



Learning with Lincoln Institute

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Lincoln – Douglas Debates: How It All Began

by Nicole Cox



Through studying and analyzing correspondence between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas regarding the debates of the 1858 election, students will understand why the debates occurred, where the debates occurred, and the significance of the debates. This lesson is presented in the form of a power-point presentation with a follow up activity that assesses the students' understanding of the locations and chronological order of the debates

Overview

Subject:	Language Arts/Social Sciences
Time Required:	One 50 minute class periods
Grade Range:	K - 5
Understanding Goal:	The students will learn the locations, dates, and significance of the Lincoln-Douglas debates
Investigative or Essential Question:	How did the Lincoln-Douglas debates come to happen? Where were they held, and why were they important?



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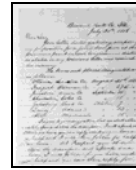
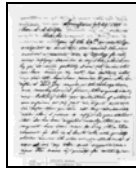
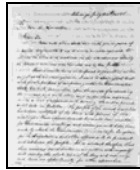
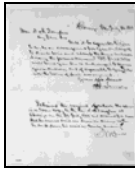
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Materials

Purpose of Library of Congress Items: Primary sources are used to introduce students to the importance of the political debates. Also, they show the tensions between Lincoln and Douglas on the campaign trail.

Library of Congress Items: Bibliographical Information attached.



Additional Materials:

-  Blank Illinois Map (attached)
-  Example PowerPoint (attached)

Required Vocabulary: debate, candidate

Prior Content Knowledge: This lesson would be a part of a unit about Abraham Lincoln's life and the politics of Illinois's history. The students would have prior knowledge of Lincoln's life in Illinois politics.

Technology Skills: None

Standards

Illinois Learning Standards: 16.A.2c, 16.B.2d
17.A.2b

For information on specific Illinois Learning Standards go to www.isbe.state.il.us/ils/



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Actions

Description of Teacher Actions:

Build Prior Knowledge

1. Share "Lincoln – Douglas Debate" poster and brainstorm what students know about the subject.
2. Present the PowerPoint which introduces the letters written between Lincoln and Douglas leading to the debates.
3. Lead the class discussion based on the material and questions in the presentation.
4. Present Library of Congress primary sources in the PowerPoint and help the class analyze the items through discussion of the material.

Student Investigative Activity

1. Students plot the locations of the debates on a map of Illinois and order of the debates based on a color code

Best Instructional Practices:

Teaching for Understanding

Students are encouraged to use critical thinking skills in this lesson with the "Think about it" questions through out the slides. The questions address various levels of Bloom's Taxonomy to ensure that higher levels of thinking skills are used. The assignment will assess the knowledge gained in the lesson about the order and locations of the debates.



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Attachments

Library of Congress Resources

Title:		Abraham Lincoln to Stephen A. Douglas, Saturday, July 24, 1858 (Debates)
	Collection or Exhibit	Abraham Lincoln Papers
	Media Type:	Unpublished Text
	URL:	http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mal&file Name=mal1/010/0102700/malpage.db&recNumm=0
Title:		Stephen A. Douglas to Abraham Lincoln, Saturday, July 24, 1858 (Debates)
	Collection or Exhibit	Abraham Lincoln Papers
	Media Type:	Unpublished Text
	URL	http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mal&fileName=mal 1/010/0103100/malpage.db&recNum=0
Title:		Abraham Lincoln to Stephen A. Douglas, Thursday, July 29, 1858 (Debates)
	Collection or Exhibit	Abraham Lincoln Papers
	Media Type:	Unpublished Text
	URL	http://memory.loc.gov/cgi- bin/ampage?collId=mal&fileName=mal1/010/0109200/malpage.db&recNum=0
Title:		Stephen A. Douglas to Abraham Lincoln, Friday, July 30, 1858 (Debates)
	Collection or Exhibit	Abraham Lincoln Papers
	Media Type:	Unpublished Text
	URL	http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mal&fileName= mal1/011/0110100/malpage.db&recNum=0
Title:		Lincoln Douglas debate : Du Page County Centennial, August 27th, West Chicago.
	Collection or Exhibit	By the People, for the People: Posters from the WPA, 1936.1943
	Media Type:	Published Text
	URL	http://memory.loc.gov/cgi- bin/query/r?ammem/wpapos:@field(NUMBER+@band(cph+3f05233))
Title:		Monument on the site of famous debate. Dedication exercises held yesterday on anniversary of Lincoln and Douglas meeting. By Lutz White. In the Aurora Beacon-News
	Collection or Exhibit	An American Time Capsule: Three Centuries of Broadside and other Printed Ephemera
	Media Type:	Published Text
	URL	http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/qauery/r?ammem/rbpebib: @field(NUMBER+@band(rbpe+0180630d))



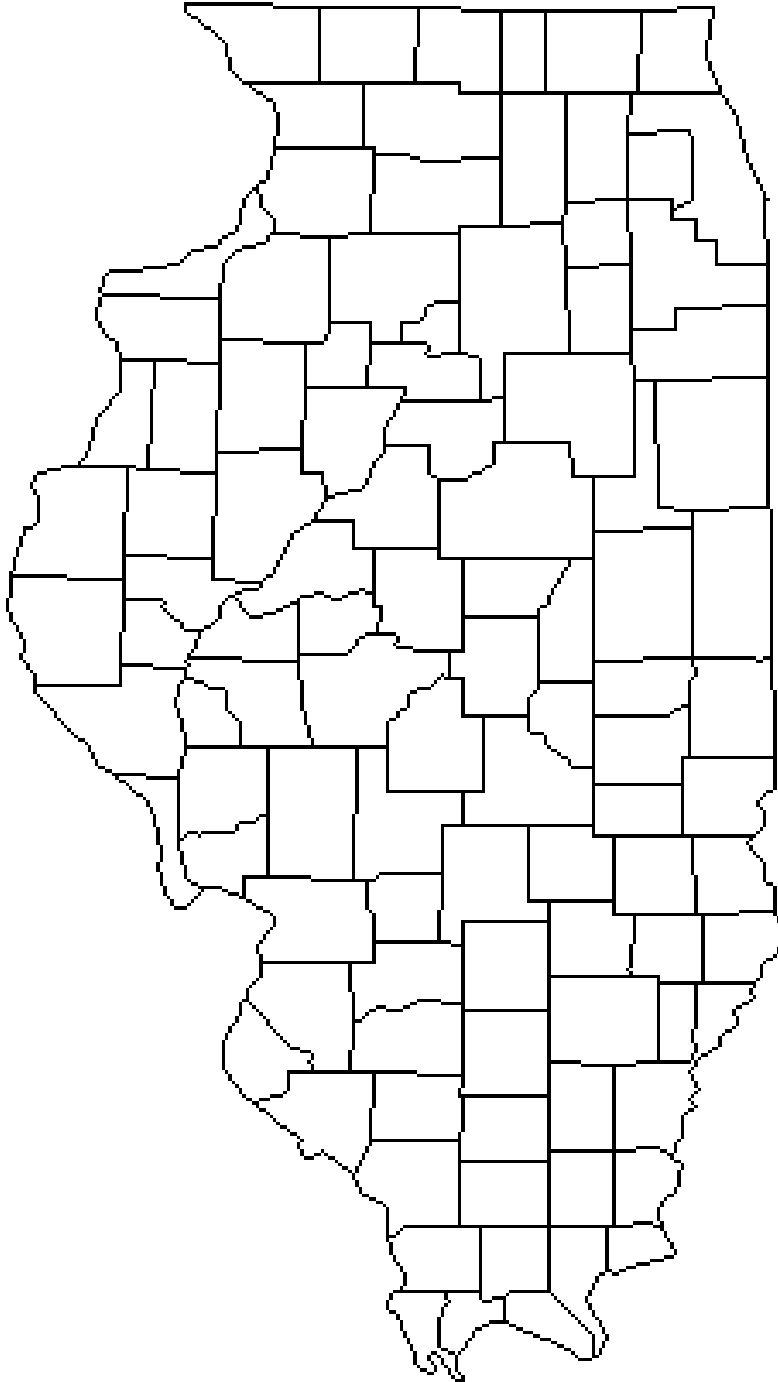
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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
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Illinois



Order of debate	Name of City	Color on Map
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		



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PowerPoint

1

Lincoln-Douglas Debates 1858

How it all began

2

What do we know?

- In 1858 Abraham Lincoln ran for Senate against Stephen A. Douglas. During this election, Lincoln and Douglas met in a series of 7 debates.

3

What do we want to know?

Why did Lincoln and Douglas debate?

Where and when did the debates happen?

Why were the debates so important?

4

Why did Lincoln and Douglas debate?

5

- Abraham Lincoln requested a series of debates with Stephen A. Douglas on July 24, 1858 through a letter written by his campaign manager, Mr. Norman B. Judd.
- It is thought that Mr. Douglas was upset with Lincoln because he followed his campaign trail speaking after Douglas about the topics that Douglas had spoken about.
- Lincoln proposed the debates so that both candidates could be heard on the topics important to the voters.

6

Lincoln's letter to Douglas July 24, 1858

7

Lincoln's Letter to Douglas July 24, 1858 (transcript)

- From Abraham Lincoln to Stephen A. Douglas (in Norman B. Judd's hand) | July 24, 1858
- Chicago Ill. July 24, 1858
- My Dear Sir
- Will it be agreeable to you to make an arrangement for you and myself to divide time and address the same audiences during the present canvass? Mr. Judd who will hand you this is authorized to receive your answer, and if agreeable to you to enter into the terms of such arrangement.
- Your Obedt. Servt
- A. Lincoln
- I delivered the original of which the above is a true copy to the Hon. S. A. Douglas at Chicago on the 24th of 1858 and requested for answer that he would send me down an answer when he sent down his next morning.
- N. B. Judd
- Note: Fifteen over a month after his nomination for the United States Senate on June 16, 1858, Lincoln was content to follow Senator Douglas on the latter's speaking tour, frequently answering his speeches after their conclusion or the next day. Republican Democratic editors stayed to take in full, and because of Douglas's inclination to attack the Republican Senatorial colleague Lyman Trumbull rather than Lincoln, Lincoln and his manager Norman Judd concluded to challenge Douglas to a series of joint debates. The challenge is contained in this note, which is a copy Judd made of the original in Lincoln's hand.

8

Questions to think about.

- Why do you think that Lincoln requested to debates?
- Do you think Douglas was upset about Lincoln following him on the campaign trail?
- What conditions would you have made about the debates?

9

Douglas to Lincoln July 24, 1858

- Stephen Douglas quickly responded to Lincoln's request for a series of debates.
- He agreed to debates as long as they were done according to his conditions.

10

Douglas to Lincoln July 24, 1858

<http://memory.loc.gov/naid/mml/0101010100/001.jpg>



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11

Douglas to Lincoln
July 24, 1858 (transcript)
From *Stephen A. Douglas to Abraham Lincoln*, July 24, 1858

- Chicago, July 24th, 1858
- Dear Sir:
- Your note of this date, in which you inquire if it would be agreeable to me to make an arrangement to divide the time and address the same audiences during the present canvass was handed me by Mr. Judd.
- Recent events have interposed difficulties in the way of such an arrangement. I went to Springfield last week for the purpose of conferring with the Democratic State Central Committee upon the mode of conducting the canvass and with them and under their advice, made a list of appointments covering the entire period until late in October. The people of the several localities have been notified of the time and places of the meetings. These appointments have all been made for Democratic meetings and arrangements have been made by which the Democratic Candidates for Congress, for the Legislature and other officers will be present and address the people. It is evident, therefore, that these various candidates, in connection with myself, will occupy the whole time of the day and evening and leave no opportunity for other speeches.
- Besides, there is another consideration which should be kept in mind. It has been suggested recently that an arrangement had been made to bring out a third candidate for the U. S. Senate, who, with yourself, should canvass the state in opposition to me, and with no other purpose than to insure my defeat by dividing the Democratic party for your benefit. If I should make this arrangement with you, it is more than probable, that this other candidate, who has a common object with you, would desire to become a party to it and claim the right to speak from the same stand, so that he and you in concert might be able to take the opening and closing speech in every case.

16

From *Abraham Lincoln to Stephen A. Douglas*, July 29, 1858

Dear Sir

Yours of the 24th in relation to an arrangement to divide time and address the same audiences, is received, and, in apology for not sooner replying, allow me to say that when I sat by you at dinner yesterday, I was not aware that you had answered my note, nor certainly, that my own note had been presented to you—An hour after I saw a copy of your answer in the Chicago Times; and, reaching home, I found the original awaiting me—Protesting that your insinuations of attempted unfairness on my part are unjust, and with the hope that you did not very considerably make them, I proceeded to reply. To your statement that "It has been suggested recently that an arrangement had been made to bring out a third candidate for the U. S. Senate who, with yourself should canvass the state in opposition to me &c;" I can only say that such suggestion must have been made by yourself; for certainly none such has been made by, or to me, or otherwise, to my knowledge—Surely you did not deliberately conclude, as you insinuate, that I was expecting to draw into an arrangement, of terms to be agreed to on by yourself, by which a third candidate, and my self, "in concert, might be able to take the opening and closing speech in every case"

As to your surprise that I did not sooner make the proposal to divide time with you, I can only say I made it as soon as I resolved to make it—I did not know but that such proposal would come from you; I waited respectfully to see—It may have been well known to you that you went to Springfield for the purpose of agreeing on the plan of campaign; but it was not so known to me—When your appointments were announced in the papers, extending to the 21st of August, I, for the first time, considered it certain that you would make no proposal to me; and then resolved, that if my friends concurred, I would make one to you—As soon thereafter as I could see and consult with friends satisfactorily, I did make the proposal—It did not occur to me that the proposed arrangement could derange your plan, after the latest of your appointments already made—After that, there was, before the election, largely over two months of clear time—

12

- I cannot refrain from expressing my surprise, if it was your original intention to invite such an arrangement that you should have waited until after I had made my appointments, inasmuch as we were both here in Chicago together for several days after my arrival, and again at Bloomington, Atlanta, Lincoln and Springfield, where it was well known I went for the purpose of consulting with the State Central Committee and agreeing upon the plan of campaign.
- While under these circumstances I do not feel at liberty to make any arrangement which would deprive the Democratic Candidates for Congress, state officers and the Legislature from participating in the discussion at the various meetings designated by the Democratic State Central Committee, I will, in order to accommodate you as far as it is in my power, to do so, take the responsibility of making an arrangement with you for a discussion between us at one prominent point in each Congressional district in the state, excepting the second and sixth districts, where we have both spoken and in each of which cases you had the concluding speech. If agreeable to you I will indicate the following places as those most suitable in the several Congressional districts at which we should speak, to wit, Freeport, Ottawa, Galesburg, Quincy, Alton, Jonesboro & Charleston.
- I will confer with you at the earliest convenient opportunity in regard to the mode of conducting the debate and the times of meeting at the several places subject to the condition that where appointments have already been made by the Democratic State Central Committee at any of these places I must insist upon your meeting me at the day times specified.
- Very Respectfully,
- Your Obedient Servant
- S. A. Douglas
- (Endorsed on Envelope by Lincoln)

17

For you to say that we have already spoken at Chicago and Springfield, and that on both occasions that the closing concluding speech, is hardly a fair statement—The truth rather is this—At Chicago, July 9th, you made a carefully prepared conclusion on my speech of June 16th; twenty-four hours after I made a happy conclusion on yours of the 9th, you had six days to prepare, and concluded on me again at Bloomington on the 16th; twenty-four hours after I concluded on you again at Springfield—in the mean time you had made another conclusion on me at Springfield, which I did not hear, and of the contents of which I know nothing when I spoke; so that your speech made in design, and in the night of the 17th at Springfield were both made in perfect independence of each other—The contents of all the speeches and the dates of making them dates of making all these speeches, will show, I think, that in the matter of time for preparation, the advantage has all been on your side, and that none of them the external circumstances have stood to my advantage—

I agree to an arrangement for us to speak at the seven places you have named, and at your own times, provided you name the times at once, so that I, as well as you, can have myself, the time not covered by the arrangement—As to other details, I wish perfectly reciprocally, and no more—I wish as much time as you, and that conclusions shall alternate—

That is all—

- Your obedient Servant
- A. Lincoln—
- P. S. As matters now stand I shall be at no more of your exclusive meetings; and for about a week from to-day—a letter from you will reach me at Springfield—A. L.
- Note 1 Though he made most of the arrangements that the program would cause the Douglas agreed on July 24 to a series of seven debates with Lincoln, at Ottawa, Freeport, Jonesboro, Charleston, Clinton, Quincy and Alton, Lincoln, the condition of the debates to be decided later. See Douglas to Lincoln, July 24, 1858, in this collection. For Douglas's response to this letter, see Douglas to Lincoln, July 30, 1858, in this collection, and Lincoln's later accepting Douglas's conditions in *Collected Works*, II, 531.
- Note 2 Lincoln and Douglas had dined together on the 28th at either Clinton or Decatur, Illinois, (obviously without conferring about joint appearances on the platform.)
- Note 3 Since Breese had allowed his name to be used as a candidate for the United States Senate should Democrats favorable to the Buchanan Administration win a majority in the Illinois General Assembly in 1858.

13

Questions to think about.

- What did Douglas think about Lincoln requesting the debates?
- What did Douglas accuse Lincoln and his political party of doing?
- Why do you think that Douglas set the conditions that he did?
- If you were Lincoln would you agree to the conditions?

18

Questions to Think About

- How did Lincoln respond to the accusation that he was "tricking" Douglas into debating to divide the Democratic party?
- Why did Lincoln not propose the debates earlier?
- Lincoln agreed to the seven debate sites, but what were his conditions?

14

Lincoln to Douglas July 29, 1858

- Lincoln responded to Douglas's letter on July 29, 1858.
- Lincoln resented to implications that he was involved in a plan to take over the debates with a third candidate.
- Lincoln explains why he didn't propose the debates at an earlier time.

19

Where and When were the debates held?

15

Lincoln to Douglas July 29, 1858

<http://memories.loc.gov/html/mml/naid1101/0109280/001.jpg>

20

Douglas to Lincoln July 30, 1858

- Douglas wrote to Lincoln on July 30, 1858 in response to his letter of the 29th.
- He sets the locations and the dates of the seven debates.
- He also agrees to the debate set up suggested by Lincoln in his letter dated July 29, 1858.

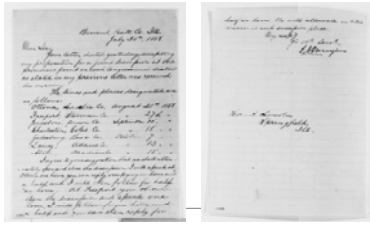


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Douglas to Lincoln July 30, 1858



21

Douglas to Lincoln July 30, 1858 (transcript)

From Douglas to Lincoln in Abraham Lincoln Papers, July 30, 1858
Barnes, Fred C. B.
July 30, 1858
Dear Sir:
Your letter, dated yesterday, accepting my proposition for a joint discussion at one prominent point in each Congressional District as stated in my previous letter was received this morning.
The times and places designated are as follows:
Ottawa, ... LaSalle Co. ... August ... 21st ... 1858
Freeport, ... Stevenson Co. ... " 27th " "
Jonesboro, ... Union Co. ... September ... 15 " "
Charleston, ... Coles Co. ... " 18 " "
Galesburg, ... Knox Co. ... October ... 7 " "
Quincy, ... Adams Co. ... " 13 " "
Alton, ... Madison Co. ... " 15 " "
I agree to your suggestion that we shall alternately open and close the discussion. I will speak at Ottawa one hour, you can reply, occupying an hour and a half, and I will then follow for half an hour. At Freeport you shall open the discussion and speak one hour, I will follow for an hour and a half and you can then reply for half an hour. We will alternate in like manner at each successive place.
Very respectfully,
Yr. obedt servt.,
S. A. Douglas
[Note: 1 Lincoln's reply is in Collected Works, II, 531.]
[Note: 2 See Lincoln to Douglas, July 29, 1858.]

22

Questions to Think About

- This letter was more to the point than the previous letters. Why do you think that is?
- Where and when were the debates scheduled to take place?
- If you were Lincoln would you agree?
- How were the debates going to take place? (speaking order)

23

Why were the debates so important?

- Why was it important for the candidates hold seven debates?
- In the 1850's there was not the technology that there is today. Today debates are shown on television and can be watched by voters at home. In the 1850's the only way for voters to hear what candidates stood for was to hear them speak in person. Debates were a way for voters to do this and to compare the candidates.
- Each district hosted a debate so that voters could hear the candidates closer to where they lived.

25

- The debates drew in huge crowds.
- People came on horse back, buggies, wagons and walked to the debates.
- This painting of the debate in Charleston show the crowds that came in support of their chosen candidate.
- This depiction of the debate hangs in the capitol in Springfield in the Office of the Secretary of State.



25

Debate re-enactments

- The debates were such an interesting point in history that they were re-enacted many times.
- This poster advertises one such debate held in West Chicago.
- The poster shows the busts of Lincoln and Douglas in profile.



26

Remembering the debates



- The debates became such an important part of Illinois history that monuments were set up at debate sites. This article from the Aurora Beacon News tells of one such monument.

27

What it all means...

- The Lincoln-Douglas debates were very important in Illinois history.
- The candidates debated to let their viewpoints be heard by the voters in all of the districts.
- There were seven debates, each held in a district where the candidates had not spoken in before.
- The debates have been remembered through re-enactments and monuments throughout the state of Illinois.

28

Your Job...

- On the map of Illinois, plot the location of the seven Lincoln-Douglas debates.
- Complete the key of the map by color coding the order of the debates.
- You may use a current map of Illinois to find the location of the cities where the debates were held.

29