



## Lesson 10.2 “The Presidential Election of 1860”

### Unit 10: New Hampshire and the Civil War

#### Lesson Objectives

- Students will analyze a political cartoon and use secondary source information to explain its comment on the election of 1860.
- Students will look closely at a campaign object from 1860 and identify how it communicates its message.
- Students will interpret a map and charts to answer questions about the results of the election of 1860.
- Students will use evidence from the sources in the lesson to write a response to the focus question.

#### Lesson Competencies

- I can analyze primary and secondary sources and draw appropriate conclusions. (Moose SS)
- I can recognize how media communicate values, information, and ideology. (Moose SS)
- I can use sources (pictures, primary and secondary sources, discussion) to expand my understanding of the topic/text and locate information to support my point of view. (ELA 6)
- I can integrate information, distinguish relevant-irrelevant information (e.g., fact/opinion), and (visually, orally, in writing) present what was learned. (ELA 8)

#### Essential Questions

How has New Hampshire come to be the way it is?

#### Focus Questions

How did the presidential election of 1860 divide the country?

#### Estimated Time

Four 40-minute class sessions

#### Materials & Equipment

“Dividing the National Map” for printing or projection  
Class set of “Quick Connect: Dividing the National Map”  
Class set of “Election of 1860: Meet the Candidates”  
“Honest Old Abe is Bound to Win” for printing or projection  
Class set of “Spreading the Word about Honest Abe”  
“Election of 1860 Results” map for printing or projection  
Class set of “Election of 1860 Results” worksheet  
Class set of “The Election That Led to Division?”



## Educator Introduction & Rationale

The presidential election of 1860 took place during a time of extreme division among the citizens of the United States. Abraham Lincoln found himself nominated by the recently formed Republican Party. Running against his former debate opponent Stephen Douglas (the Democratic nominee), Lincoln joined a field of four that also included Southern Democratic nominee John Breckinridge and Constitutional Party nominee John Bell. The four political parties demonstrated how divided the country had become by that point, representing a wide range of perspectives on the big issues of the day. After Lincoln won the election, southern states, afraid that their practice of enslaving people would be abolished, began to secede from the Union. By the time of Lincoln's inauguration on March 4, 1861, seven states had officially seceded with four more threatening to do so. Just over a month later, the Civil War began.

This is the second lesson in Unit 10: New Hampshire and the Civil War. It is recommended that students complete the learning activities in Lesson 10.1, "A House Divided Cannot Stand" and Lesson 4.3 "Merchants, Ships, and the Triangle Trade" in order to have background knowledge about the practice of slavery, its connection to the American economy in the 18th and 19th centuries, and the national divisions created by the so-called "peculiar" institution. Students will also benefit from having background knowledge about how campaigns, elections, and voting work. See the learning activities in 16.2 "Campaign Strategies" and 16.3 "Voting in New Hampshire" for ideas about supporting student understanding of those topics. Additionally, as necessary, note with students that the platforms and ideologies of Lincoln's Republican Party of the 1860s (and Douglas' Democratic Party) bear little resemblance to the positions those parties hold today.

In this lesson, students investigate how the election of 1860 both represented and created divisions within our nation. By analyzing an 1860 political cartoon and reading a chart of supporting information, students learn about presidential candidates' positions on the major concerns of the day. Students then look closely at a campaign object from New Hampshire and think about the symbols, language, and imagery used to convey the Republican Party's platform. This activity is followed by an analysis of maps and charts that show the results of the election. The lesson culminates with a written response to the focus question that uses evidence explored throughout the lesson.

This lesson has been aligned to standards for grades 3–5; however, the topics and skills will be meaningful for middle school students. Some of the activities in this lesson have been adapted from an excellent lesson for older students called "1860: The Election That Led to War" from the National Parks Service found at [www.nps.gov/teachers/classrooms/upload/1860-The-Election-that-led-to-War.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/teachers/classrooms/upload/1860-The-Election-that-led-to-War.pdf). Suggestions for extension and reinforcement are included throughout the learning activity; their worksheets and sources are at the end of the resources file. Please adapt all the material in this lesson, as necessary, to meet the needs of the students in your classroom. Lesson vocabulary and definitions are at the end of this document. You may wish to preview these with your students.

## Learning Activity

### Activation

**Quick Connect: "Dividing the National Map."** Project or distribute copies of the political cartoon "Dividing the National Map." Give students a few minutes to look at it closely while handing out the "Quick Connect: Dividing the National Map." Have students complete the Encounter and Investigate tasks on the worksheet to become familiar with the source. Remind students that in addition to their own observations, the caption and title may provide helpful information for their analysis.

Ask students to share their ideas for the Encounter and Investigate questions as a whole group. Synthesize their responses to ensure that all students understand the details listed on the Quick Connect Answer Key. At the least, students should know:

- The image is a political cartoon from 1860. If students are not familiar with political cartoons, review the vocabulary definition.
- The cartoon shows four candidates for the presidential election of 1860: Abraham Lincoln, John Breckinridge, Stephen Douglas, and John Bell.

### Direct Instruction

**Meet the candidates.** Explain to students that the presidential election of 1860 took place during a time of extreme division across the country, as different regions had polar opposite positions on the big issues of the day. The four candidates represented four different political parties. Note that the Democratic Party had split into northern and southern factions.

Distribute copies of "Election of 1860: Meet the Candidates." Ask students to read through either alone or out loud in pairs the descriptions of each candidate, his party, and his platform while thinking about the cartoon.

Project the political cartoon again. Ask students to use the new information with their initial observations to complete the Build task. Challenge them to identify each figure with the correct name in their captions. Refer to the educator reference version of "Quick Connect: Dividing the National Map" to support and correct student thinking.

**Grade 3–5 reinforcement:** Simplify the chart by providing only the party platform regarding slavery. Reinforce student understanding by creating a sorting activity using the details from the chart.

**Grade 6–8 extension:** Encourage students to develop their image analysis skills further. Use the "A Political Race" cartoon which shows the progression of the campaign between the candidates and the Analyzing Photographs worksheet found on the Analyze It! section on the "Moose on the Loose" website. "A Political Race" source is found at the end of the resources file.

**Teaching tip:** This is a good place to pause if dividing the lesson between teaching blocks.

## Guided Practice

**Spreading the word.** Explain to students that campaigning and elections worked a bit differently in the 19th century than they do today. Once nominated by a political party, candidates rarely continued campaigning in public and instead relied on supportive citizens to spread the word through newspaper articles, parades, rallies, and speeches.

In New Hampshire during the 1860 presidential campaign, Abraham Lincoln was the most popular candidate. Project or distribute copies of "Honest Old Abe is Bound to Win." Ask students to examine the symbols, images, and language on it. Use the worksheet "Spreading the Word about Honest Abe" to help students analyze the source.

**Teaching tip:** Take care to note with students the racist imagery in the source as it may trigger some students. Breckinridge, who supported enslaving people and allowing the spread of slavery in the territories, is shown in the campaign image carried on a platform by people with dark skin, presumably enslaved people.

**Grade 3–5 reinforcement:** Students can work independently or with a partner to create their own campaign item for a candidate.

**Grade 6–8 extension:** The Wide-Awakes were Lincoln supporters who organized nighttime parades in different states. Younger voters, even some who were not old enough to vote, were drawn to this group's energetic activities. Learn more about the group in this video from the National Museum of American History found at [americanhistory.si.edu/democracy-exhibition/education/young-people-and-elections](http://americanhistory.si.edu/democracy-exhibition/education/young-people-and-elections). Note: Scroll down to find Episode 5: Shared Democracy. At 2 minutes 20 seconds, the segment about the Wide-Awakes is completed and the students then discuss getting out the vote in the 2020 election. After viewing, ask students to make comparisons to ways young people, even those not old enough to vote, have become involved in recent presidential elections.

**Teaching tip:** This is a good place to pause if dividing the lesson between teaching blocks.

## Independent Practice

**Examine election results.** Provide students with "Election of 1860: Results." Have students use the map and charts to answer the questions, then use best practices to review the answers with the whole group.

**Grade 3–5 reinforcement:** Focus on questions 1–6 in teacher-led small groups. Since answering these questions requires substantial reading and math skills, this may be a good activity to complete during that instructional time.

**Teaching tip:** This is a good place to pause if dividing the lesson between teaching blocks.

**Student  
Reading**

**The Election of 1860.** Before moving into Reflection, direct students to read Unit 10: Learn It! "[The Divided Union](#)," pages 1 to 6.

**Reflection**

**What happened next?** Provide students with "The Election That Led to Division?" and give them time to combine the information from the primary source with the information from all of the other sources to write a response to the focus question. Use the writing process most familiar to your students to structure this task.

**Grade 3–5 reinforcement:** As a pre-writing step, provide students with the "Focus Question Mind Map" and encourage them to generate their own ideas first and then add to the mind map with supporting evidence from the sources. Students can use their completed mind maps to develop their final written responses. Alternatively, students could create a poster with illustrations and supporting text.

**Grade 6–8 extension:** Ask students to write their response as if reporting the issue for a New Hampshire newspaper. Their response should include essential facts about the election and a summary of South Carolina's secession announcement.

## Supporting Materials

### New Hampshire Historical Society Resources

1. Honest Old Abe Is Bound to Win, 1860

### Other Resources

- Dividing the National Map, 1860; Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division
- Election of 1860 Results; *National Atlas of the United States*, 1970, file on Wikimedia Commons
- The Union is Dissolved, 1860; Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Abraham Lincoln Papers
- A Political Race, 1860; Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection, courtesy of the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites
- Inspiration from "The Election of 1860 Role Play" from *Teaching a People's History of Abolition and the Civil War* (Rethinking Schools, 2019).

## Standards

### “Moose on the Loose” Content:

- ✓ Students will understand that the United States became divided over several issues in the decades before the Civil War, including slavery, which resulted in rising tensions throughout the nation. They will understand that New Hampshire played a part in these relationships. (3-5.T4.2)
- ✓ Students will understand that the Civil War affected the whole nation. They will understand that New Hampshire supported the Union during the war in various ways. (3-5.T4.3)

### “Moose on the Loose” Skills:

- ✓ Gathering, Interpreting, and Using Evidence (3-5.S1.1, 3-5.S1.2)
- ✓ Communicating and Critiquing Conclusions (3-5.S2.1, 3-5.S2.2)
- ✓ Effective Historical Thinking (3-5.S3.1, 3-5.S3.2)
- ✓ Comprehensive Geographic Reasoning (3-5.S4.1, 3-5.S4.2)

### NCSS Themes:

- ✓ Theme 5: Individuals, Groups, & Institutions
- ✓ Theme 6: Power, Authority, & Governance

### C3 Frameworks:

- ✓ Processes, Rules, and Laws (D2.Civ.14.3-5)
- ✓ Perspectives (D2.His.4.3-5)
- ✓ Historical Sources and Evidence (D2.His.10.3-5, D2.His.11.3-5, D2.His.13.3-5)
- ✓ Developing Claims and Using Evidence (D3.3.3-5, D3.4.3-5)
- ✓ Communicating Conclusions (D4.1.3-5, D4.2.3-5, D4.3.3-5)

### Common Core ELA Grade 3:

- ✓ Key Ideas and Details in Informational Text (RI.3.3)
- ✓ Craft and Structure in Informational Text (RI.3.6)
- ✓ Integration of Knowledge and Ideas in Informational Text (RI.3.7, RI.3.9)
- ✓ Text Types and Purposes in Writing (W.3.1, W.3.2, W.3.2b)
- ✓ Knowledge of Language (L.3.3)

### Common Core Math Grade 3:

- ✓ Use place value understanding and properties of operations to perform multi-digit arithmetic (3.NBT.A.2)

### Common Core ELA Grade 4:

- ✓ Key Ideas and Details in Informational Text (RI.4.3)
- ✓ Integration of Knowledge and Ideas in Informational Text (RI.4.7, RI.4.9)
- ✓ Text Types and Purposes in Writing (W.4.1, W.4.2, W.4.2b)

### **Common Core Math Grade 4:**

- ✓ Generalize place value understanding for multi-digit whole numbers in Number and Operations in Base Ten (4.NBT.A.2)
- ✓ Use place value understanding and properties of operations to perform multi-digit arithmetic (4.NBT.B.4)

### **Common Core ELA Grade 5:**

- ✓ Key Ideas and Details in Informational Text (RI.5.3)
- ✓ Craft and Structure in Informational Text (RI.5.6)
- ✓ Integration of Knowledge and Ideas in Informational Text (RI.5.9)
- ✓ Text Types and Purposes in Writing (W.5.1, W.5.2, W.5.2b)

### **Common Core Math Grade 5:**

- ✓ Perform operations with multi-digit whole numbers and with decimals to hundredths (5.NBT.B.7)



## Lesson Vocabulary

<b>campaign</b>	(noun) A connected series of events or actions to make something happen; for example, a political campaign is waged to win elections
<b>candidate</b>	(noun) Someone who is applying for a job. In a presidential primary, a candidate is a person who is trying to get the job of president of the United States.
<b>election</b>	(noun) When people vote for a person for office or other position
<b>electoral vote</b>	(noun) The votes cast by members of the electoral college. Each state has a number of electoral college members (electors) equal to its total number of members in the House of Representatives and Senate.
<b>homestead</b>	(noun) An area designated by the federal government to be developed as an independent farm
<b>platform</b>	(noun) The main beliefs and policies of a political party
<b>political cartoon</b>	(noun) A drawing that explains a political situation with visual humor
<b>political party</b>	(noun) An organized group of people with similar goals and opinions about how a nation should function. The United States has two major political parties: the Democratic Party and the Republican Party.
<b>popular vote</b>	(noun) The votes cast by all eligible voters
<b>secede</b>	(verb) To separate from a political organization, like from a state or country
<b>transcontinental railroad</b>	(noun) A railroad that crosses a whole continent
<b>western territories</b>	(noun) The areas in the western part of the United States that had not, in 1860, been organized as states