



## Teaching Guide

### SEGMENT 6, WEBISODE 5

Please note: Each segment in this Webisode has its own Teaching Guide



#### Segment Overview

The “Little Giant,” Stephen Douglas of Illinois, was a bit of a character. He had a large head set on broad shoulders, and yet he was very short. His major opponent in the quest for an Illinois seat in the United States Senate was Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln was quite tall, rather gaunt, very lanky, and a man who often wore suit coats whose sleeves could not quite cover his long arms. What a mismatched twosome—mismatched in more ways than physical appearances.

Douglas was a feisty orator, a staunch Democrat, and a man with a mission. He campaigned and crusaded for the rights of individual states to make their own decisions regarding slavery. His position was labeled popular sovereignty, meaning that the people of each state—not the federal government—should be allowed to make decisions affecting their own lives. In 1854, Douglas sponsored the Kansas-Nebraska Act that permitted people in new United States territories to decide the issue of slavery for themselves. Abolitionists were enraged; so was Lincoln, who wanted all new territories kept free.

In their campaign for the Senate seat, these two outspoken men took each other on in a series of seven debates held across the state of Illinois in 1858. The topics were slavery, preservation of the Union, and the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Although Lincoln lost the Senate election, the debates brought him national fame, and he became president of the United States during the Civil War.

#### Teacher Directions

1. Review with students the meanings of debate-related terms: debate; argument; and issues. Explain that Lincoln and Douglas met seven times in seven different cities in Illinois to debate issues. Remind students that debating issues publicly has been a part of national political campaigns at all levels: local, state, and national. Most recently, George W. Bush and Al Gore debated several times in the national elections of 2000.
2. Ask the students.
  - Where would Lincoln and Douglas have debated in the small towns of Illinois? (All the debates took place outdoors, even in bad weather.)
  - How would the rest of the country know what they said to each other? (Newspapers printed the entire debates; information could be telegraphed as well.)



#### Let's Discuss

Let's Discuss, Cont.

- What can people today learn from public debates, as opposed to debates presented in the year 1858? (Today we can see the debates or listen to the debates across the country. Stress that we can actually see the opponents in action, their facial expressions, body movements, pauses, lapses, anger or irritation, and personal connections to the audience.)
  - What was the importance of these seven debates? (The debates were not about Lincoln becoming president. They were about critical issues affecting slavery and about future slave states coming into the Union. The debates gave Lincoln a national reputation)
  - Why would Southerners want more slave states and why would Northerners oppose allowing slavery in new territories. (Each wanted a balance of power; the North saw slavery as a threat to paid immigrant workers in the new territories; the South wanted to extend their economic system of plantations with slave labor into the new territories.)
3. Discuss with students the value of the debate process. What do public debates accomplish? Help students understand that when people attend a public debate, they see and hear three things: (1) They see the real person and judge him or her on personality and speech; (2) They hear the logic and the good reasons provided for the arguments; and (3) They hear all the persuasive methods that speakers use to gain and keep the audience's attention.

### Teacher Directions

1. Introduce Stephen Douglas and Abraham Lincoln to the students. Explain their different viewpoints about slavery, preservation of the Union, and the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Use information from the Overview, videos, Joy Hakim's *Liberty For All* from the series *A History of US*, or other books and web sites.
2. Be sure that the students understand that Douglas believed that the people should decide if their territory or state would be free or slave. He believed that the states should have more power than the federal (United States) government, and that each state had the right to make its own laws to suit itself. On the other hand, Lincoln believed that slavery should not spread into the new territories, that the Declaration of Independence included everyone when it stated that all men were created equal. Lincoln also believed that the federal government should be more powerful than the states.
3. Explain the Lincoln-Douglas debates to the students. Explain that the debates provided voters (only white men at that time) with information about the candidates and their political stands on issues of the day. The audience also saw and heard the candidates in person. The debates were



History Sleuth

History Sleuth, Cont.

social occasions and went on for hours – and provided quite a bit of controversy and public attention. Do debates arouse such interest today? Why or why not?

4. Help students visualize how oddly matched these two men were, one extremely tall and thin, and the other short and rather stout.
5. Use a transparency of the Student Sheet: *The Kansas-Nebraska Act* to discuss that act with the students.
6. Place two hats (constructed from paper earlier) in front of the students. Label one hat Lincoln (perhaps a tall, black one) and one Douglas (a short, brown one). Shuffle the quotation cards, cut from the Student Sheet: *The Short and The Tall Of It: The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*.
7. Explain the activity to the students.
8. Read the actual quotes from the Lincoln-Douglas debates, one card at a time to the students.
9. Guide the class in discussing the meaning of each statement, who said it and why, and the possible impact on people in the North or South who heard these words. The class decides in which hat to place the card: Did Douglas or Lincoln say the words during their debates? The students place the quotation card in Douglas' or Lincoln's hat.
10. After analyzing and placing all the quotation cards in the hats, the teacher removes each card, reads the quote again and tells the class who said it.
11. Volunteers put on the appropriate hat and explain the quote in reference to the candidate's stand.

### Teacher Directions

1. Divide the class into two teams. Each team represents one side of a debate topic (see below). The teams sit facing each other in two large circles to promote eye contact and discussion.
2. Write the following proposition on the board  
Resolved: That all schools should (should not) stay open year round.  
**Note to the Teacher:** If you dislike this topic, select another, but phrase it in this manner, i.e. "Resolved that..."
3. At random, assign one class team the pro side of the proposition, and the opposing argument to the other team. Each team brainstorms arguments for or against the proposition. Encourage students to come up with as many good reasons as possible for supporting their side.
4. Students come together as a class—the pros on one side of the room and the cons on the opposite side. The pro side goes first, giving one



What Do You Think,  
Continued.



argument; then the con group locates the opposite argument from their own lists. Keep going back and forth until all major arguments have been covered. Discuss which team had the best arguments, and thus determine the winner of the debate.

5. Help students understand that the above exercise demonstrates in a simplified way how the debate process actually works in both public and government debate.

**Optional:** If your school has access to C-Span, watch some of the congressional debate proceedings. Discuss them afterwards with the students.

### Teacher Directions

1. If necessary, review the issues surrounding slavery in general; the origins of the slave trade; the growth of different attitudes toward slavery between North and South; the work of Frederick Douglass; the divergent opinions of three senators; and the slavery-centered debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas.
2. Help the students understand that the issue of slavery was very complex, and that arguments for and against the institution of slavery consumed the decade of the 1850s.
3. Provide each student a copy of Student Sheet: *The Complex Issues of Slavery*, or you may use it to make a transparency. If used as a transparency, allow time for students to make their own copies of the chart.
4. Students work with partners, one partner wearing a name tag *The Southern Point of View* and the other *The Northern Point of View*.
5. Introduce each issue on the Student Sheet: *The Complex Issues of Slavery*, one at a time, offering background information as needed.
6. Allow each partner a few minutes to share the Northern or Southern points of view with each other, then open the issue to class discussion. Keep up a lively give and take discussion with the student partisans giving their respective points of view.
7. Use the following guidelines to shape both the partner interaction and the following class discussion.
  - **The Constitution** states, “all men are created equal.” Did Southerners view enslaved people as equals? Did Northerners view enslaved people as equals? Did Southerners view African Americans as men and women protected by the Constitution? Why or why not? Did Northerners view African Americans as men and women protected by the Constitution? Why or why not? (Southerners made the argument

- that when the founding fathers wrote the Constitution they did not mention “slaves”, and thus they did not intend to include slaves as a part of the “equality” statement.
- **Economic:** Did the North need slaves? Why or why not? Did the South need slaves? Why or why not? What were their reasons? What were some crops that Southerners grew? Why did Southerners believe they needed slaves to harvest these crops? What would they have done if they had no slaves to work the fields? Why did the North prefer cheap immigrant labor to slave labor?
  - **Racial:** Discuss discrimination based on the color of one’s skin or the belief that African Americans were not intelligent.
  - **Moral:** Discuss the attitudes of people who represented themselves as religious individuals, and yet shunned black people and mistreated them. Consider that Southerners often stated that they were taking care of black people as their moral duty.
  - **Political:** Review the arguments regarding states’ rights versus an allegiance to one indivisible nation.
  - **Legal:** What arguments did both sides make concerning the legality of slavery? Refer to the compromises and the slave laws.
8. Discuss the meaning of Lincoln’s words from a speech in his 1860 campaign for president: “A house divided against itself cannot stand.”

### Teacher Directions

Use the following activities with your students.

**Language Arts** — Students use the Student Sheet: *The Short and the Tall of It*. Students use Think-Write-Pair-Share: students individually choose a statement made either by Douglas or Lincoln, and write a brief argument opposing or supporting that viewpoint. Students share responses with partners.

**Geography/Library/Technology** — Students use a physical map to examine the terrain of Nebraska and Kansas. What are the major crops grown in these states? Students discuss differences in how crops are cultivated in the South versus Kansas and Nebraska. Students speculate on why settlers in these two new territories might have wanted or needed slaves, or the reverse.

**Mass Media** — Students watch several confrontations between and among senators and house members on C-Span. Students discuss the following: speech topics; use of notes; gestures; body movement; vocal tone; word choice; argument style. Discuss with students how debate works in our Congress. Possibly print out excerpts from the *Congressional Record* (available on the Internet) for students to see that all words uttered every day in Congress end up in the *Congressional Record!*



Connections, Cont.

**Art** — Students create a political cartoon showing the very tall, lanky Mr. Lincoln debating and talking to the rather short, wide, and large-headed Mr. Douglas. Before drawing, students look at political cartoons to analyze the use of caricature.

**Speech** — Students use a microphone and a tape recorder and take turns reading excerpts from the Lincoln and Douglas debates. Work with students so that they read the brief statements fluently and with emphasis. Play back the recording.

**Media/Language Arts** — Students watch the video *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*. Students will enjoy it tremendously, and it provides an excellent background for understanding Lincoln.

**Note to the Teacher:** Review the video before sharing it with your class.

**The Short and  
the Tall of It:**

**The Lincoln-Douglas  
Debates  
1858**

**Identify the Speaker!**

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**Identify the Speaker!**

“It is the true intent and meaning of this act (The Kansas-Nebraska Act) not to legislate slavery into any State or Territory, or to exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to...regulate their domestic institutions in their own way.”

“For one, I am opposed to Negro citizenship in any and every form.”

“I hate it because of the monstrous injustice of slavery itself....I have no prejudice against the Southern people.”

“I...am in favor of the race to which I belong having the superior position. I have never said anything to the contrary, but I hold that...there is no reason why the negro is not entitled to all the natural rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence, the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

“But I do say that, as I understand the Dred Scott decision, if any one man wants slaves, all the rest have no way of keeping that one man from holding them.”

“This Union was established on the right of each State to do as it pleased on the question of slavery, and every other question....”

“I hold that the signers of the Declaration of Independence had no reference to negroes at all when they declared all men to be created equal....They alluded to white men, and to none others.

“...there never had been a man in the whole world who had said that the Declaration of Independence did not include negroes in the term ‘all men’.”

“This Government was made upon the great basis of the sovereignty of the States, the right of each state to regulate its own domestic institutions to suit itself.”

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# Answer Sheet

## The Short and the Tall of It:

### The Lincoln-Douglas Debates 1858 – Identify the Speaker!

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– Stephen Douglas

“For one, I am opposed to negro citizenship in any and every form.”

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“I hate it because of the monstrous injustice of slavery itself....I have no prejudice against the Southern people.”

– Abraham Lincoln

“I...am in favor of the race to which I belong having the superior position. I have never said anything to the contrary, but I hold that...there is no reason why the negro is not entitled to all the natural rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence, the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

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– Abraham Lincoln



# *The Kansas-Nebraska Act Of 1854*



The big question was whether residents of Kansas and Nebraska would live in free or slave states. There were two groups: the free soilers and the proslavery people.

In 1854, Stephen Douglas sponsored a bill stating that the residents of Kansas and Nebraska could and should decide for themselves if they wanted to be free or slave states.

This act passed. Once again, the ugly question arose whether slavery should be accepted in United States territories.

Douglas had no way of knowing that his push for passing this act would lead to mob violence between proslavery and free soilers. Bands of ruffians even tried to keep those persons against slavery from voting.

**So ! What do you think about this Act?**

# The Complex Issues of Slavery

The Northern View

Constitutional

Economic

Racial

Moral

Political

Legal

The Southern View

Constitutional

Economic

Racial

Moral

Political

Legal