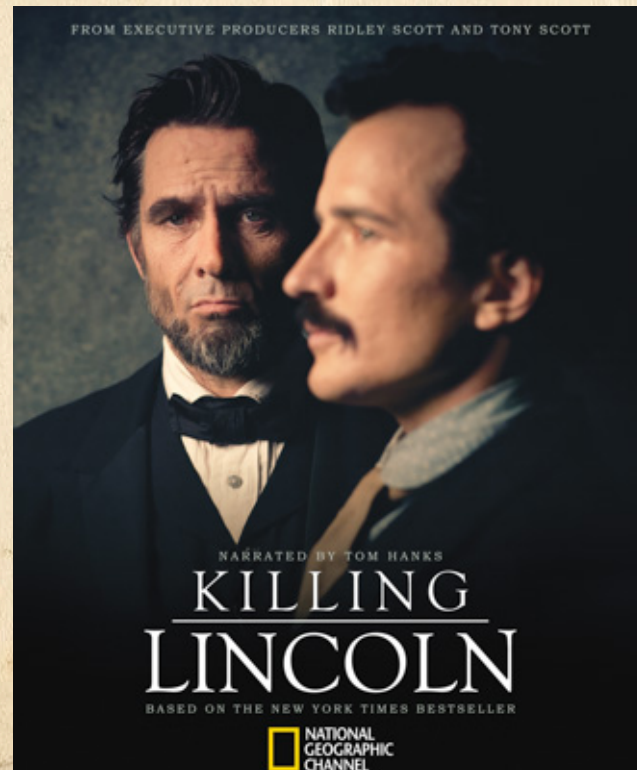


# *Killing Lincoln*

## Social Studies

Student Activities for Grades 8–12:  
For Use After Viewing Entire Film



# Overview

The following activities were developed as companion resources for the National Geographic Channel docudrama **Killing Lincoln**, narrated by Oscar-winning actor Tom Hanks. The film is based on Bill O'Reilly and Martin Dugard's best-selling book "Killing Lincoln." The student activities may be used after students view specific clips or after they view the entire film. Each activity is labeled as to whether it is suitable to use with individual streamed clips or requires students to view the entire film before they can construct their responses. Labels indicate which program clip corresponds with the activity. Most of the clips are approximately two minutes in length.

The activities require students to engage in higher-order thinking and constructive conversations. Students will also use historical habits of mind to analyze perspectives and connect historical events to the present. Teachers may opt to have students use the resources in the electronic version as provided here, or they may duplicate the materials for students to manually write their responses. A separate document is provided as an answer key.

## **About Sheryl A. Jones – Creator of the Education Materials**

Sheryl Jones is a dedicated educator who currently serves Detroit Public Schools as the director of the Department of Multilingual/Multicultural Education. In this role, she is the lead administrator for the Office of Social Studies, Office of English Language Learners and the Office of Global Language.

Ms. Jones states:

*The docudrama, **Killing Lincoln**, is a compelling educational film that offers a fresh perspective on the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. The content of this film readily lends itself to debate and substantive conversations in the classroom. It also provides great opportunities for students to make contemporary connections to historical events, thereby making history engaging and relevant.*

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# Activity 1

## Film Note Taking

As you view *Killing Lincoln*, complete the following note-taking charts about the significant historical figures listed on each page. Later, you will use these charts to complete additional activities.

**Historical Figure: Abraham Lincoln, 16th President of the United States of America**

Did what, when?	Why?	Results

# Film Note Taking continued

Historical Figure: John Wilkes Booth, Actor and Assassin of President Lincoln

Did what, when?	Why?	Results

# Film Note Taking continued

Historical Figure: Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America

Did what, when?	Why?	Results

# Film Note Taking continued

Historical Figure: Ulysses S. Grant, Commanding General of the United States Army

Did what, when?	Why?	Results

# Film Note Taking continued

Historical Figure: Robert E. Lee, Commanding General of the Confederate States of America

Did what, when?	Why?	Results



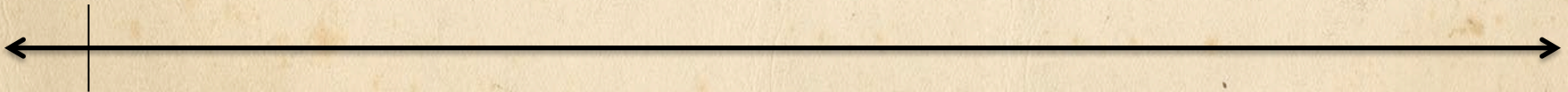
# Activity 2

## Historical Timeline

**After viewing the film, complete the timeline by inserting the following events in chronological order (the first one has been done for you):**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
October 1864	John Wilkes Booth writes a letter detailing his plot to kidnap President Lincoln
April 11, 1865	Lincoln makes speech after Lee surrenders as Booth watches
July 7, 1865	Sentences carried out for Booth's co-conspirators
March 4, 1865	Lincoln gives inauguration speech as Booth watches
April 3, 1865	Confederate forces burn down Confederate capitol of Richmond, Va.
April 14, 1865	Booth shoots Lincoln at Ford's Theatre
April 26, 1865	Booth is shot and captured, then dies

October 1864



John Wilkes Booth  
writes a letter  
detailing his plot  
to kidnap  
President Lincoln

# Activity 3

## Analyzing Perspectives

**After viewing clips 1, 2 and 3, analyze the following quotes, then compare and contrast Booth and Lincoln's viewpoints in a short essay.**

### **Clip 1 - Excerpts from John Wilkes Booth's Letter to the Confederacy**

*"To Whom It May Concern, God judge me right or wrong, my love is for the South alone, nor do I deem it a dishonor in attempting to make for her a prisoner of this man to whom she owes so much misery. This country is for the white man and not the black. To whom it may concern, a Confederate, doing duty upon his own responsibility. J. Wilkes Booth."* John Wilkes Booth, October 1864, Excerpts from a Letter to the Confederacy

### **Clip 2 - Lincoln's Last Speech**

*"It is unsatisfactory to some that the elective franchise is not given to the colored man; I would myself prefer that it were now conferred on the very intelligent and on those who serve our cause as soldiers."* Abraham Lincoln, April 1865, Lincoln's Last Speech (made following Robert E. Lee's surrender)

### **Clip 3 - Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address**

*"With malice towards none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right. Let us strike on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds. To do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."* Abraham Lincoln, March 1865, Inauguration Address

# Activity 4

## Time Continuity and Change

**After viewing the film, with a partner, using your notes from *Killing Lincoln* and what you know about U.S. history and civics, answer the following questions and then discuss your answers with your class:**

**After an assassination attempt while riding alone at night, President Lincoln asked a soldier who found his lost hat with a bullet hole through the crown not to tell anyone of the incident. Why do you think he swore the soldier to secrecy, and should he have done so?**

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**After being warned about assassination plots by Secretary of War Stanton, President Lincoln replied, “Doors to the White House stand open, to one and all, day and night. My life is in reach to anyone, sane or mad, by the hand of a murderer I can die but once but to go continually in fear, that is to die over and over and over again.” Do you agree with President Lincoln’s position? Why or why not?**

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**3. Compare security provisions for the President of the United States today to those made for President Lincoln.**

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**4. What innovations and changes were made after the killing of Lincoln?**

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**5. Why do you think Confederate President Jefferson Davis said, "Next to the destruction of the Confederacy, the death of Abraham Lincoln was the darkest day the South has ever known"? Compare the meaning of this quote with modern-day examples.**

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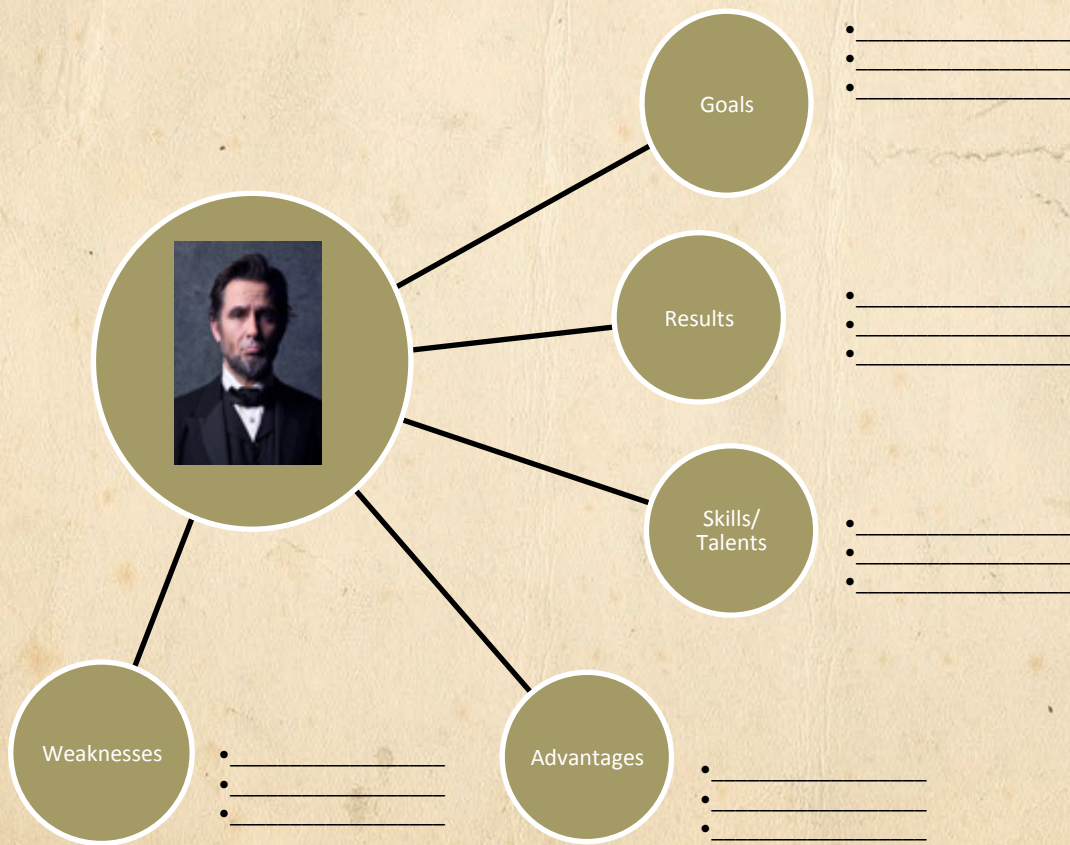
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# Activity 5: Historical Figure Character Map: Abraham Lincoln

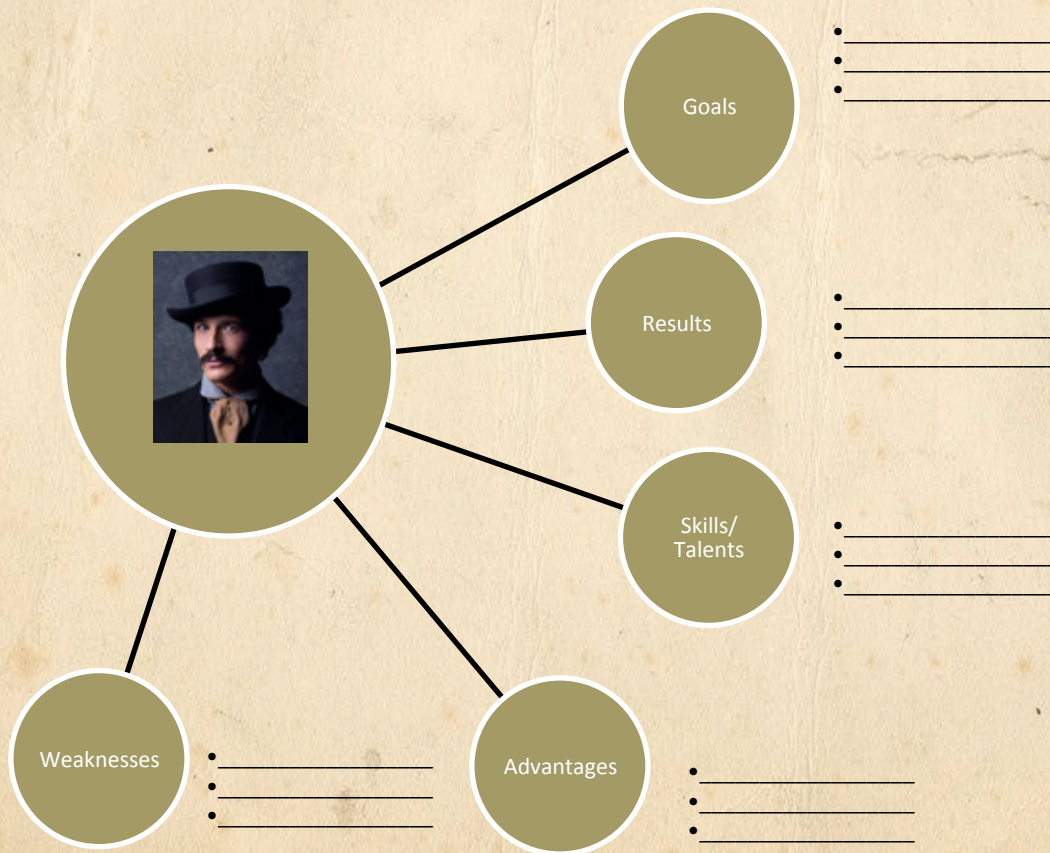
After viewing the film, complete this graphic organizer using information from *Killing Lincoln*.



# Activity 6: Historical Figure

## Character Map: John Wilkes Booth

After viewing the film, complete this graphic organizer using information from *Killing Lincoln*.



# Activity 7

## Reflection and Discussion

**After viewing the film, in a small group discuss the following questions and then share your thoughts during a whole class discussion.**

**1. Was John Wilkes Booth a madman, a zealot, neither or both? Explain your conclusion based on evidence from *Killing Lincoln*.**

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**2. How might American history have been different if Lincoln had not been assassinated?**

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