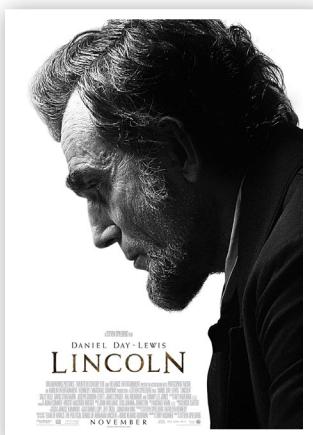




# Lincoln

## DISCUSSION GUIDE



### SYNOPSIS

Steven Spielberg directs two-time Academy Award® winner Daniel Day-Lewis in *Lincoln*, a revealing drama that focuses on the 16<sup>th</sup> President's tumultuous final months in office. In a nation divided by war and the strong winds of change, Lincoln pursues a course of action designed to end the war, unite the country and abolish slavery. With the moral courage and fierce determination to succeed, his choices during this critical moment will change the fate of generations to come.

During President Lincoln's tumultuous final months in office, he pursues a course of action to end the Civil War, unite the country and abolish slavery.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How did the film change your view of how the government worked in Lincoln's time? Do you think it works any differently now?
- What exactly was Lincoln fighting for? Was he fighting primarily to free all of the slaves? Was he fighting to end the war, or to keep the whole country together and preserve it for generations to come?
- What type of methods did Lincoln use to persuade some of Congress to vote his way? Did some of the methods seem sneaky or duplicitous? Were they illegal in any way, strictly speaking? Do you think some of his methods were justified? How would you have acted?
- Lincoln tells a lot of stories throughout the film, often at tense moments when people are in direct conflict with one another. Why do you think he tells stories? What effect do they have on the people listening? Why do you think some of the people are frustrated by his stories?
- Why do people think of Lincoln now as such a great leader? What are some of the characteristics of Lincoln that you see in the film, and why do they make him a great leader?





# *Lincoln* DISCUSSION GUIDE



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

- Lincoln's relationship with his wife is troubled by tragedies they have faced in their past. How does Lincoln treat his wife as they struggle with issues surrounding the war and whether their son should go fight? What does his treatment of Mary Todd add to how you view Lincoln, both as a person and as a leader?
- Why do you think some of the people in Congress so vehemently oppose Lincoln's ideas? What are they fighting for, and what are they worried about happening?

## DO YOUR RESEARCH

- During a key scene in which some of the politicians explain their position by talking about the slippery slope they will start down if the slaves are freed, they mention allowing women to vote. This causes an uproar from people on both sides of the debate. Look into the history of voting rights, and note when different groups of people were first allowed to vote in the United States. Why do you think it took so long for women to be allowed to vote? Do you think that some of the prevailing attitudes about women voting were similar to some of the attitudes in 1863 about freed slaves voting?
- The Emancipation Proclamation, and the subsequent end of the Civil War, brought a great deal of newfound freedom to people who had previously been slaves. Yet in the United States it was not until the 1960s that the Civil Rights movement took place. Research racial attitudes from 1860 through 1960, and note important historic landmarks along the way. Why do you think it takes so long for some people to change their mindsets? Do you think we have come a long way since 1960, or do some of those attitudes still exist? Why or why not?

## GET INVOLVED

- Elections and voting are an important part of being American citizens, and of democracy in general. It is a privilege, duty and honor to be able to vote. At the same time, it takes many different people to make sure that elections run smoothly and are fair to everyone who is of voting age. Find out how you can help with the democratic process by volunteering to help as a poll worker during the next election. Visit [http://www.eac.gov/voter\\_resources/become\\_a\\_poll\\_worker.aspx](http://www.eac.gov/voter_resources/become_a_poll_worker.aspx) to find out more information about volunteering in your state.