of fear that he might be misinterpreted or that he might inflame passions. However, privately, he sought to reassure Southerners that he posed no radical threat to them. For example, he said: "You think slavery is right and ought to be extended while we think it is wrong and ought to be restricted. That I suppose is the rub." Nevertheless, Confederates remained adamantly opposed to Lincoln's presidency.

Meanwhile, Congress tried to hold the country together. The Crittenden Solution suggested that Congress extend the Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific and allow slavery south of that line. Lincoln reacted clearly to all such proposals: He would accept a stronger Fugitive Slave Law and would allow slavery in Washington, D.C., and wherever else it already existed. But he remained steadfastly opposed to slavery expanding across the country, saying, "Let there be no question of extending slavery"

Border states During all this maneuvering the secession movement had slowed down. The upper South had not seceded yet. Those states, with Virginia as their leader, remained precariously within the Union. Lincoln eyed such states carefully when considering what to do about Ft. Sumter. For he knew that any mistaken or provocative Union move might easily swell the Confederate ranks with these states. He felt the Union could not afford their loss.

Lincoln's inauguration Thus during tight security Chief Justice Roger Brooke Taney administered the oath of office to Abraham Lincoln on March 4, 1861. Lincoln's inaugural speech accurately foretold his intentions toward the seceded South. Once again he sought to assure them that he posed no threat to the South or its institutions. He agreed that slavery should continue to exist in its present states. He was willing to approve a Constitutional amendment affirming this point. He called for a stronger Fugitive Slave Law. However, he also declared that "no state upon its mere motion can lawfully get out of the Union" Furthermore, he stated that "the power confided in me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the government"

In closing, Lincoln tried to soften Southern listeners with a conciliatory message:



"In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors."

Thus, Lincoln wisely set his course by placing responsibility for war in the South's hands and by affirming his intention to hold federal property.

Crisis at Fort Sumter

Acting Secretary of War Joseph Holt quickly put Lincoln's principles to the test by reporting the contents of Major Anderson's latest letter. In it Anderson described that it would be impossible to reinforce Sumter now. To make matters worse, he estimated that his supplies would last only to about April 15. Lincoln had believed the fort was in no imminent danger. This information would soon force the president's hand.

Lincoln then sought input from military and political experts. However, military experts' advice was not consistent. The army believed thousands of soldiers would be needed to reach and relieve the fort. Conversely, naval advisers thought a naval fleet could force its way into Charleston Harbor.

On March 15 Lincoln convened a Cabinet meeting. There he posed this question: "Assuming it to be possible to now provision Fort Sumter, under all the circumstances is it wise to attempt it?" The cabinet's most prominent member Secretary of State William Seward strongly opposed the proposal as a provocative and dangerous maneuver. All of the other Cabinet members agreed with Seward, with the notable exception of Postmaster General Montgomery Blair, who argued strongly for reinforcement and provisioning of the fort.

Meanwhile, Ft. Sumter's supplies continued to diminish. The situation at Fort Pickens in Florida further complicated Lincoln's dilemma. That fort also remained in Union hands. Logistically it was easier to supply and reinforce against a Confederate attack than Sumter. Was it, perhaps, more realistic to surrender Fort Sumter and to choose instead a defense of Union interests at Fort Pickens?



Thus Lincoln realized he would soon have to make a careful decision about the crisis. Questions such as the following were disturbing him: *Could he leave Anderson and his beleaguered Union troops isolated and short on food, having to fend for themselves? Would an aggressive move to save the fort endanger Northern support for the Union cause? What could he do to hold border states' loyalty to the Union and to prevent their secession? Was it militarily feasible to save Sumter? If not, what would surrendering Sumter mean to the South? And what would such a surrender mean to the North?*

So now the moment arrives for your class to resolve this crisis. Adopting the roles of Lincoln and his advisers/critics, class members will convene to discuss and to analyze Lincoln's options. Finally, the president will make and announce his decision to all of you.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Moderator The moderator's tasks include controlling the flow and pace of the president's decision-making session in Day 2. The moderator also helps players as they prepare for the decision-making session by doing the following:

- reviewing key concepts
- suggesting props and costumes
- physically arranging the room
- introducing the lesson
- conducting the class' evaluation of the decision

Note:

If you are not assigned one of these roles, you still have an important responsibility: preparing yourself and the whole class for the debriefing following the re-creation.

See pages 6 and 7 ...

President Lincoln The president's decision is the entire focus of the re-creation. The president arrives at his decision by listening to the input of advisers and critics and by analyzing the strong and weak points of the alternatives listed on page 7. After the president selects and announces his choice to the class, he responds to class members' questions.

Advisers/critics Each adviser or critic will receive a handout which will provide information about each individual's life and background. These handouts also explain personal viewpoints concerning the Fort Sumter crisis. During the decision-making session the advisers and critics will explain their positions to President Lincoln. They will exchange and discuss their differences with each other while they assist the president in identifying the strong and weak points of each alternative.

Advisers

- Montgomery Blair, postmaster general
- Stephen Hurlbut, friend and native of Charleston

Critics

- William Seward, secretary of state
- General Winfield Scott, United States Army

AUDIENCE MEMBERS' RESPONSIBILITIES



Those of you who are not actually playing a role in the decision-making session nevertheless fill a vital part of the re-creation as a member of the audience. Your key responsibilities include the following:

- listening carefully to the discussion
- identifying the key factors Lincoln must consider
- differentiating between points of view
- analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the options available to the president
- developing questions to ask the president about his decision
- evaluating his decision

In order to demonstrate that you are fulfilling the above responsibilities, you should do a thorough job of note-taking on pages you make such as those below and on page 7.

Note-taking On the day before the re-creation begins, take out a clean sheet of 8-1/2"x11" paper and prepare it for the next day's note-taking.

Side 1 Divide it into four horizontal columns, one for each of the four advisers/critics whose names you place in the left margin inside the four horizontal columns. When President Lincoln meets with his advisers/critics, you will write brief sentence fragments that pinpoint the advice each person gives the president.

Please take considerable notes, writing down what is said during this mini-unit. You will then be prepared for a meaningful debriefing experience.

Research shows us that when persons write as they are learning, they retain considerable knowledge—and for a long time period.

President Lincoln and Fort Sumter	
Suggestions from advisers/critics	
Montgomery Blair Postmaster General	
Stephen Hurlbut friend from Charleston	
William Seward Secretary of State	
General Winfield Scott United States Army	

Side 2 Turn over the same sheet of paper and divide it into four horizontal columns, one for each of the four alternatives below. Put key words from each alternative in the left margin of each of the horizontal columns. Next divide the four horizontal columns into two vertical columns, one of which you head *Good Points*, one of which you head *Bad Points*. Then, during the time the president and his advisers/critics specifically consider these four alternatives, fill in what is good and what is bad about each alternative. Once again use sentence fragments rather than complete sentences. Here are the four alternatives Lincoln and his advisers will consider:

Alternative 1: Supply and reinforce Fort Sumter by authorizing a large naval force to blast our way, if necessary, into Charleston Harbor. This military action will prove our determination to oppose the secession movement.

Alternative 2: Surrender Fort Sumter but resolve to hold and defend Fort Pickens in Florida. Fort Pickens is easier to defend than Sumter.

Alternative 3: Attempt to supply Sumter with food only. Use force only if the rebels resist this move. Advise the Confederates that we mean only to bring supplies to the men. This choice may place the burden of aggression on the Confederacy.

Alternative 4: Surrender both Fort Sumter and Fort Pickens. Such a move will cement the remaining border states to the Union.

Suggestion:

Be certain you take your notes in **sentence fragments** on both the front and back sides of your note sheet.

Do not attempt to write down verbatim—i.e., word for word—what is said. Simply try to get the main point of each idea being presented.



Another idea:

Before the **Debriefing** and **Testing** which end the unit, you may wish to come back to your notes and carefully write in your own opinions of what was said. (If your note sheets are full, use a different sheet of paper.)

Research about writing has also found that if a person writes down personal reactions or relationships to what is being studied, the information becomes increasingly real to the person.

President Lincoln and Fort Sumter		
Alternatives	Good Points	Bad Points
1 Supply and reinforce Ft. Sumter		
2 Surrender Ft. Sumter but resolve to hold and defend Ft. Pickens		
3 Attempt to supply Ft. Sumter and use force only if resisted		
4 Surrender both Ft. Sumter and Ft. Pickens		



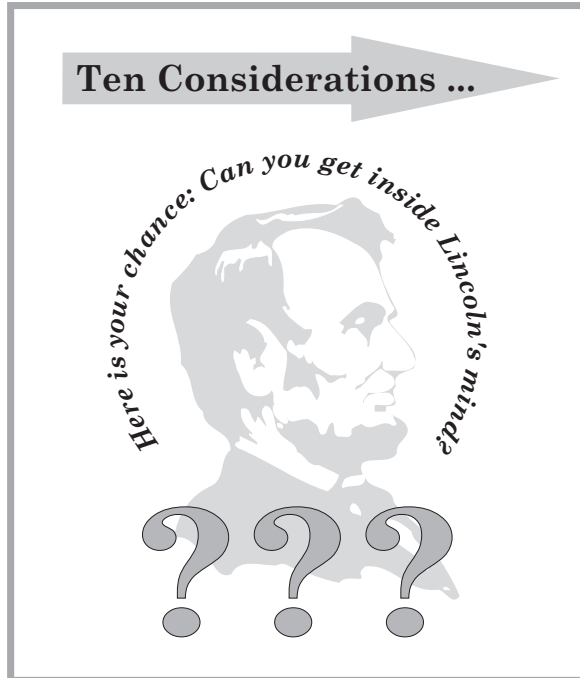
This culminating activity will be enjoyable and a real learning activity if you have studied and listened carefully enough to get truly involved in Lincoln's decision.

Good luck!

DEBRIEFING

Back inside your activity group your members will discuss the list provided below. Before you begin, you must choose a chairperson, who then chooses a recorder. The chairperson leads the discussion while the recorder writes down a) the list your group has chosen, and b) the reasons your group has given for its list sequencing.

Directions: The list below provides **Ten Considerations** President Lincoln most likely thought about while he was weighing his Fort Sumter decision. Your group must identify and sequence **Lincoln's five most important considerations**. Your recorder must write down some of the reasons your group advanced while choosing and *sequencing* Lincoln's five most important considerations—from *most important to fifth most important*. If time permits, all chairpersons will meet in the center of the room to compare lists and reasons. After such discussion, your teacher will likely lead you in trying to agree on a class list.



1. The South must be taught a lesson by seeing a demonstration of the North's military power.
2. The border states must not be angered into seceding because of a provocative Union move.
3. Federal property must be protected.
4. A president is sworn to protect the Constitution.
5. Northern political support is important for a minority president.
6. Secession is wrong and shouldn't be encouraged.
7. Prudent, cautious moves may convince the South that they were wrong in seceding and that compromise may still be possible.
8. Anderson and his men's lives must be protected.
9. Our country's prestige must be preserved.
10. The authority of the United States must not be challenged without a strong response.

TESTING

On the day following the re-creation, your teacher may choose one or both of the following activities.

Within an activity group of classmates you will all be allowed to use the notes you took during the re-creation. These notes will help you figure out the answers to the multiple choice test. **Remember:** *No pens or pencils, and no Student Guides will be allowed out during the time your activity group discusses the test items.* After about 10 or 15 minutes of discussion, your group will separate so that each member takes the test in isolation—without any notes.

Special note:

All members of the group with the highest average score will receive bonus points on the test.