

Slavery, the Civil War & Reconstruction

The Election of 1860 and Abraham Lincoln

“Honest Abe” he was called. The tall, thin man from Illinois started out in a log cabin. But he would become one of the most famous presidents of the United States.

Before Abraham Lincoln was president, he tried to become a senator. He and his **opponent**¹, Stephen A. Douglas, had different opinions. They **debated**² in front of an audience about all of the things they believed. Their debates became famous. Everyone was talking about “The Lincoln-Douglas Debates.” One of Lincoln’s speeches was quoted in newspapers everywhere. Lincoln said “A house divided against itself cannot stand...I believe this government cannot **endure**³ permanently half slave and half free.”

Lincoln lost the race for Senate, but his speeches and debates did give him a lot of publicity. People all over the North knew who Abraham Lincoln was. The Republican Party decided that Lincoln should be president. Republicans chose Lincoln as their candidate for the Election of 1860.

Southerners were **outraged**.⁴ They feared that Lincoln’s “house divided” speech meant that he would get rid of slavery. Lincoln assured the southern states that he would not get rid of slavery where it already existed. Lincoln said that his biggest goal was to preserve the Union and keep all of the states together. But Southerners wanted to be able to spread slavery into the territory west of the Mississippi too. They knew that Lincoln would not allow slavery in the territories.

In the election of 1860 not one single southern state voted for Abraham Lincoln. The division between the North and the South was clear. The dividing line was slavery. Soon the southern states would separate from the Union and create the Confederate States of America.

¹ **opponent** – a person who is against another in a fight or a debate

² **debate** – a discussion of the reasons or opinions on two opposing sides

³ **endure** – to continue to exist

⁴ **outraged** – anger caused by an offensive act

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What did Lincoln mean when he said “A house divided against itself cannot stand”?
 - a. It is a good idea to have slavery everywhere.
 - b. Northern and Southern states should decide about slavery for themselves.
 - c. Having slavery in some states and not in others won't work.
 - d. Slavery should not be allowed anywhere.

2. No southern state voted for Lincoln because
 - a. he was from the North.
 - b. the people there thought he might end slavery.
 - c. they didn't understand what he was saying.
 - d. they didn't know who he was.

3. The southern states were going to separate from the northern states because
 - a. the northern states were against slavery.
 - b. the southern states were against slavery.
 - c. the southern states felt like it.
 - d. the southern states knew that Lincoln would try to end the Union.

4. Before Lincoln became president, he
 - a. was a Congressman.
 - b. was governor of Illinois.
 - c. ran for Senate.
 - d. was vice-president.

5. The passage “The Election of 1860 and Abraham Lincoln” is mostly about
 - a. the Presidential election right before Lincoln got elected President.
 - b. elections for Senate seats all over the country in 1860.
 - c. the speeches from the Lincoln-Douglas debates.
 - d. how Abraham Lincoln became famous and won the Presidency.

6. How did Lincoln's race for Senate help him to become President?

7. What did Abraham Lincoln promise to southern states?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Not one single southern state voted for Lincoln _____ the 1860 presidential election.

- a. during
- b. after
- c. before
- d. especially

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Before he became President, Abraham Lincoln lost a race for Senate in Illinois.

Who? Abraham Lincoln

(did) What? _____

Where? _____

When? _____

10. **Vocabulary Word:** debate: a discussion about a subject on which people have different views.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: _____

Teacher Guide and Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 750

Featured Text Structure: Descriptive – the writer explains, defines or illustrates a concept or topic

Passage Summary: Abraham Lincoln became famous during his debates with Stephen A. Douglas when he was running for Senate. In 1860, he was nominated for the Presidency, which left the southern states outraged. They know that he would not allow slavery to spread to the western territories.

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 - d. how Abraham Lincoln became famous and won the Presidency.**

6. How did Lincoln's race for Senate help him to become President?

Suggested answer: Although Lincoln lost the race for Senate, he became famous through the speeches and debates of the Senate race. He was chosen as the Republican candidate for President because of his fame.

7. What did Abraham Lincoln promise to southern states?

Suggested answer: Abraham Lincoln promised southern states that he would not get rid of slavery where it already existed, and that his biggest goal was to preserve the Union.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Not one single southern state voted for Lincoln _____ the 1860 presidential election.

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- b. after
- c. before
- d. especially

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(did) What? **lost a race for Senate**

Where? **in Illinois**

When? **before he became President**

10. **Vocabulary Word:** debate: a discussion about a subject on which people have different views.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.