



The Election of 1860: A Four-Way Race

Title	The Election of 1860: A Four-Way Race
Subject	Abraham Lincoln, Voting, the Election of 1860, Political Parties
Author	Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection
Grade level	5-8
Time	2-3 days broken into 50-60 Mins blocks
Objectives	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify the candidates running for president in 1860.• Explain each of the candidates' platforms.• Interpret election maps and charts.• Identify the role of the 1860 election on the start of the Civil War. <p>Current Indiana Education Standards (2023): History</p> <p>8.H.21: Describe the Abolitionist Movement and identify figures and organizations involved in the debate over slavery, including leaders of the Underground Railroad, and how the movement affected the division between the North and South.</p> <p>8.H.22: Analyze the influence of early individual social reformers and movements such as the abolitionist, feminist, and social reform movements.</p> <p>8.H.23: Analyze the causes and effects of events leading to the Civil War, and evaluate the impact issues such as states' rights and slavery had in developing America's sectional conflict. (E)</p>



8.C.6: Explain ways that citizens can participate in the election process (e.g., political parties, campaigns, and elections) at the national, state, and local levels. (E)

8.G.1: Read and interpret maps that portray the physical growth and development of the United States from colonization through Reconstruction (1877). (E)

Common Core Standards: History/Social Studies

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

Overview

This lesson covers the election of 1860, offering students a chance to uncover the thoughts and ideas of not just the presidential candidates but also the average men and women of the time. This lesson includes three worksheets introducing the candidates and their platforms, which will lead the students to their final project. Each student or group (teacher can choose whether students work together or individually) will be assigned one of the presidential candidates and give a presentation. The student or group must also choose two of the following to include in their campaign presentation: write a campaign song or create a campaign banner, button, political cartoon, or poster.

Historical Background

The presidential election of 1860 took place in a time of national crisis. The presidential platforms in the election of 1860 covered issues such as a national tariff, a transcontinental railroad, the Homestead Act, and slavery. The principal issue dividing the nation during this election was the question of the future of slavery in America.

The newly-formed Republican Party nominated Abraham Lincoln, of Illinois, on a platform opposed to the spread of slavery into the Western Territories. The Democratic Party, unable to agree on the topic of slavery, split into northern and southern factions. The Northern Democrats nominated Stephen A. Douglas, while the Southern Democrats nominated Vice President John C. Breckinridge. The election also led to the creation of a new political party, the Constitutional Union Party, which nominated John Bell of Tennessee. Although Douglas believed he was the national



candidate, the race for the White House was sectional. The contest in the North was between Lincoln and Douglas, while in the South it was between Breckinridge and Bell.

On November 6, 1860, eligible voters –white males—went to the ballot box to cast their votes. Lincoln won the Electoral College by a landslide. Since the North had more voters, the majority of the Electoral College was controlled by the Northern states. Lincoln didn't win a single electoral vote from a Southern state. The election of 1860 established the Democratic and Republican parties as the dominant political parties in the United States. It also was the tipping point for Southern representatives to vote to secede from the Union in order to preserve slavery. Within a few weeks, the newly-formed Confederate States of America fired on Fort Sumter and started the Civil War.

Materials

Pen, pencil, worksheets (located in this packet), highlighters, glue, computer, art supplies, dictionaries

Activities and Procedures

Activity One: Building Background

Have students fill out the worksheet about voting terms and the presidential candidates. Students can use the internet, library, dictionaries, etc. Teachers can choose what works best in their classroom setting.

Activity Two: Electoral Map

For this exercise students will use the provided map to fill in the results of the 1860 election. Using different colors, they will fill out the key, which includes the four different presidential candidates, then fill in the map with the corresponding colors.

Activity Three: Campaign Promotions

Students will choose what type of campaign promotion they/their group should do. See attached worksheets of campaign materials from the 1860 election to help students brainstorm ideas for their campaign material.

**Resource
List****Activity Four:** Putting It All Together

Each student/student group should be assigned one of the presidential candidates. They will then give a presentation about their political platform and why you should vote for them.

Web Resources:

Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection: *The 1860 Election: A Four-Way Race*

lincolncollection.org/collection/curated-groupings/category/the-1860-election/

The American Presidency Project: *Election of 1860*
presidency.ucsb.edu/statistics/elections/1860

History: *The Election of 1860* <https://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/election-of-1860>

HarpWeek: *Lincoln v. Douglas v. Breckinridge v. Bell*
elections.harpweek.com/1860/Overview-1860-1.asp

Video Resources:

Crash Course: *The Election of 1860 and the Road to Disunion* (14 mins):
<https://youtu.be/roNmeOOJCDY>

Heimler's History: *The Election of 1860 and SECESSION* (about 7 mins):
https://youtu.be/Ayvo2Yra_oE

Indiana State Museum: *Behind-the-Scenes: Lincoln Election of 1860* (9 mins):
https://youtu.be/VwjdnXYh_rA

History, America: *The Story of Us* (Season 1, Episode 4, Deepening Division Threatens the Union) (44 mins): <https://youtu.be/70euLmJfiuc>

History: America: *The Story of Us* (Season 1, Episode 4, Deepening Division Threatens the Union) Section about the election of 1860 (about 9 mins):
<https://youtu.be/70euLmJfiuc?t=2363>

Books:

The Election of 1860: A Nation Divides on the Eve of War by Jessica Gunderson

The Election of 1860: Reconsidered by James Fuller



Lincoln and the Election of 1860 by Michael S. Green

The Election of 1860: A Campaign Fraught with Consequences by Michael F. Holt

Primary Sources:

Selected Writings of Abraham Lincoln edited by Richard Burton

Includes the *Speech at Cooper Union Institute*, *The House Divided Speech*, and *First Inaugural Address*.

<https://archive.org/details/selectedwritings00inlinc/mode/2up>

Life of Stephen A. Douglas, United States Senator from Illinois: With his Most Important Speeches and Reports by Henry M. Flint

<https://archive.org/details/lifeofstephenado5893flin/mode/2up>

Speech of Hon. S.A. Douglas, of Illinois, in the Senate, May 15 & 16, 1860 by Stephen A. Douglas

<https://archive.org/details/speechofhonsad00doug>

Slavery, a Divine Institution by J.B. Thrasher

<https://archive.org/details/slaverydivinein00thra/mode/2up>

Speech of Hon. John Bell, of Tennessee, on the Nebraska and Kansas Bill: Delivered in the Senate of the United States, May 24 and 25, 1854 by John Bell

<https://archive.org/details/speechofhonjohnbell>

Speech of Hon. John C. Breckinridge, Vice-President of the United States: At Ashland, Kentucky, September 5th, 1860, Repelling the Charge of Disunion and Vindicating the National Democracy edited by John Cabell

<https://archive.org/details/speechofhonjohnnc00brec/page/n1/mode/2up>

Portraits and sketches of the lives of all the candidates for the presidency and vice-presidency, for 1860: comprising eight portraits engraved on steel, facts in the life of each, the four platforms, the Cincinnati platform, and the Constitution of the United States edited by J. C. Buttre

<https://archive.org/details/portraitssketches00newy/page/n2/mode/1up>

**Worksheets,
Keys, and
Instructions**

Inserted below for ease of access.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Class: _____

Activity One: Building Background

Directions: Write the definitions for each word or phrase below.

1. Emancipation:

2. Secession:

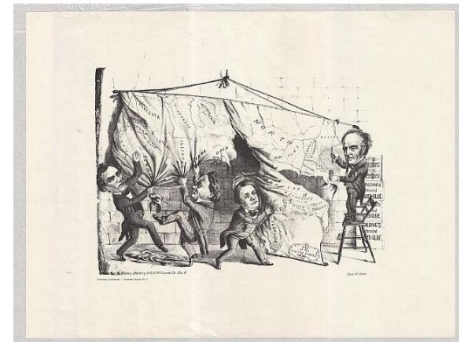
3. Popular Vote:

4. Popular Sovereignty:

5. Manifest Destiny:

6. Missouri Compromise:

7. Homestead Act:



Dividing the National Map
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection
Item ID: 71.2009.081.0874

Name: _____

Date: _____

Class: _____

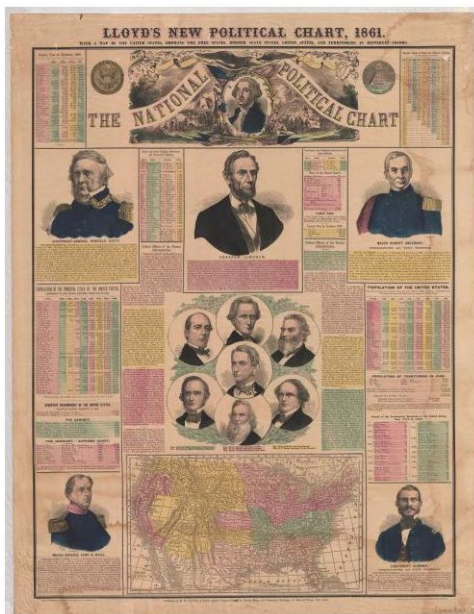
8. Transcontinental Railroad:

9. Tariff:

10. Slavery:

11. States' Rights:

12. Electoral College:



13. Kansas-Nebraska Act:

14. Slave Codes:

Name: _____

Date: _____

Class: _____

Candidate Name	Past Political Experience	Political Party	Position on Slavery	Region of Support

Name: _____

Date: _____

Class: _____

Activity One: Building Background

Directions: Write the definitions for each word or phrase below.

1. Emancipation: The process of being set free from slavery.

2. Secede: To withdraw, leave, or abandon a group, country, or community.

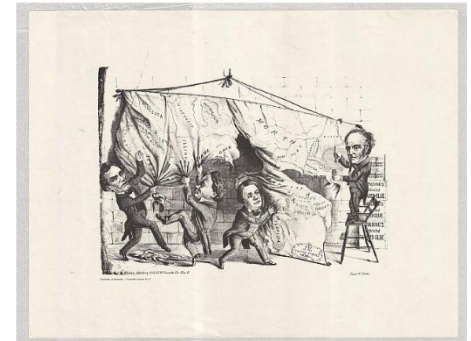
3. Popular Vote: The votes cast for a candidate by the voters, rather than a vote by elected representatives/electoral college.

4. Popular Sovereignty: Allows the people within a state to hold the political power. In the 1860 election and prior this was the idea that people in the state could decide on whether their state would enter the Union as a free or slave state based on a vote rather than outright banning slavery.

5. Manifest Destiny: A belief that the settlers in the United States were destined to expand across the continent from the east coast to the west coast.

6. Missouri Compromise: Passed in 1820, this law admitted Missouri to the Union as a slave state and Maine as a free state. All states north of the 36/30 parallel (southern border of Missouri) would be admitted as a free state.

7. Homestead Act: Granted Americans 160-acre plots of land in the Western Territories. It also allowed women, former slaves, and immigrants to become landowners for a small application fee.



Dividing the National Map
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection
Item ID: 71.2009.081.0874

Name: _____

Date: _____

Class: _____

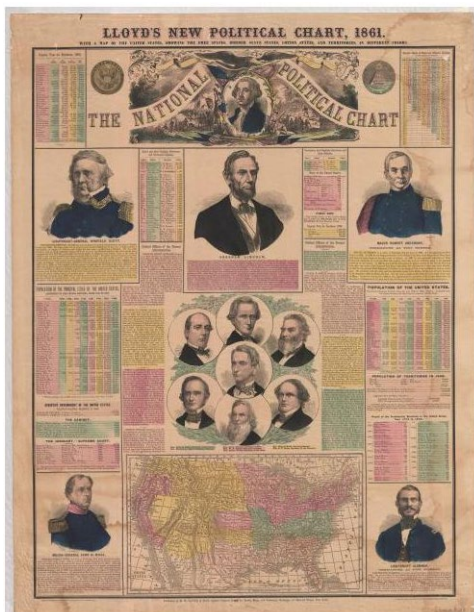
8. Transcontinental Railroad: A railroad that would connect the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of the U.S. to further the mission of westward expansion and Manifest Destiny.

9. Tariff: Tax imposed by the government paid on particular goods or services of imports or exports.

10. Slavery: When a person is owned and held captive by another person. Enslaved people were considered by law to be property and without rights.

11. States' Rights: The idea that political power should be held by a state government rather than the federal government.

12. Electoral College: An elected group of people that represent the states of the U.S., and who formally cast votes for the election of the president.



13. Kansas-Nebraska Act: Passed in 1854, this act repealed the Missouri Compromise. The act created two new territories (Kansas and Nebraska), and allowed for popular sovereignty in these territories.

14. Slave Codes: Laws passed by slave states which kept enslaved people from rebelling or escaping. These laws forbade slaves to gather in groups, leave their owner's land without a written pass, and own or have guns in their possession. These codes also solidified the continuation of slavery and further stripped enslaved people of their human rights.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Class: _____

Candidate Name	Past Political Experience	Political Party	Position on Slavery	Region of Support
Abraham Lincoln	Illinois House of Representatives, U.S. House of Representatives	Republican	Prohibit slavery in the territories, contain slavery to where it exists.	North
Stephen Douglas	Illinois State Attorney, Illinois House of Representatives, Secretary of State, Illinois Supreme Court Justice, U.S. House of Representatives, U.S. Senate	Northern Democratic	Opposed federal slave codes in territories, supported popular sovereignty and permitting spread of slavery into western territories.	North
John Breckinridge	U.S. House of Representatives, Vice-President under President Buchanan.	Southern Democratic	Supported federal slave codes in territories, supported popular sovereignty and permitting spread of slavery into western territories.	South
John Bell	Tennessee State Senate, U.S. House of Representatives, U.S. Secretary of War under President Harrison, U.S. Senate	Constitutional Union	Avoided the slavery issue to keep the country united.	Border States/Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia

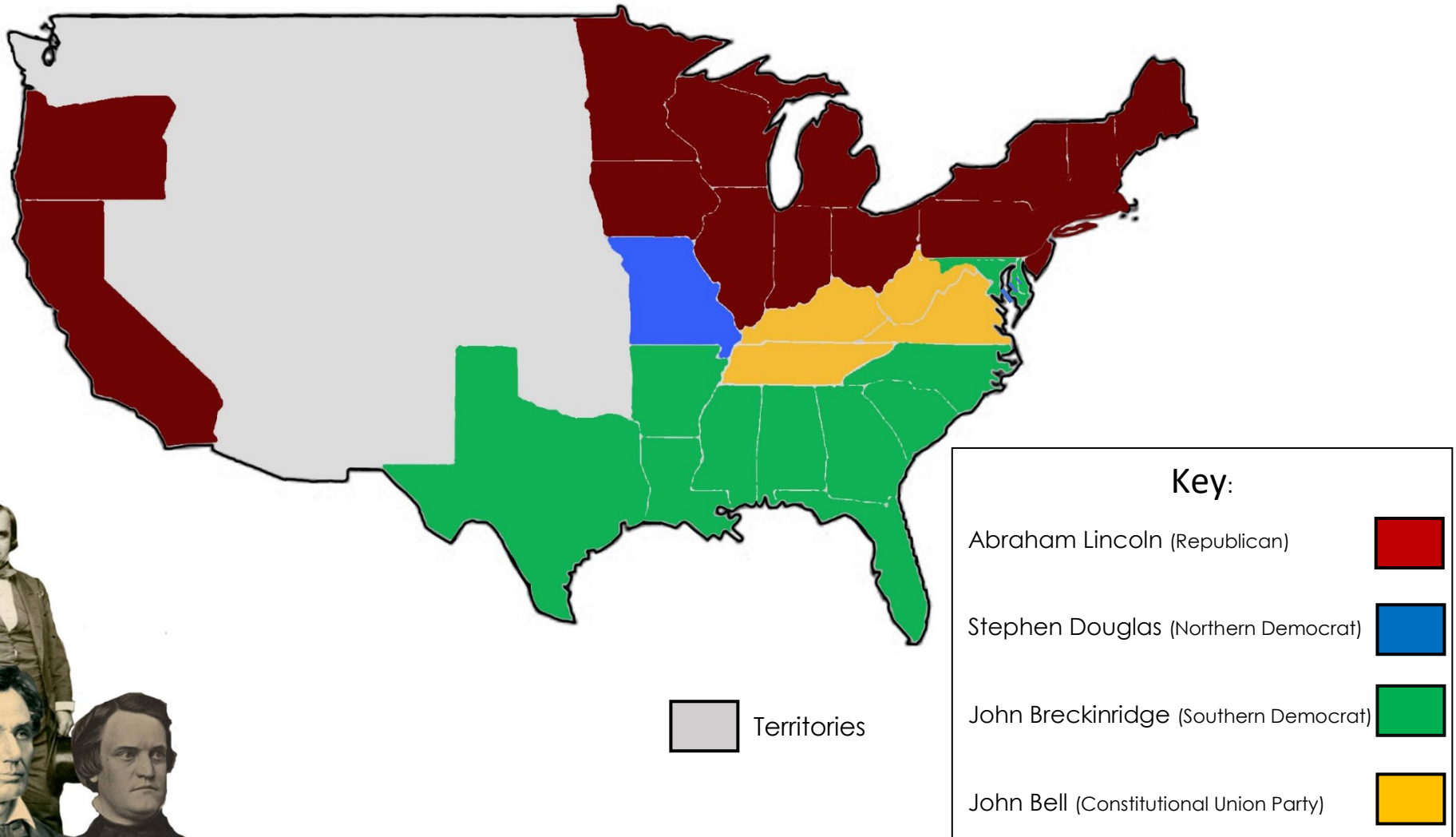
Name: _____

_____ Date: _____

_____ Period: _____

Activity Two: Electoral Map

Directions: Select a color for each candidate and color in the key. Then color each state according to the election results based on the state's electoral vote.



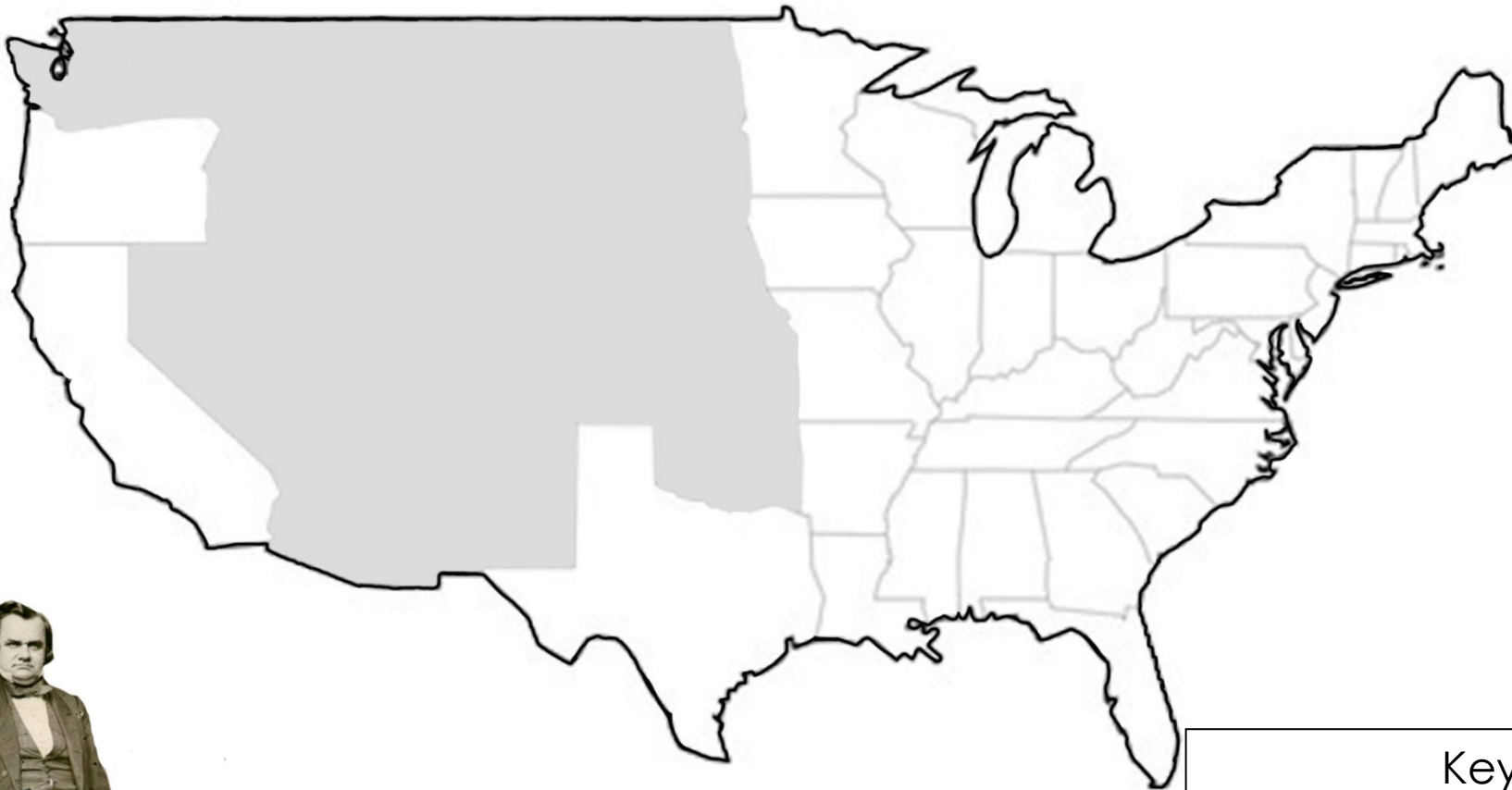
Name: _____

Date: _____

Period: _____

Activity Two: Electoral Map

Directions: Select a color for each candidate and color in the key. Then color each state according to the election results based on the state's popular vote.



 Territories

Key:

Abraham Lincoln (Republican)

☐

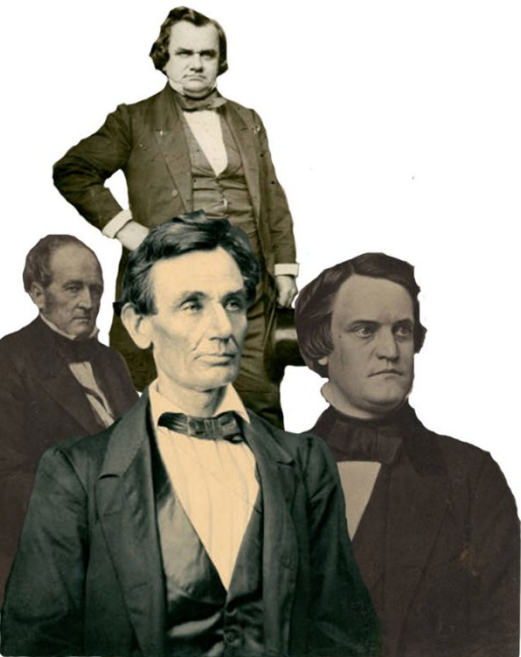
Stephen Douglas (Northern Democrat)

☐

John Breckinridge (Southern Democrat)

☐

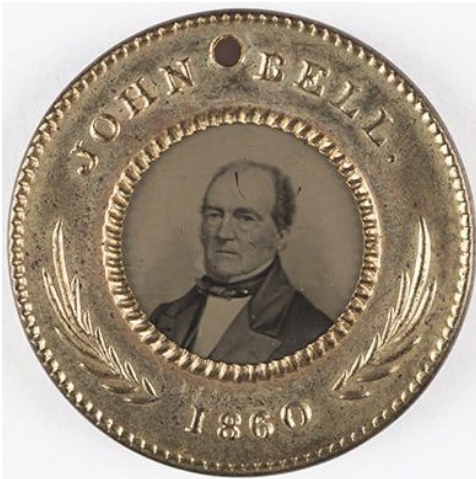
John Bell (Constitutional Union Party)

☐

Activity 3: Campaign Promotions

Directions: Use the examples below to create your own campaign promotion. Choose two different kinds of promotions.

Section One: Campaign Buttons



John Bell Campaign Button
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection
71.2009.082.0236



Stephen Douglas Campaign Button
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection
71.2009.082.0235



Abraham Lincoln 1860 Campaign Button
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection
71.2009.082.0217



John C. Breckinridge Button
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection
71.2009.082.0245

Section Two: Campaign Songsters

LINCOLN AND VICTORY.

BY W. SCOTT.

ARISE, arise, Republicans!
And bear the banner of the free
To where the star of empire lights
Us on to victory.

Then let the watch-word be
Lincoln and Victory!
Sound it from sea to sea,
Lincoln and Victory!

Arise, arise, Republicans!
And sweep the prairies of the West,
The teeming hill-sides of the East,
For Lincoln of the West
Then let the watch-word be, etc.

Arise, arise, Republicans!
Our leader is an honest man;
We'll follow on through good or ill—
For Lincoln leads the van.
Then let the watch-word be, etc.

1*

Connecticut Wide-Awake Songster
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection
71.2009.084.00105

The Lincoln Hurrah.

Lincoln's the chief to lead the way,
Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!
The fire by night,— the cloud by day,
Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!
Mailed in truth, and strong in hand,
He'll bring us to the promised land,
Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!
Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!

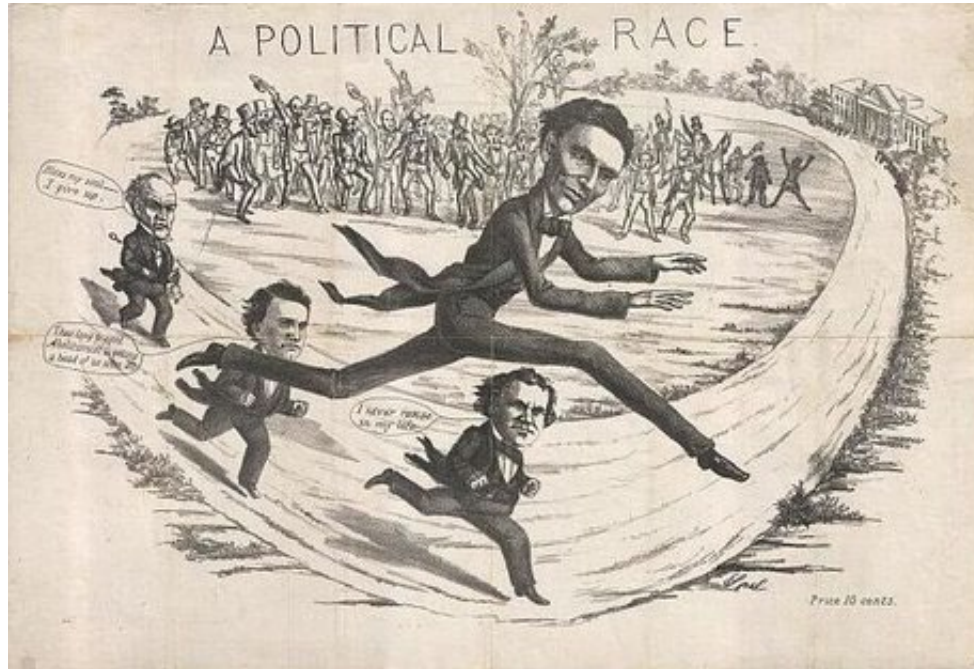
The ship of State, with tattered sail,
Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!
Is madly driving 'fore the gale,
Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!
He'll soon repair her crippled form,
And bring her safely through the storm.
Hurrah! &c.

The sable flag that o'er us waves,
Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!
Shall float no longer over slaves,
Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!
From Kansas' dark and bloody ground,
To California's farthest bound.
Hurrah, &c.

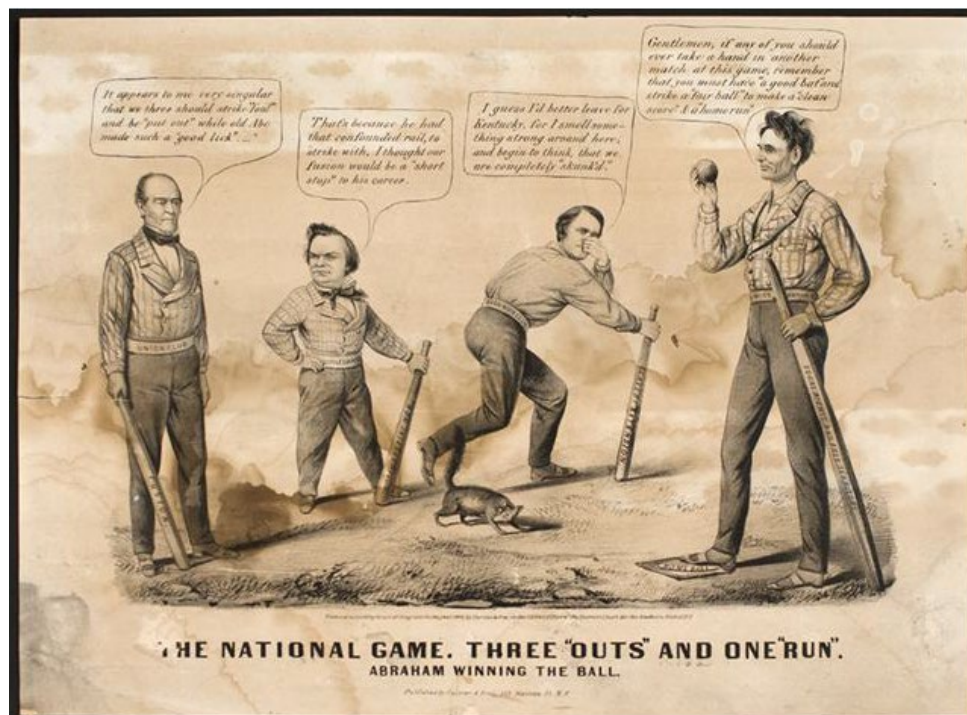
Free speech Abe Lincoln will defend,
Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!
And Slavery's curse he'll ne'er extend,
Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!
He goes for Freedom's holy cause,
For equal rights, and equal laws.
Hurrah, &c.

Republican Songs for the People
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection
71.2009.084.00021

Section Three: Campaign Cartoons

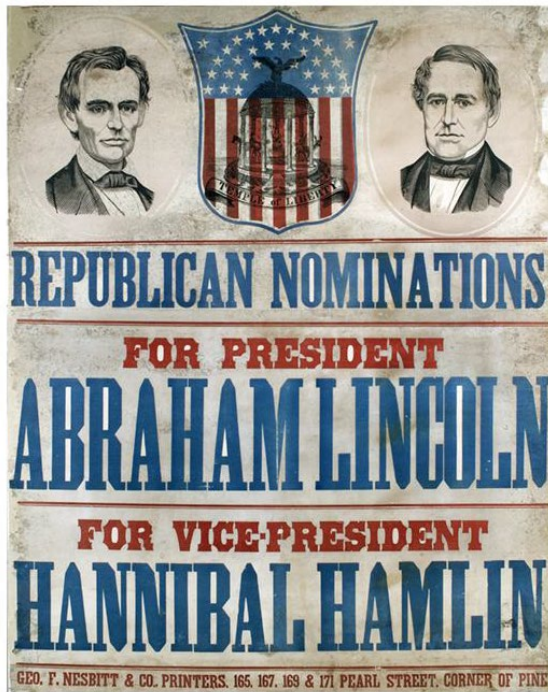


Race for the Presidency
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection
71.2009.081.0882

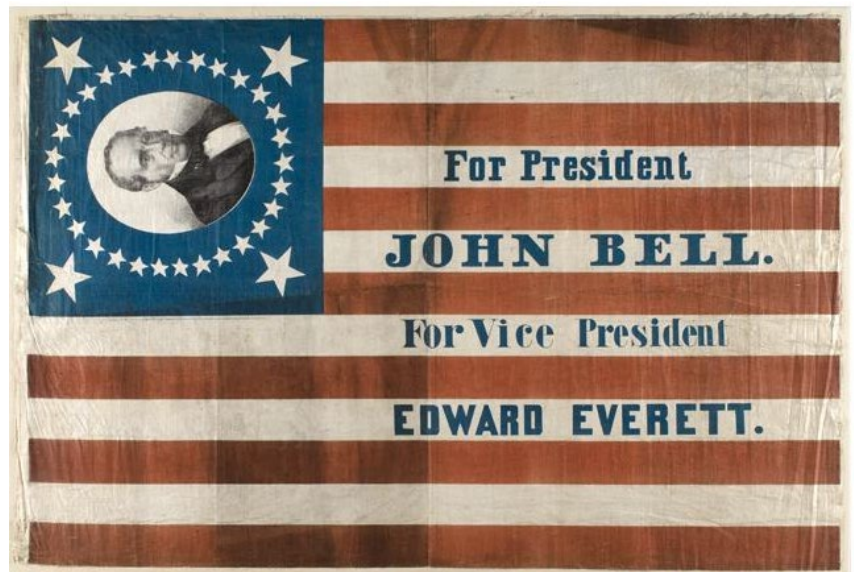


The National Game: Three "Outs" and One "Run"
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection
71.2009.081.0114

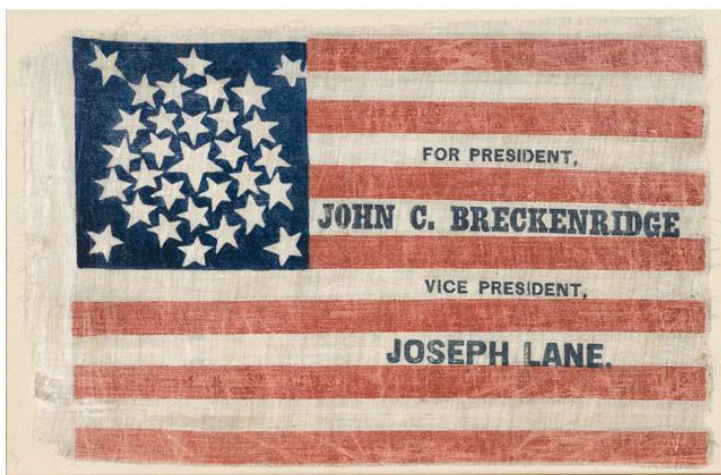
Section four: Campaign Banners



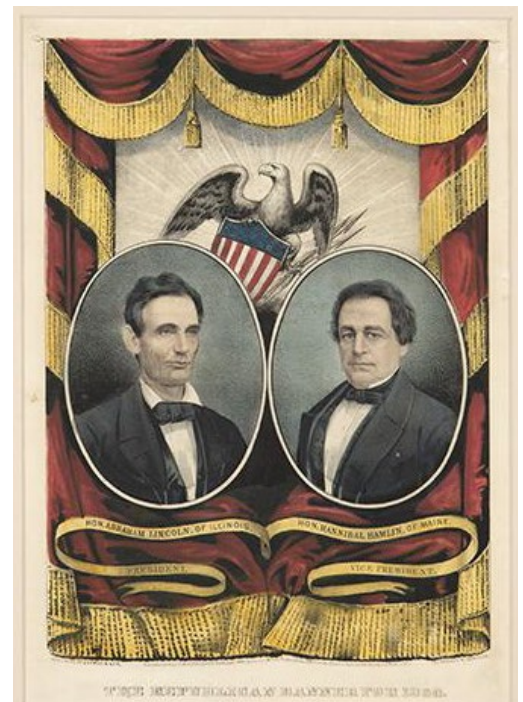
Republican Nominations Banner
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection
71.2009.081.0360



Bell and Everett Campaign Flag
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection
71.2009.082.0258



Breckenridge and Lane Campaign Flag
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection
71.2009.082.0173



Republican Nominations Banner for 1860
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection
71.2009.081.0195