



Cheshire College  
South & West

# HISTORY A LEVEL BRIDGING ACTIVITY



# ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND THE US CIVIL WAR

Welcome to A Level History!

We start the course in 1865 with the United States of America emerging from a bloody civil war between the North and South, largely over the issue of slavery.

On the eve of victory for the North the President, Abraham Lincoln, is assassinated whilst at the theatre. The United States, shaken by war and the loss of its leader, looked to rebuild but the deep rifts are not easily healed...

The activities in this pack centre around Abraham Lincoln as a person and as a president. Although he has met his end by the start of our course, it is incredibly useful for us to know what he stood for and the actions that he took.

We will look at some sources and their portrayal of Lincoln and the causes of the Civil War as well as looking at Lincoln's own words.

Let us begin...

If you have any questions about the course, do not hesitate to ask either  
Andy or Ben:

[andrew.leath@ccsw.ac.uk](mailto:andrew.leath@ccsw.ac.uk)

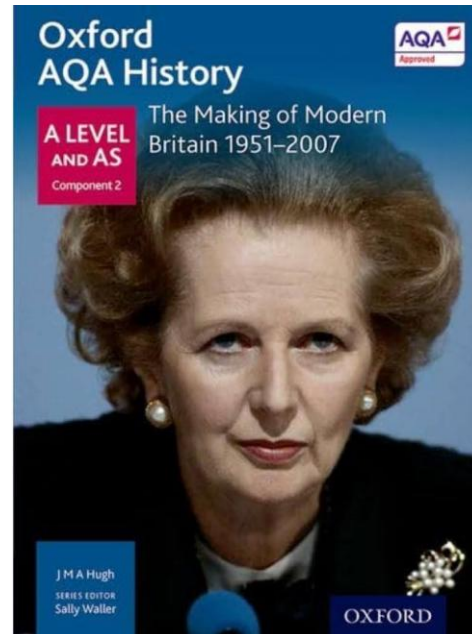
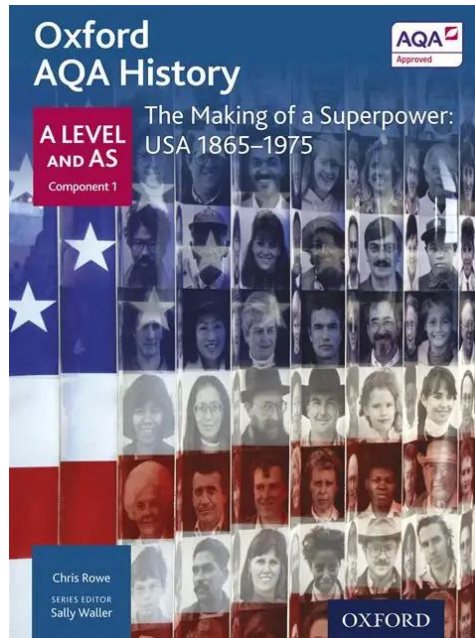
[ben.connor@ccsw.ac.uk](mailto:ben.connor@ccsw.ac.uk)

## What will you study?

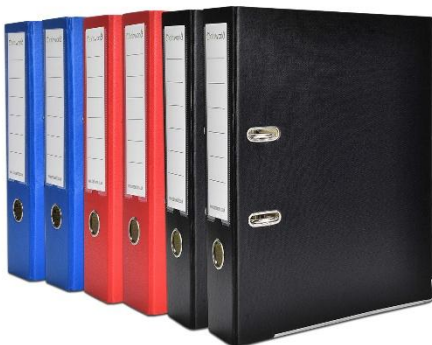
Year	Module	Timeframe
Year One	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The making of a Superpower: USA, 1865–1975</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="#"><u>The Making Of A Superpower USA Specification</u></a></p>	<p>➤ 1865 - 1920</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Making of Modern Britain, 1951– 2007</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="#"><u>The Making Of Modern Britain Specification</u></a></p>	<p>➤ 1951 - 1979</p>
Year Two	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The making of a Superpower: USA, 1865–1975</b></p>	<p>➤ 1920 - 1975</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Making of Modern Britain, 1951– 2007</b></p>	<p>➤ 1979 - 2007</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NEA (Coursework) – The Crusades</b></p>	<p>➤ 1095 - 1212</p>

## What do you need to do to prepare?

1) Get copies of the course textbooks



2) Get yourself some ring binder folders, topic dividers and plastic wallets – These will be essential to organise your work



3) Complete all of the tasks in this document – They are aimed to give you introduce you **The making of a Superpower: USA, 1865–1975** module

## Task One – Causes of the US Civil War

The following are five interpretations of the issues behind the American Civil War.

**Interpretation A:** From *Twenty-Eight Years a Slave*, by Thomas Johnson, published in 1909. Johnson was born a slave in 1836 in Virginia where he was bought and sold several times. After the Civil War he was freed and moved north, where he became a church minister and eventually a missionary in Africa.

‘In 1860, there was great excitement over the election of Mr Abraham Lincoln as President of the United States. The slaves prayed to God for his success. We knew that he was in sympathy with the abolition of slavery. The election was the signal for a great conflict in which the question was: Shall there be slavery or no slavery in the United States? The South said: Yes, there shall be slavery.’

**Interpretation B:** From *The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government*, by Jefferson Davis, published in 1881. Davis was the son of a plantation owner who, in 1845, entered Congress for the state of Mississippi. When Mississippi and six other states left the Union and set up their own Confederate government in 1861, Davis was elected as its President.

‘The Confederates fought for the fundamental right to withdraw from a Union which they had, as independent states, voluntarily entered. On reading what has recently been written, people might conclude that the war was caused by efforts on the one side to extend and keep slavery, and on the other to resist it and establish human liberty. The Southern States and Southern people have been represented as "defenders" of slavery, and the North as the champions of universal freedom. This is false.’

**Source C:** From a speech by George Julian in the American Senate on 14<sup>th</sup> January, 1862. Julian was a politician, lawyer, and writer who represented the state of Indiana in Congress.

‘This rebellion is a bloody and terrible demonstration of the fact that slavery and freedom cannot live together in peace. I know that it was not the purpose of this administration, at first, to abolish slavery, but only to save the Union, and keep the old order of things. The policy of emancipation has come from the circumstances of the rebellion. I believe the popular demand now is, or soon will be, for the total abolition of slavery as the righteous purpose of this war, and is the only means of achieving a lasting peace.’

**Source D:** From *The Vicksburg Mississippi Daily Whig* newspaper, January 1860

‘The people of the South have allowed Yankees\* to monopolise trade with its huge profits. We have let the North do all the importing and most of the exporting business for the whole Union. Thus the North has grown more powerful to an astonishing degree, at the expense of the South. It is no wonder that their villages have grown into magnificent towns and cities.’

\* *Yankees* - people from the Northern states of America



**Source E:** From a letter written by President Abraham Lincoln to Horace Greeley, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1862. Greeley was the editor of *The New York Tribune* newspaper.

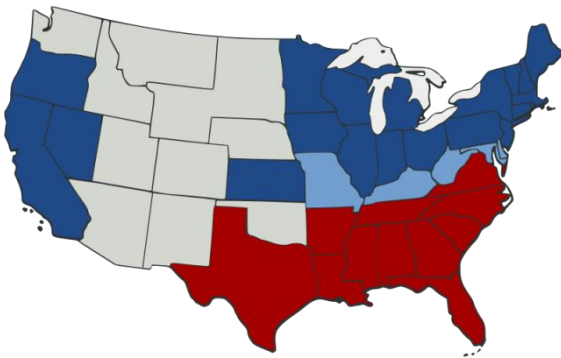
‘There are those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery. I do not agree with them. My overriding object in this struggle is to save the Union, and it is not either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could do it by freeing some and leaving other slaves alone, I would also do that.’

## Tasks:

1. Read sources and interpretations A-E. Underline the key points in each source.
  2. What does each source/interpretation suggest about what caused the American Civil War?
  3. How useful is each source/interpretation in helping you to answer the question ‘What caused the American Civil War?’ Think about:
    - Who wrote the source/interpretation?
    - When was it written?
    - What was the purpose of the source/interpretation?
    - Who was the audience for the source/ interpretation?
  4. Why do you think that North and South fought each other in the American Civil War?
-

## Task Two - The US Civil War Background

Battle	Outcome				
	U	C	D		
Aug 1861: Bull Run (2 <sup>nd</sup> )				The Union states were:	The Confederate states were:
Feb 1862: Fort Donelson					
Apr 1862: Shiloh					
Sep 1862: Antietam					
Jan 1863: Stones River					
May 1863: Chancellorsville					
Jul 1863: Gettysburg					
Sep 1863: Chickamauga					
May 1864: Spotsylvania Court House					
May 1864: Wilderness					



Make a key for the map:

The Border states were:

Key individuals	
Union	Confederacy

## Task Three – In Lincoln’s Own Words

Words of Abraham Lincoln	In my own words:
<p><i>“A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure, permanently, half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved — I do not expect the house to fall — but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward, till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new — North as well as South.”</i></p>	
<p><i>“How can anyone who abhors the oppression of negroes, be in favour of degrading classes of white people? Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid. As a nation, we began by declaring that "all men are created equal." We now practically read it "all men are created equal, except negroes." When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read "all men are created equal, except negroes, and foreigners, and catholics." When it comes to this I should prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretence of loving liberty — to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be take pure, and without the base alloy of hypocrisy [sic].”</i></p>	
<p><i>“I would save the Union. I would save it the shortest way under the Constitution. The sooner the national authority can be restored; the nearer the Union will be "the Union as it was." If there be those who would not save the Union, unless they could at the same time save slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that. What I do about slavery, and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union. I shall do less whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause, and I shall do more whenever I shall believe doing more will help the cause. I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors; and I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views.”</i></p>	

**Tasks:**

1. Summarise Abraham Lincoln's position on slavery:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

2. Read Lincoln's Gettysburg Address below. What reasons does Lincoln give for fighting the Civil War?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in **Liberty**, and dedicated to the proposition that **all men are created equal**.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate -- we can not consecrate -- we can not hallow -- this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us -- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion -- that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain -- that this nation, under God, shall have a **new birth of freedom** -- and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

**Abraham Lincoln**  
**November 19, 1863**

## Task Four – Lincoln’s Aims for Reconstruction

*‘In 1865 the triumphant federal government faced the problem of restoring the Confederate states to the Union. This process was known as Reconstruction. The period from 1865-1877 is often called the ‘age of Reconstruction’. However, Reconstruction was not something that began in 1865: it was an issue from 1861 onwards and it was really what the war was about. Nor did the process of Reconstruction end in 1877: in most southern states it ended much earlier. The debate over timescale is by no means the only debate about Reconstruction. Virtually every aspect of the topic has been the subject of controversy’*

From: Farmer, A., *America: civil war & westward expansion 1803-1890*, Hodder, 2015

Some historians think that, during Reconstruction, Lincoln’s sole aim was to restore Confederate states to the Union. Other, more popular interpretations, like the T.V. series *Roots* (Chomsky & Erman, 1977) present Lincoln as ‘the Great Emancipator’, suggesting that his main aim was to free the slaves. In order to fully understand Reconstruction, especially after 1865, we must look at Lincoln’s aims and actions in the early part of the process. We must therefore accept that Reconstruction started in 1861.

The exam will assess your ability to use evidence to corroborate and challenge interpretations of the past, like the ones offered above. You will then be required to offer a judgement about which interpretation is the most convincing. The tasks below will help you to practise this skill.

### Tasks:

Sort your cards into two categories:

(a) Lincoln’s aim was to restore the Confederacy to the Union

(b) Lincoln’s aim was to free the slaves

2. Make notes giving examples of specific evidence.

3. Now sort the cards into chronological order. Answer the questions below:

(a) What were Lincoln’s aims in 1861?

(b) How had his views changed by 1863?

(c) What do you think Lincoln’s aims for Reconstruction were?

(d) Do any of the interpretations given above offer a satisfactory picture of Lincoln’s aims? Why?

<p>In 1861, Lincoln was determined to maintain northern unity and make sure that there could be peace with the south in the future.</p>	<p>In April 1862, provision was made by Congress to compensate slave owners. In June, they banned slavery in all federal territories. Lincoln was unsure about these measures.</p>	<p>In March 1862, Lincoln asked Congress to compensate any state that adopted the principle of the gradual abolition of slavery.</p>	<p>'If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do so and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that.' (Lincoln, August 1862)</p>
<p>'We didn't go to war to put down slavery — but to put the flag back.' (Lincoln, December 1861)</p>	<p>In 1864, the Senate passed the Thirteenth Amendment which prohibited slavery. It failed to get support in the House and was not passed. Lincoln applied patronage pressure to Democrats in the South to try to get it ratified.</p>	<p>'I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so.' (Lincoln, April 1861)</p>	<p>On 31 January 1865, thanks in part to the work of Abraham Lincoln; the Thirteenth Amendment to the American Constitution was ratified.</p>
<p>In July 1862, Lincoln presented the Emancipation Proclamation to his cabinet. They said it needed to wait until after some military successes. Lincoln agreed.</p>	<p>In August 1861, General Fremont, a Republican and commander for the Union in Missouri, was removed from his command for declaring all the slaves of Confederate supporters in Missouri free. Lincoln saw this as a step too far.</p>	<p>The Confiscation Act (August 1861) threatened any property used 'for insurrectionary purposes' with confiscation. This did not free slaves that had run away to Union army camps in the South, but it did protect them from being returned to Confederate owners who may have punished them for running away.</p>	<p>On 22 September 1862, Lincoln declared that slavery was to remain untouched in states that returned to the Union before 1 January 1863 and that after that all slaves in enemy territory would be 'forever free'. This was the Emancipation Proclamation.</p>

## Task Four – Lincoln’s Priority: Preserve the Union or abolish slavery

Using the what you have done so far, the links below and your wider research, add points to the arguments below that Lincoln’s main aim was to a) Preserve the Union or b) Abolish slavery - **This will form the basis of your first assessment.**

- Introduction to slavery in the USA - [Attitudes to slavery - North and South - Slavery and the Civil War - National 5 History Revision - BBC Bitesize](#)
- Lincoln-Douglas Debates - [Lincoln's Breakthrough at the Lincoln-Douglas Debates | Abraham Lincoln | History](#)
- [Lincoln on Slavery - Lincoln Home National Historic Site \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#)
- [ALPLM | Examining Lincoln’s Views on African Americans and Slavery](#)
- Emancipation Proclamation - [Lincoln Signs the Emancipation Proclamation | Abraham Lincoln | History - YouTube](#)
- Thirteenth Amendment - [Lincoln Abolishes Slavery with the 13th Amendment | Abraham Lincoln | History - YouTube](#)

Lincoln’s main aim was to <b>preserve</b> the union	Lincoln’s main aim was to <b>abolish</b> slavery

**Lincoln's main aim was to preserve  
the union**

**Lincoln's main aim was to abolish  
slavery**

# Wider Engagement

## To Watch

- **The Civil War – Ken Burns Documentary**
- **Lincoln – Steven Spielberg Film**
- **Andrew Marr: History of Modern Britain – [View Record: Andrew Marr's History of Modern Britain · BoB](#)**
- **Thatcher: A Very British Revolution - [Thatcher: A Very British Revolution - BBC iPlayer](#)**
- **Blair & Brown: The New Labour Revolution - [Blair & Brown: The New Labour Revolution - BBC iPlayer](#)**

