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School Service**

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# TEACHER NOTES

Lincoln's Cabinet and the Sumter Crisis is a simulation where students assume the role of Lincoln's cabinet and attempt to successfully resolve the crisis over federal property located in South Carolina.

## OBJECTIVES:

- Students will identify the people, places, and events that immediately precipitated the Civil War.
- Students will identify the major components of a crisis, i.e., making a vital decision(s), with limited time, and incomplete information.
- Students will describe the various factors that affect political decision-making including conflicting personalities, competing constituencies, time limitations, inadequate or incomplete information, imperfect solutions, and hidden agendas.
- Students will read and interpret historical documents from the Sumter Crisis.
- Students will evaluate various options for resolving the Sumter Crisis.

## OVERVIEW:

Lincoln's Cabinet and the Sumter Crisis is a simulation for high school students who assume the role of President Lincoln and his cabinet members. The simulation begins with Lincoln's Inauguration (March 4, 1861) and concludes with Lincoln's decision regarding Fort Sumter. The simulation requires four days to complete and assumes a 50 to 55 minute class period. The simulation proceeds as follows:

### DAY ONE

Present to your class a background lecture on the people, events, terms, and concepts surrounding the Sumter Crisis (See "**Sample Outline**" and "**Telegram**" on pp. 6--8). This information is *essential* for successful student participation in the simulation. You will find a

- telegram symbol by three different points in your "**Sample Outline.**" After you have made that point in the lecture, arrange for a teacher or student to burst into the room saying in a loud voice, "Telegram! Telegram! Telegram!" The more you dramatize it the greater the effect, e.g., act shocked when the delivery person enters the room, have the delivery person require you to sign for the telegram, ask your students if they want to know the contents of the telegram. Read each telegram to the class. An excellent map of Charleston Harbor and a detailed illustration of Fort Sumter can be found at <http://www.cpl.org/ccl/sumtourtour.html>. It is recommended that you use this site to supplement your presentation. Following the presentation divide your class into groups of five students. Each group will represent Lincoln's cabinet with each person in the group assigned a different historical role. The cabinet roles are President Abraham Lincoln, Secretary of State William H. Seward,