

Teacher Tool 196: Abraham Lincoln and Passage of the 13th Amendment Study Guide

Study Guide for US History 20: Abraham Lincoln and the Passage of the 13th Amendment
Program 2

and US History 41: Abraham Lincoln and the Passage of the 13th Amendment Program 1

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HEC-TV Live! Presents
Abraham Lincoln and the Passage of the Thirteenth Amendment

Original Air Date: March 21, 2013

Grade Levels: 7-12

Program Description:

It's January 1865. Abraham Lincoln has just been re-elected President of the United States in November of 1864. With the Union public hoping against hope for an end to the seemingly endless Civil War and results on the battlefield looking to make that result more and more likely, President Lincoln decides to move forward for passage of Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, the historic legislation to end slavery in America. This program focuses on the story of the passage of this historic legislation.

In conjunction with their Social Action Campaign, "Stand Tall: Live Like Lincoln," Steven Spielberg's critically acclaimed film "Lincoln," a DreamWorks Pictures/Twentieth Century Fox film, in association with Participant Media, was distributed to all middle and high schools, both public and private, throughout the United States. As part of that initiative, this program includes excerpts from the film *Lincoln* as well as pre-recorded interview excerpts from Steven Spielberg, Doris Kearns Goodwin, Tony Kushner and others. Students will also see interaction with, and student questions of, Lincoln scholars joining us for the program.

The program focuses on three major areas related to passage of the Thirteenth Amendment. First, we look at Lincoln's motives for the amendment. Why did he believe it was necessary when he had already issued the Emancipation Proclamation? Second, we explore the timing of the historic passage. The Amendment had already passed in the Senate in the spring of 1864 but failed that same spring in the House of Representatives. Flush with re-election victory and an increased number of Republicans elected to the new Congress that was set to start its session in March of 1865, why did Lincoln decide to pursue passage in January 1865 in a lame duck final session of the outgoing Congress rather than waiting until March? And third, we explore the political process of getting the legislation through the House of Representatives. What deals were made? What politicians made a difference?

More on the "Stand Tall: Live Like Lincoln: Project:

In conjunction with their upcoming Social Action Campaign, "Stand Tall: Live Like Lincoln," which kicked off on February 12, Steven Spielberg's critically acclaimed film "Lincoln," a DreamWorks Pictures/Twentieth Century Fox film, in association with Participant Media, will be distributed to all middle and high schools, both public and private, throughout the United States when the film becomes available on DVD. Participant Media, DreamWorks Pictures and Fox/NewsCorp are funding the unparalleled effort with Disney In-Home creating the packaging and Disney Educational Productions handling the distribution. Compiled and designed by Disney Educational Productions, the DVD package each school will receive includes an Educator's Guide to help teachers engage in meaningful discussions and complete lesson plans relating to the significance of Abraham Lincoln's leadership and the importance of that period in our nation's history.

Program Objectives:

1. The participant will explore the reasons for a Constitutional amendment to end slavery and evaluate the impact of its passage.
2. The participant will interact with primary source documents and interpret how they impact his/her understanding of a particular historic subject.
3. The participant will engage in a discussion about different groups' perspectives related to the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment.
4. The participant will engage in critical thinking related to issues concerning the passage of the Amendment while participating in a program on that topic.

Program Format:

The program consists of the following segments. The Lincoln scholar joining us for the program provides expert analysis on each of the topics listed. In addition, audience questions for our expert guest as well as comments received from audience members during the live presentation are also included in each segment of the program. The program also includes excerpts from the film *Lincoln* as well as pre-recorded interview excerpts from Steven Spielberg, Doris Kearns Goodwin, Tony Kushner and others.

1. Welcome and Introduction—Student groups and experts are introduced and welcomed to the program. Video elements include the trailer from the film “Lincoln,” and an interview excerpt with Doris Kearns Goodwin on some interesting discoveries she made about Lincoln while researching her book, “Team of Rivals.”

2. The Need for the Amendment—We’ll explore Lincoln’s motives for wanting the Amendment to become part of the Constitution. Graphic and video elements include the text of the 10th and 13th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. As part of the segment, we look at Big Picture Question One for the program: Why did Lincoln feel an amendment to end slavery was necessary? Why wouldn't the Emancipation Proclamation suffice?

- A. Strengths and Weaknesses of the Emancipation Proclamation
- B. Strengths and Weaknesses of a Constitutional Amendment
- C. Wording of the Amendment Proposed

3. Timing of the Passage—This segment will focus on Lincoln’s decision to push for passage in the House of Representatives by the end of January 1865. Video elements include an interview excerpt with “Lincoln” screenwriter Tony Kushner on what he learned about Lincoln’s ability to master the process of politics. As part of the segment, we investigate Big Picture Question Two for the program: Why did Lincoln decide to push for passage in the House during a lame duck session in January 1865? Why not wait until the newly elected Congress was inaugurated in March and do it then when more Republicans would be in the House chamber?

- A. Previous Passage by the Senate in spring of 1864
- B. 1864 Presidential and Congressional Election Results
- C. Nature of a Lame Duck Session of Congress

4. Politics of the Process—This segment will focus on the political process of getting the amendment through the House. Why were some opposed to the amendment? What deals were made to change minds? What politicians made a difference? Video elements include clips from the film “Lincoln” related to the topics in the segment. As part of the segment, we explore Big Picture Question Three for the program: What is your response to the political deal making that made passage of the Amendment possible? Was it acceptable? Does it change your view of Lincoln as a politician? Does it change your view of Lincoln as a man?

- A. Reasons for Those Opposed to the Amendment
- B. Nature of House of Representatives versus Senate in getting legislation passed
- C. The Politics of Getting the Vote
- D. Work of Thaddeus Stevens

5. Closing Segment--Including summary of topics discussed and final questions from students. As part of the segment, we explore Big Picture Question Four for the program: What similarities and differences do you see when comparing the passage of the 13th amendment to the passage of major legislation in Congress today?

- A. Comparisons to Legislative Process Today
- B. Final thoughts from Program Experts

Featured National Standards (History):

Grades 5-12:

Historical Thinking Standards

1. Chronological Thinking

B. Identify the temporal structure of a historical narrative or story: its beginning, middle, and end (the latter defined as the outcome of a particular beginning).

E. Interpret data presented in time lines and create time lines by designating appropriate equidistant intervals of time and recording events according to the temporal order in which they occurred.

2. Historical Comprehension

A. Identify the author or source of the historical document or narrative and assess its credibility.

B. Reconstruct the literal meaning of a historical passage by identifying who was involved, what happened, where it happened, what events led to these developments, and what consequences or outcomes followed.

C. Identify the central question(s) the historical narrative addresses and the purpose, perspective, or point of view from which it has been constructed.

D. Differentiate between historical facts and historical interpretations but acknowledge that the two are related; that the facts the historian reports are selected and reflect therefore the historian's judgment of what is most significant about the past.

E. Read historical narratives imaginatively, taking into account what the narrative reveals of the humanity of the individuals and groups involved--their probable values, outlook, motives, hopes, fears, strengths, and weaknesses.

F. Appreciate historical perspectives--(a) describing the past on its own terms, through the eyes and experiences of those who were there, as revealed through their literature, diaries, letters, debates, arts, artifacts, and the like; (b) considering the historical context in which the event unfolded--the values, outlook, options, and contingencies of that time and place; and (c) avoiding "present-mindedness," judging the past solely in terms of present-day norms and values.

4. Historical Research Capabilities

A. Formulate historical questions from encounters with historical documents, eyewitness accounts, letters, diaries, artifacts, photos, historical sites, art, architecture, and other records from the past.

B. Obtain historical data from a variety of sources, including: library and museum collections, historic sites, historical photos, journals, diaries, eyewitness accounts, newspapers, and the like; documentary films, oral testimony from living witnesses, censuses, tax records, city directories, statistical compilations, and economic indicators.

C. Interrogate historical data by uncovering the social, political, and economic context in which it was created; testing the data source for its credibility, authority, authenticity, internal consistency and completeness; and detecting and evaluating bias, distortion, and propaganda by omission, suppression, or invention of facts.

F. Support interpretations with historical evidence in order to construct closely reasoned arguments rather than facile opinions.

5. Historical Issues—Analysis and Decision-Making

A. Identify issues and problems in the past and analyze the interests, values, perspectives, and points of view of those involved in the situation.

Program-Related Activity Suggestions:

1. Learn More About the Thirteenth Amendment—Familiarize students with basic information about the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment. When did it occur? Who were the major political players on both sides of the issue? What were their positions on the issue? How was success realized? A wide variety of web resources are available, and a few are highlighted below if you do not have resources of your own to refer to.

<http://www.alplm.org/home.html> -- Official website of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum

<http://www.alplm.org/blog/podcast-2/> -- Podcast on the 13th amendment with experts from the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum

<http://www.greatamericanhistory.net/amendment.htm> -- Wording of the amendment and background information on the reasons for it and its passage

<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=40> -- Image of the original document of the Thirteenth Amendment and background information on it

http://schillerinstitute.org/educ/hist/eiw_this_week/v4n5_feb3_1865.html -- Description of the events regarding passing the Amendment in December of 1864 and January 1865 and the reaction to those events

<http://www.sethkaller.com/freedomdocuments/13th-amendment/> -- Information on passage of the amendment as well as images of the original document and handwritten copies made at the time

<http://dep.disney.go.com/lincoln/home> -- Disney Learning Hub educational website related to the film Lincoln and the passage of the Amendment

2. Think About the Big Picture Questions—Using individual student work time and class discussion, have students contemplate and develop their own answers for the three Big Picture Questions below that formed the focus of the program.

Big Picture Question 1: Why do you think Lincoln felt an amendment to end slavery was necessary? Why wouldn't the Emancipation Proclamation suffice?

Big Picture Question 2: Why do you think Lincoln decided to push for passage in the House during a lame duck session in January 1865? Why not wait until the newly elected Congress was inaugurated in March and do it then when more Republicans would be in the House chamber?

Big Picture Question 3: What is your response to the political deal making that made passage of the Amendment possible? Was it acceptable? Does it change your view of Lincoln as a politician? Does it change your view of Lincoln as a man?

Big Picture Question 4: What similarities and differences do you see when comparing the passage of the 13th amendment to the passage of major legislation in Congress today?

3. Compare Your Thinking—Have students compare their responses to the Big Picture Questions of the program to those given by students who joined us for one of our live programs on

the topic. Those videos can be found on our Educate.Today website as US History 41, US History 37, US History 34, US History 29 and US History 20.

4. Reflect on What You’ve Learned—Have students compare their previous understanding of the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment with their current understanding since the program. How has that understanding changed as a result of talking with experts and reading the documents? Have students cite specific examples of changed perceptions or understandings and what particular items or experiences helped foster that change.

5. Go Back in Time and Write a Letter—Have students go back to the winter of 1865 and take on the guise of an individual of the time writing a letter to a friend declaring their response to the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment. Are they a southern plantation owner, a northern businessman, an abolitionist, a politician, a soldier, or perhaps a mom worried for her sons who are fighting in the war? What other guise could they choose to take? In that person’s voice, have students write a letter to a specific friend outlining their reactions, hopes, fears, worries, concerns, expectations, etc. in light of the amendment’s passage.

6. Learn About State Ratification of the Amendment—Have students follow up the passage of the Amendment by Congress with their own research on the process for passage in the state legislatures that was needed for its final ratification and addition to the Constitution. What do they notice about the time it took? The order of states that ratified it? The states that did not ratify it? Have students share their learning in a journal entry or class discussion.

7. Learn More About the Topic—Have students view additional videos on our Educate.Today website to learn more about what our Lincoln scholar had to say on specific topics and/or his responses to specific audience questions we received during that program. The clips referred to below are included on the Program Materials page for this archived program.

- a. US History 30: Lincoln’s ability to politically strategize—what does it tell us about his character?
- b. US History 31: Lincoln’s ability to use the bully pulpit of the Presidency
- c. US History 32: Lincoln’s use of political patronage to obtain votes for the amendment
- d. US History 33: On Lincoln’s accessibility/people skills/personality
- e. US History 35: Could Lincoln have gotten the amendment passed without political deal making?
- f. US History 36: Did Lincoln know any slaves and how did that affect his view of slavery?

Supplemental Resources:

<http://www.alplm.org/home.html> -- Official website of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum

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<http://www.greatamericanhistory.net/amendment.htm> -- Wording of the amendment and background information on the reasons for it and its passage

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