

# LINCOLN AND DOUGLASS: AN AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP

## LINCOLN AND DOUGLASS: AN AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP

by Nikki Giovanni, ill. by Bryan Collier

Grades 1-7; Ages: 6-12

Themes: U.S. History, Slavery, Biography, Civil War, Respect

Running Time: 16 minutes

### SUMMARY

This insightful and timeless story begins on the night of Lincoln's second inaugural reception at the White House. As Lincoln anxiously awaits the arrival of his friend, Frederick Douglass, viewers are taken back through some of the defining moments in the lives of these two extraordinary individuals. Set against the backdrop of slavery, civil unrest, and a divided country, this film explores the common values of respect, education, and freedom that fostered the friendship between Lincoln and Douglass. Students will be inspired to explore the dynamic history that brought Douglass and Lincoln together at the White House for the inaugural ball, as well as the rich path that they laid for generations after them.

### OBJECTIVES

- Students will compare and contrast Lincoln and Douglass.
- Students will differentiate between primary and secondary sources.
- Students will create timelines of Lincoln's and Douglass's lives.
- Students will evaluate the impact of the Emancipation Proclamation on African Americans.

### BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Use a KWL chart to elicit background knowledge (a three-columned chart: What I Know, What I Want to Know, What I Learned). Encourage students to brainstorm what they know about Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, slavery, and the Civil War. Record all of this information in the What I Know column of the KWL chart. Next, have students generate a list of questions or areas that they want to know more about. Record these suggestions in the next column. Tell students that the film they are about to watch describes the friendship that existed between Lincoln and Douglass, despite their vastly different backgrounds. Revisit the KWL chart after viewing the movie to fill in the What I Learned column.

Define primary and secondary sources for students. Suggested definitions: *Primary sources are from people who were actually present when an event happened. Secondary sources are from people who were not actually there when an event took place.* After students record the definitions, give examples of primary and secondary sources. As an extension, provide a sampling of copies of primary sources (photographs, letters, diary entries, birth certificates) and secondary sources (encyclopedia entries, newspaper articles, textbook excerpts) for the students to sort. Encourage students to watch the film carefully to see if they can spot a primary document.

### AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Revisit the KWL chart. Students should independently make a list of what they learned from the movie. Then, have students share what they learned and record it on the KWL chart. Using what they learned from the movie as a starting point, students can further research some of the people or events from the movie. Provide project ideas for students such as a wanted poster for John Brown and others who participated in the attack on Harper's Ferry, or a newspaper article about Lincoln's second inaugural ball. Students may also want to research the Civil War or the history of slavery in the south.

Work as a class to create biographical timelines for Lincoln and Douglass. Divide the class in half for this project. One half of the class should research Lincoln's life, the other Douglass's. Guide students in illustrating and annotating each important date in the two men's lives. Be sure they use the same measurement for each year on their timeline. After the timelines are assembled, have each group present their work to the other group. Finally, display the timelines by aligning the dates, to show where each man was in life at a given time.

Use the timeline activity and information from the movie to compare and contrast Lincoln and Douglass on a Venn Diagram. Talk with students about how skin color shaped their lives and opportunities in very different ways. Encourage students to make connections with Lincoln's and Douglass's experiences. Discuss with students the values that were shared by Lincoln and Douglass.

Guiding questions:

- How were Lincoln and Douglass different from many of the other people of their time?
- Were Lincoln and Douglass more similar or more different? Why do you think so?
- What personality traits or characteristics did Lincoln and Douglass have that are important in leaders today? How do leaders today show those characteristics?

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