



LINCOLN AND FORT SUMTER

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

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OVERVIEW



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.

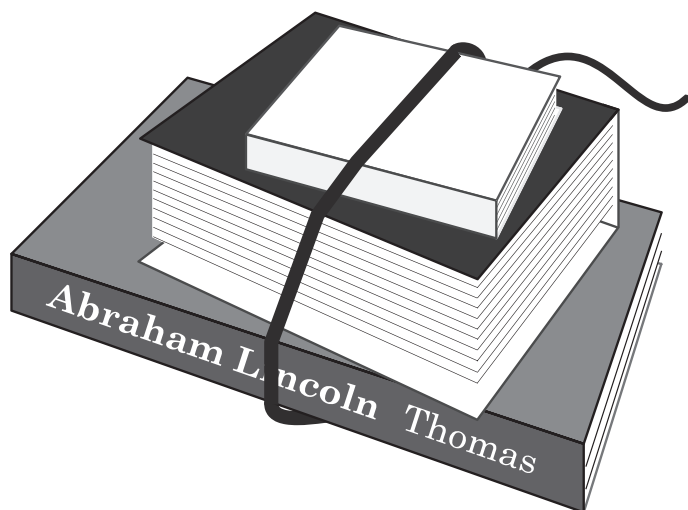
Current, Richard N., *Lincoln and the First Shot*, J.B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, 1963. This fine work is a detailed description of the specific Fort Sumter crisis. It clearly draws the issues for examination and spends considerable energy discussing various interpretations of the crisis by schools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

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.



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

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

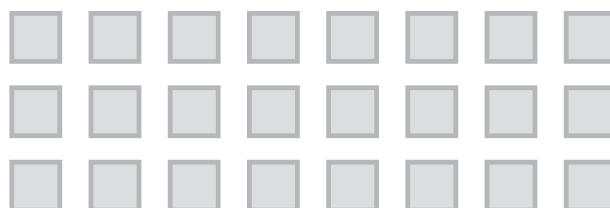
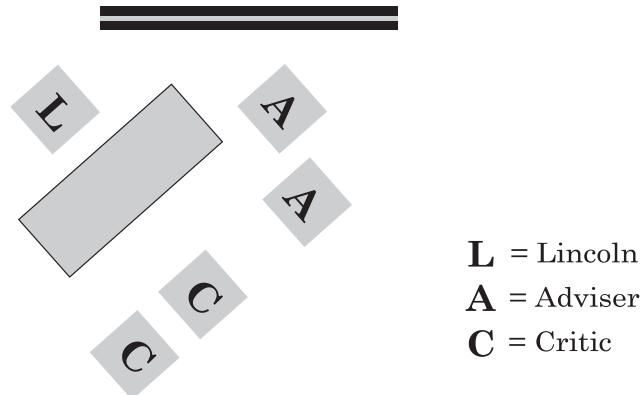
Role players:

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.