DOCUMENTS

Interpreting Alternative Viewpoints in Primary Source Documents

The Emancipation Proclamation

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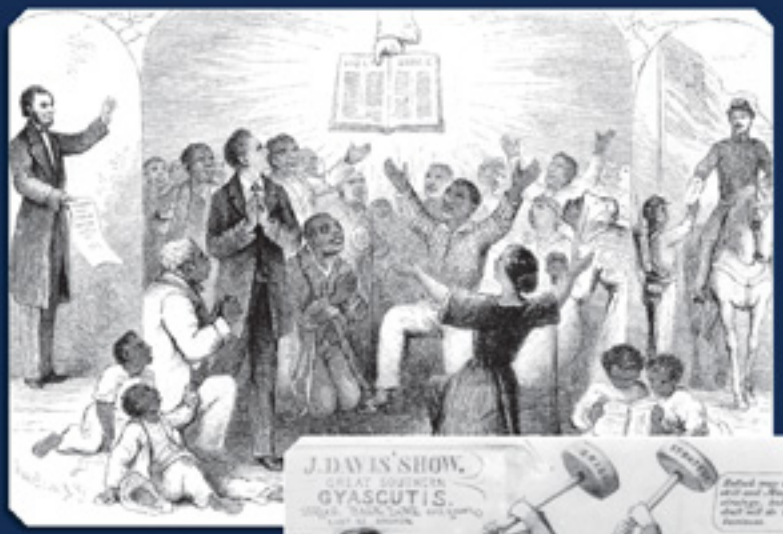
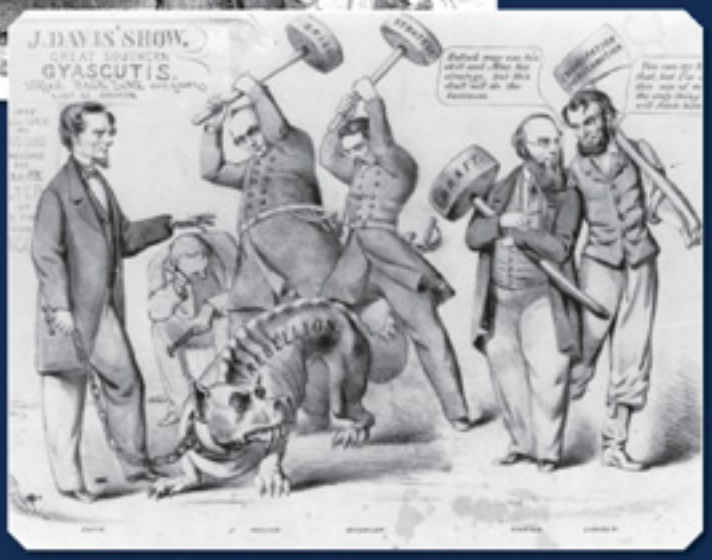




Debating the DOCUMENTS

Interpreting Alternative Viewpoints in Primary Source Documents

The Emancipation Proclamation

Was it an idealistic effort to put an end to slavery or a cynical political move to help win the war?

HS476 v2.0

MindSparks®

CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

Contents

Teacher Introduction

Using Primary Sources

Primary sources are called "primary" because they are first-hand records of a past era or historical event. They are the raw materials, or the evidence, on which historians base their "secondary" accounts of the past.

A rapidly growing number of history teachers today are using primary sources. Why? Perhaps it's because primary sources give students a better sense of what history is and what historians do. Such sources also help students see the past from a variety of viewpoints. Moreover, primary sources make history vivid and bring it to life.

However, primary sources are not easy to use. They can be confusing. They can be biased. They rarely all agree. Primary sources must be interpreted and set in context. To do this, students need historical background knowledge. *Debating the Documents* helps students handle such challenges by giving them a useful framework for analyzing sources that conflict with one another.

"Multiple, conflicting perspectives are among the truths of history. No single objective or universal account could ever put an end to this endless creative dialogue within and between the past and the present."

From the 2011 Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct of the Council of the American Historical Association.

The Debating the Documents *Series*

Each *Debating the Documents* booklet includes the same sequence of reproducible worksheets. If students use several booklets over time, they will get regular practice at interpreting and comparing conflicting sources. In this way, they can learn the skills and habits needed to get the most out of primary sources.

Each *Debating the Documents* Booklet Includes

- **Suggestions for the Student and an Introductory Essay.** The student gets instructions and a one-page essay providing background on the booklet's topic. A time line on the topic is also included.
- **Two Groups of Contrasting Primary Source Documents.** In most of the booklets, students get one pair of visual sources and one pair of written sources. In some cases, more than two are provided for each. Background is provided on each source. *Within each group, the sources clash in a very clear way*. (The sources are not always exact opposites, but they do always differ in some obvious way.)
- **Three Worksheets for Each Document Group.** Students use the first two worksheets to take notes on the sources. The third worksheet asks which source the student thinks would be most useful to a historian.
- **One DBQ.** On page 20, a document-based question (DBQ) asks students to write an effective essay using all of the booklet's primary sources.

How to Use This Booklet

1. Have students read "Suggestions for the Student" and the Introductory Essay.

Give them copies of pages 5–7. Ask them to read the instructions and then read the introductory essay on the topic. The time line gives them additional information on that topic. This reading could be done in class or as a homework assignment.

2. Have students do the worksheets.

Make copies of the worksheets and the pages with the sources. Ask students to study the background information on each source and the source itself. Then have them take notes on the sources using the worksheets. If students have access to a computer, have them review the primary sources digitally.

3. "Debate the documents" as a class.

Have students use their worksheet notes to debate the primary source documents as a class. Urge students to follow these ground rules:

- Use your worksheets as a guide for the discussion or debate.
- Try to reach agreement about the main ideas and the significance of each primary source document.
- Look for points of agreement as well as disagreement between the primary sources.
- Listen closely to all points of view about each primary source.
- Focus on the usefulness of each source to the historian, not merely on whether you agree or disagree with that source's point of view.

4. Have students do the final DBQ.

A DBQ is an essay question about a set of primary source documents. To answer the DBQ, students write essays using evidence from the sources and their own background knowledge of the historical era. (See the next page for a DBQ scoring guide to use in evaluating these essays.)

The DBQ assignment on page 20 includes guidelines for writing a DBQ essay. Here are some additional points to make with students about preparing to write this kind of essay.

The DBQ for this Booklet (see page 20):

"In bringing about the end of slavery, the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 was not nearly as important as the 13th Amendment of 1865." Explain why you do or do not agree with this statement.

- Analyze the question carefully.
- Use your background knowledge to set sources in their historical context.
- Question and interpret sources actively. Do not accept them at face value.
- Use sources meaningfully to support your essay's thesis.
- Pay attention to the overall organization of your essay.

Complete DBQ Scoring Guide

Use this guide in evaluating the DBQ for this booklet. Use this scoring guide with students who are already familiar with using primary sources and writing DBQ essays.

Excellent Essay

- Offers a clear answer or thesis explicitly addressing all aspects of the essay question.
- Does a careful job of interpreting many or most of the documents and relating them clearly to the thesis and the DBQ. Deals with conflicting documents effectively.
- Uses details and examples effectively to support the thesis and other main ideas. Explains the significance of those details and examples well.
- Uses background knowledge and the documents in a balanced way.
- Is well written; clear transitions make the essay easy to follow from point to point. Only a few minor writing errors or errors of fact.

Good Essay

- Offers a reasonable thesis addressing the essential points of the essay question.
- Adequately interprets at least some of the documents and relates them to the thesis and the DBQ.
- Usually relates details and examples meaningfully to the thesis or other main ideas.
- Includes some relevant background knowledge.
- May have some writing errors or errors of fact, as long as these do not invalidate the essay's overall argument or point of view.

Fair Essay

- Offers at least a partly developed thesis addressing the essay question.
- Adequately interprets at least a few of the documents.
- Relates only a few of the details and examples to the thesis or other main ideas.
- Includes some background knowledge.
- Has several writing errors or errors of fact that make it harder to understand the essay's overall argument or point of view.

Poor Essay

- Offers no clear thesis or answer addressing the DBQ.
- Uses few documents effectively other than referring to them in "laundry list" style, with no meaningful relationship to a thesis or any main point.
- Uses details and examples unrelated to the thesis or other main ideas. Does not explain the significance of these details and examples.
- Is not clearly written, with some major writing errors or errors of fact.

Suggestions to the Student

Using Primary Sources

A primary source is any record of evidence from the past. Many things are primary sources: letters, diary entries, official documents, photos, cartoons, wills, maps, charts, etc. They are called "primary" because they are first-hand records of a past event or time period. This *Debating the Documents* lesson is based on two groups of primary source documents. Within each group, the sources conflict with one another. That is, they express different or even opposed points of view. You need to decide which source is more reliable, more useful, or more typical of the time period. This is what historians do all the time. Usually, you will be able to learn something about the past from each source, even when the sources clash with one another in dramatic ways.

How to Use This Booklet

1. Read the one-page introductory essay.

This gives you background information that will help you analyze the primary source documents and do the exercises for this *Debating the Documents* lesson. The time line gives you additional information you will find helpful.

2. Study the primary source documents for this lesson.

For this lesson, you get two groups of sources. The sources within each group conflict with one another. Some of these sources are visuals, others are written sources. With visual sources, pay attention not only to the image's "content" (its subject matter) but also to its artistic style, shading, composition, camera angle, symbols, and other features that add to the image's meaning. With written sources, notice the writing style, bias, even what the source leaves out or does not talk about. Think about each source's author, that author's reasons for writing, and the likely audience for the source. These considerations give you clues as to the source's historical value.

3. Use the worksheets to analyze each group of primary source documents.

For each group of sources, you get three worksheets. Use the "Study the Document" worksheets to take notes on each source. Use the "Comparing the Documents" worksheet to decide which of the sources would be most useful to a historian.

4. As a class, debate the documents.

Use your worksheet notes to help you take part in this debate.

5. Do the final DBQ.

"DBQ" means "document-based question." A DBQ is a question along with several primary source documents. To answer the DBQ, write an essay using evidence from the documents and your own background history knowledge.

The Emancipation Proclamation

On July 22, 1862, as the Civil War raged, President Abraham Lincoln told his Cabinet he had decided to issue a proclamation, the key part of which stated the following:

"All persons held as slaves within any state or designated part of a state, the people whereof shall be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free . . ."

Except for the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, no other official document may have been more important in shaping the nation's future than this one, the Emancipation Proclamation.

In the summer of 1862, the Civil War was not going well for the North. At first, Lincoln had said he was fighting the South to save the Union, not to end slavery. He feared that freeing slaves now might be seen as a sign of weakness and Northern despair. So he waited for a key Northern victory in the war. In September 1862, the North stopped General Robert E. Lee's forces in Maryland at the battle of Antietam. Hence, on September 22, Lincoln issued a preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. It gave the South until January 1, 1863 (100 days), to stop its rebellion.

When January 1, 1863, arrived, the official Emancipation Proclamation freed slaves in all areas still in rebellion. It was a day of celebration, after which Lincoln began to be called "The Great Emancipator." Abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison called the proclamation "a great historic event, sublime, in its magnitude, momentous and beneficent in its far-reaching consequences."

Yet not all historians have been this kind. After all, the proclamation only freed slaves in areas still in rebellion. It left slavery alone in the border states that Lincoln desperately wanted to keep on the North's side. The slaves freed were mainly out of reach in rebel-held areas. Nor did the proclamation include grand principles or ringing phrases condemning slavery outright. It freed only some slaves as a war measure at a time of national crisis.

Some historians also suggest that Lincoln never really cared about slavery all that much and only freed the slaves to help achieve his real goal—saving the Union. After all, in a letter to editor Horace Greely, Lincoln himself said, "If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that."

Yet in recent years, some historians have offered a different view of all this. They make the case that Lincoln had in fact always seen slavery as a great wrong and did want to end it. However, they say Lincoln was just as concerned about the means used to achieve that goal as he was about the goal itself. The means used to end slavery had to be strictly constitutional. Lincoln felt duty-bound to act constitutionally. If he did not, he felt his actions would be overturned by courts or in some other way.

This is why he stopped some of his generals when they freed slaves on their own. And he himself waited to act until he could justify the step as absolutely necessary to winning the war. At that point, he could then use his powers as Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy to order an end to slavery—but still only in areas where doing so would aid the war effort. However, according to this view, even this more limited step doomed slavery in the long run anyway.

The four documents here should help you take part intelligently in this ongoing debate about Lincoln, slavery, and the Emancipation Proclamation.

The Emancipation Proclamation Time Line

1861

January: Several Southern states quit the Union following Abraham Lincoln's election as president in 1860. In time, 11 states form the Confederate States of America. **April:** Shots are fired on Fort Sumter, a federal fort in South Carolina. **July:** The First Battle of Bull Run takes place. Poorly prepared Northern soldiers are chased back to Washington, D.C. A naval blockade of the Confederate coastline begins to work.

1862

April: At the Battle of Shiloh in Tennessee, Union troops are led by Ulysses S. Grant. Of 110,000 soldiers taking part, 23,746 are killed, wounded, or missing. **May–August:** Several big battles take place in Virginia. The South does the best in this fighting. On July 13, Lincoln reads the initial draft of the Emancipation Proclamation to Secretaries Seward and Welles. A week later, he discusses this draft at a Cabinet Meeting. **September:** The Battle of Antietam includes the bloodiest single day of the war (about 5,000 killed). Antietam is enough of a Union victory that Great Britain and France decide not to support the South. It also leads Lincoln to publish the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22. It will go into effect on January 1, 1863. On that day, it will free all slaves in areas still fighting the Union. This changes the war's focus from saving the Union to freeing the slaves.

1863

January: On January 1, Lincoln signs the Final Draft of the Emancipation Proclamation. **March:** The Union passes its first draft law. All men from ages 20 to 45 can be called to serve in the military, unless they pay a fee or find a substitute. **May–July:** The South wins at Chancellorsville. But it loses one of its best fighters, General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson. In July, two huge Union victories take place—Grant's victory at Vicksburg, Mississippi, and the battle at Gettysburg in Pennsylvania. At Gettysburg, General George Meade's Union forces defeat Robert E. Lee's Confederates. A few days later, huge anti-draft riots break out in New York City. Irish immigrants and other poor people burn buildings and lynch several black people. Similar draft protests take place in the South.

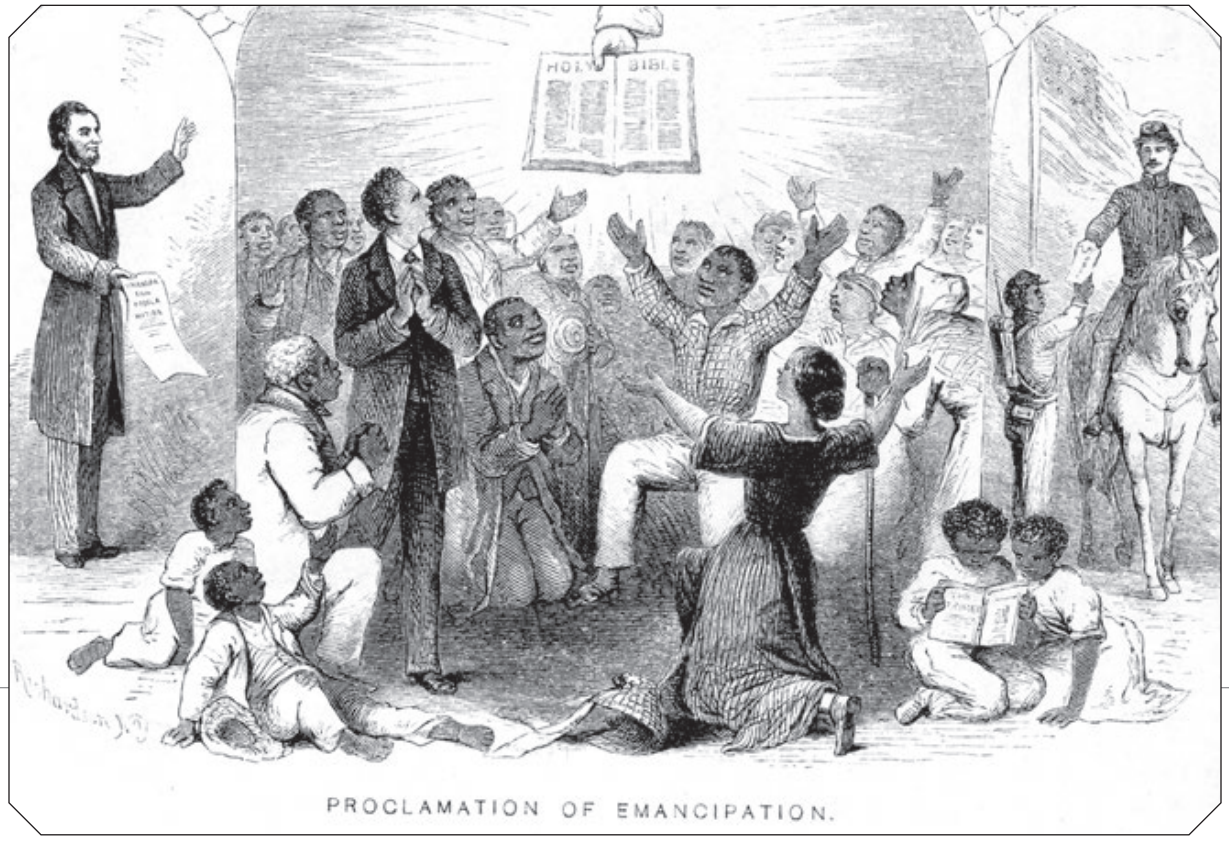
1864

May–June: Grant begins a long campaign against Lee in Virginia. Several big battles are followed by a 10-month siege of the rail center of Petersburg, Virginia. **September:** Union General William T. Sherman's forces take Atlanta, Georgia, an arms center for the entire South. **November:** Sherman's victory helps Lincoln's popularity, and he wins re-election as President against Democrat and Union General George B. McClellan. Sherman soon begins his famous and very bloody "March to the Sea" through Georgia. His aim is to destroy the South's will to fight.

1865

January–April: Both Sherman and Grant fight on in North and South Carolina and Virginia. In April, Grant takes the Confederate capital, Richmond, Virginia. Lee surrenders to Grant at Appomattox Courthouse on April 9. His men are allowed to use their horses to go home. The Civil War is basically over. (Some surrenders continue into May.) On April 14, John Wilkes Booth shoots and kills Lincoln at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C.

Visual Primary Source Document 1



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Information on Document 1

This drawing was created and published sometime between 1865 and 1880. It is titled "Proclamation of Emancipation." In its center panel, liberated black slaves kneel and rejoice, looking up to the Holy Bible being held above them. In the left panel, Abraham Lincoln holds up the Emancipation Proclamation. In the right panel, a soldier on horseback hands a paper of some sort down to a black soldier standing beside him. This probably refers to one part of the Emancipation Proclamation allowing the freed slaves into the armed services to help fight for the Union in the Civil War.