

Creating Historical Narratives: Investigating the Death of Lincoln

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/alhtml/alrintr.html>

Overview/Prior Knowledge

This lesson fits into a study of Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War. Students should have general knowledge of the assassination of Lincoln and will use that prior knowledge to interact with and analyze primary sources related to his death to further investigate and then write a historical narrative detailing his death.

Objectives

- Students will generate compelling and supporting questions about the assassination of Lincoln.
- Students will corroborate and reconcile contradictory information in various primary sources.
- Students will create a narrative describing the last hours of President Lincoln.

Time Required

Two to three one-hour class periods.

Recommended Grade Range

7th or 8th grade (depending on when US History is taught)

Subject/Sub-Subject

Social Studies and English Language Arts

Standards

Social Studies

United States History from Exploration through Reconstruction

8.2 Evaluate the key people, factors and events which led to the American Revolution and establishment of United States government. (Strands: Civics, Civil Rights, Geography, History, Economics).

1. Explain colonists' roles in the French and Indian War.

8.3 Identify and evaluate the people, places, and documents that caused the founding of the nation and relate their significance to the development of the American constitutional republic. (Strands: Civics, Civil Rights, History).

8.4 Analyze the challenges and central ideas involved in creating the new nation. (Strands: Civics, Civil Rights, Geography, History, Economics).

NCSS Theme

Time, Continuity, and Change

English Language Arts

CCSS ELA Writing Standards Grade 6-8 1 a.b.c.d.e. 2a.b.c.d. e.f., 4, 5, 7,8,9

CCSS ELA Reading Standards Grade 6-8 1, 4, 7, 9

Library of Congress - Teaching with Primary Sources Skills:

- Analyze primary sources using Library of Congress tools
- Analyze a set of related primary sources in order to identify multiple perspectives

Highlighted Strategies:

- Observe-Reflect-Question

Credits

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Taught in Joshua Pankey's 7th Grade Classroom at Armstrong Middle School

Materials

- Sources – See Resource Guide at the end of this document.
- Lincoln Primary Source Set on the TPS Teachers Network or Pinterest that can be used for easy access and to limit the sources students analyze <https://www.pinterest.com/ncm39/lincoln-primary-source-set>
- Intro activity/lesson – Lincoln's pockets - http://tah.eastconn.org/tah/1112KB2_LincolnPocketsLesson.pdf

Procedures

Introduction

Using the lesson (or a modified shorter version) on Lincoln's pockets (http://tah.eastconn.org/tah/1112KB2_LincolnPocketsLesson.pdf) is a great way to introduce and engage students in better understanding the assassination of Abraham Lincoln and the larger plot surrounding it.

The teacher will share the definitions of compelling and supporting questions with the students ([C3 Framework](#), p. 17). The teacher will then guide students in the development of questions about Lincoln's assassination. After students have proposed about twenty questions, the teacher will help students determine which questions are compelling questions. Once they have identified the compelling questions, students and teachers will identify supporting questions (from the list or newly generated) to support the compelling questions. Finally, the teacher and students will agree on one compelling question to conduct an inquiry into. (If the teacher chooses, she can allow students to work in groups and conduct their inquiry on a compelling question that they select).

The teacher will explain to the students that they will be conducting an inquiry into the death of Abraham Lincoln using primary sources. They will have the opportunity to analyze and evaluate a set of primary sources related to his death and then make a claim about his death. Their claim will become the thesis for a short narrative description of his death.

During

The teacher will instruct the students to go to the Pinterest site (or have sets printed for students of the provided sources) that includes the Lincoln primary source set. Students will be directed to read and observe the primary sources in the set. After about 15 minutes the students will be directed to make a tentative claim about the death of Lincoln. The teacher will ask each group to share and will guide them to a claim that fits within the compelling question developed earlier. A good claim would be one related to the assassination being part of a larger conspiracy. Teachers may want to guide students to a focus on the conspiracy.

The teacher will instruct the students to analyze and evaluate the sources in the primary source set. This will take about 15 minutes. The students can divide the sources among the members of the group and complete an analysis sheet on each source, paying attention to any conflicts in information they may find.

The teacher will instruct students to write a narrative (individually) that describes the events surrounding the death of Lincoln, but focused on the claim they made earlier and that will help answer the compelling question. The students will be reminded to use information from the sources that answer the supporting questions. Some students may need to select three or four supporting questions that they will answer using their sources, others may not need to complete this step. Though the students did their research of the sources as a group, they will write their narratives individually. The teacher will monitor student progress to insure that they are basing their narrative on the supporting

questions, writing to support the claim, and are using sources to support their narrative. This is an opportunity to share with students the concept of citations.

After

Once students have completed their narratives, each of the groups will have an opportunity to read their narratives. Once narratives have been read, the teacher will ask if the students noticed any discrepancies. One discrepancy will be that Secretary of State William Seward died when in fact he was injured in an assassination attempt. This is an opportunity to teach the historical thinking heuristic corroboration (Wineburg, 1991). There are sources in the set that indicate that he died and others written later in the day after the assassination attempt that correct the erroneous report. There will be other items of interest that students may want to talk about. Some will notice that one of the conspirators was a woman. After this initial discussion, the teacher will ask students to read the account of Lincoln's assassination in their textbook. The teacher will ask students what additional they learned about his assassination by studying primary sources and writing their own accounts. This is an opportunity to focus on the fact that students have the ability to create their own historical accounts just like historians do.

Finally, students will be told to identify and correct any mistakes in their narrative. The teacher will monitor this process. Students will turn in their corrected narratives for a summative assessment.

Conclude the lesson:

The teacher will ask students to share what they have learned and fill in the L part of the K-W-L.

The teacher will review the key points of the lesson:

1. Primary sources can extend and add to our understanding of a historical event,
2. Primary sources are what historians use to write history,
3. Historians make claims and support their claims with information found in both primary and secondary sources,
4. Historians must corroborate information in primary sources (i.e. don't put too much faith in one source, you need multiple sources to make a claim),
5. Review the key facts about Lincoln's assassination.

The teacher will ask students if they have any questions that were not answer or if they have any new questions that might be the source of another inquiry. Students will generate questions, and these will be placed on the question wall for future reference and action.

Assessment

Formative: Student ability to analyze primary sources; Student ability to generate compelling and supporting questions

Summative: Student narrative will be evaluated for accuracy, completeness, and ability to corroborate specific details from contradictory sources.

Differentiation

- Teachers can differentiate based on student reading ability and writing ability. Teachers can provide scaffolding to support student reading of primary sources, can reduce or increase the number of sources used by a given student to write their narrative. Teachers can make adjustments to the amount of support provided during the writing process based on student ability.

Supplementary Materials

- Abraham Lincoln: A Resource Guide from the Library of Congress
<https://guides.loc.gov/abraham-lincoln-guide/digital>
- Teacher's Guide Primary Source Set from the Library of Congress
http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/lincoln/pdf/teacher_guide.pdf

Teaching with Primary Sources Resource Guide

Topic: Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

Historical Background: The following will expand to fit the space you need. Include an overview/historical background to your topic, as well as links to that content.

Abraham Lincoln was the 16th President of the United States. He was elected into office in November of 1860. He served as the president during the American Civil War, where he paved the way for the abolition of slavery with his Emancipation Proclamation. On April 14, 1865, John Wilkes Booth assassinated Lincoln at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C. This was five days after General Robert E. Lee surrendered, effectively ending the Civil War.

<http://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/abraham-lincoln>

Davidson, J.W. (2014). *America: History of our nation. Beginnings through 1877*, pp. 548-549

Delbanco, A. (Ed.) (2009). *The Portable Abraham Lincoln*.

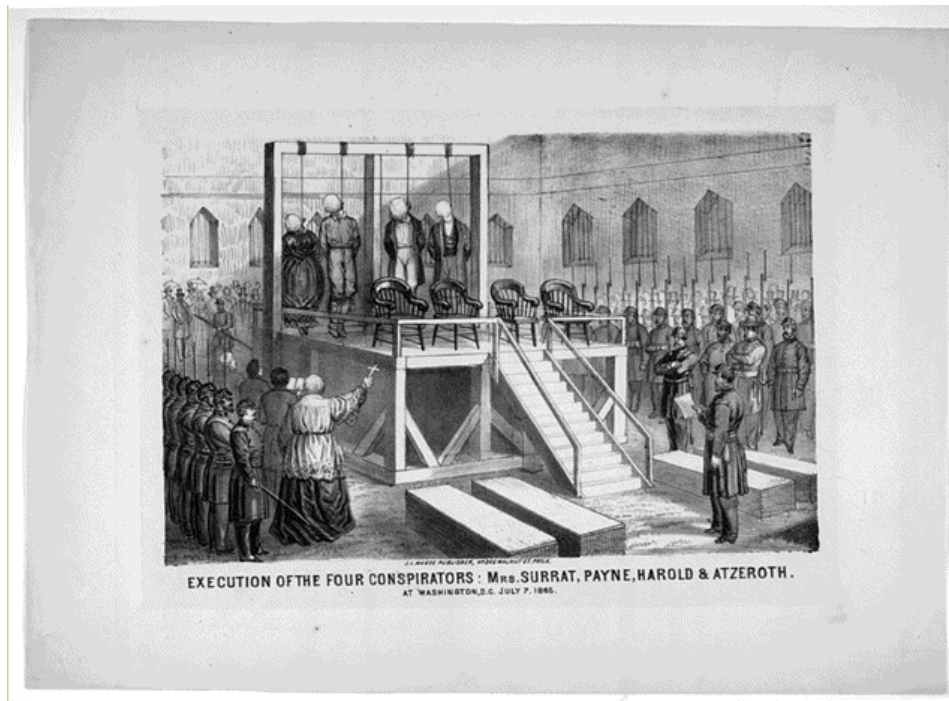
PBS The American Experience: The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/assassination/>

Timeline, primary sources, and biographies

Source 1:

Image:



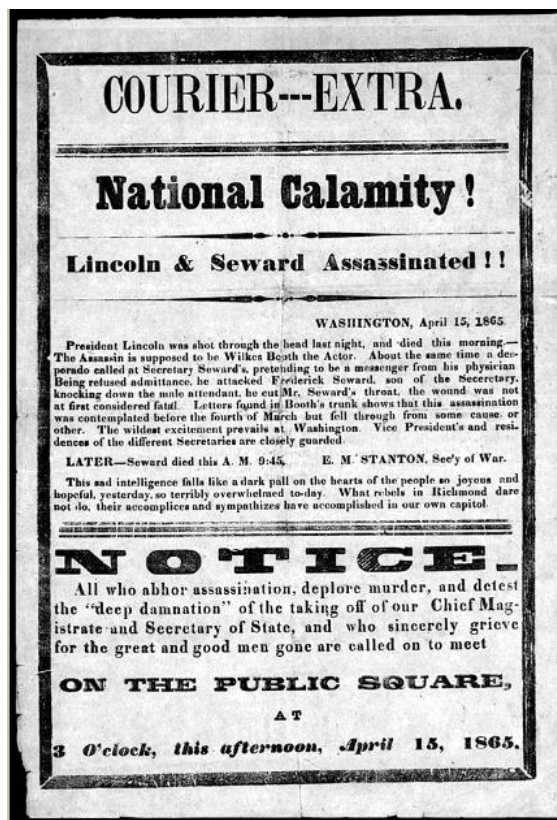
Title: Execution of the four conspirators: Mrs. Surrat [sic], Payne, Harold, & Atzeroth. At Washington, D.C., July 7, 1865.

Link: <https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/alhtml/alrb/stbdsd/00408600/001.html>

Purpose: Image analyzed and used by students to write their narratives.

Source 2:

Image:



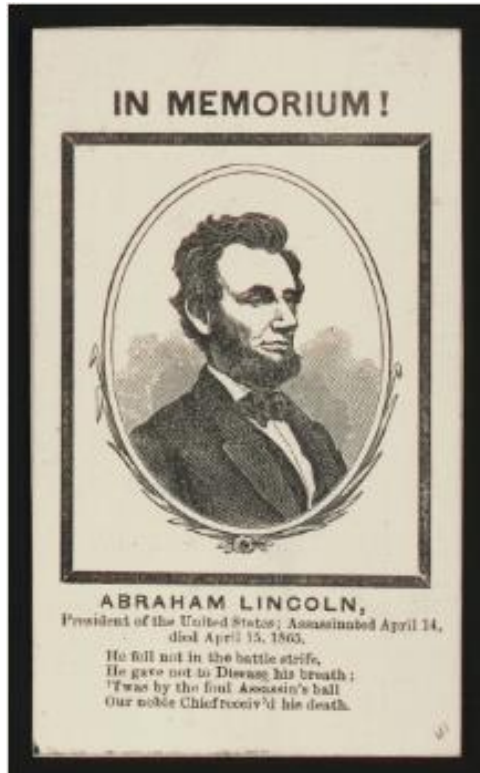
Title: Courier-Extra. National Calamity! Lincoln & Seward Assassinated!! Washington, April 15, 1865

Link: <https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/alhtml/alrb/stbdsd/00800300/001.html>

Purpose: Image analyzed and used by students to write their narratives.

Source 3:

Image:



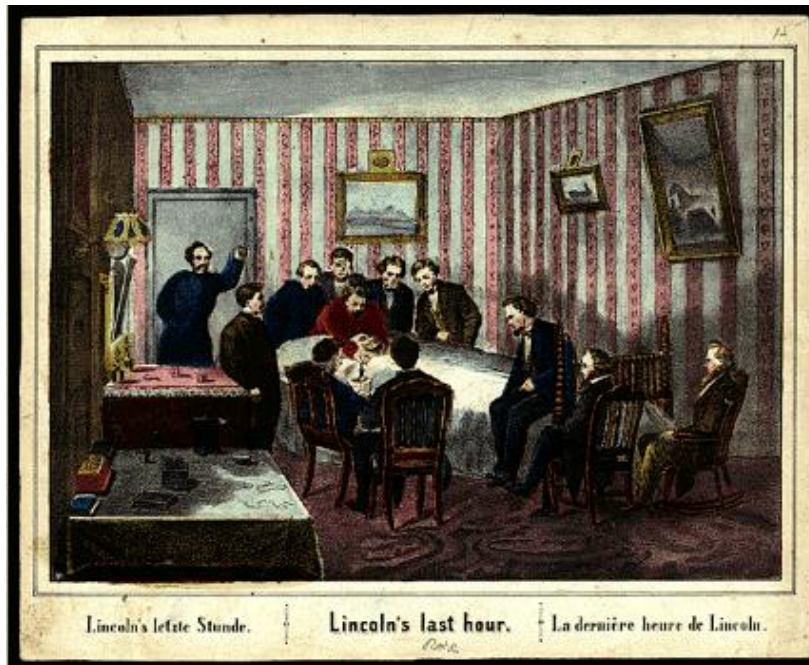
Title: In Memoriam! Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States; Assassinated April 14, died April 15, 1865.

Link: <https://www.loc.gov/item/scsm000605/>

Purpose: Image analyzed and used by students to write their narratives.

Source 4:

Image:



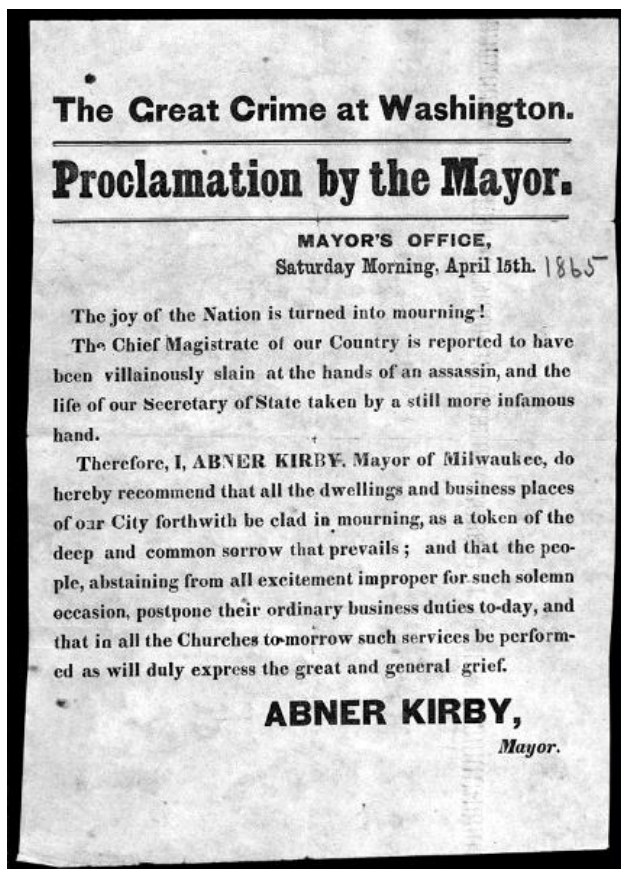
Title: Lincoln's last hour. Lincoln's letzte stunde. La dernière heure de Lincoln. [n. p., 1865?]

Link: <https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/alhtml/alrb/stbdsd/00500200/001.html>

Purpose: Image analyzed and used by students to write their narratives.

Source 5:

Image:



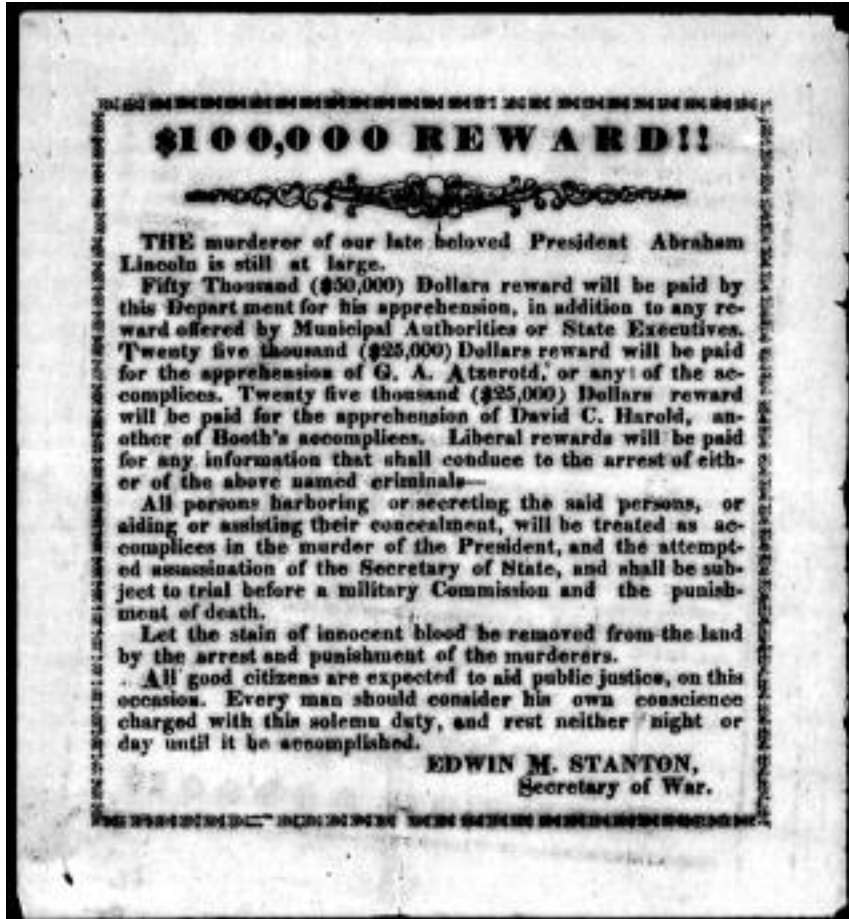
Title: Milwaukee, Wis., Mayor (Abner Kirby). The great crime at Washington. Proclamation by the Mayor's office, Saturday morning, April 5th. Milwaukee, Wis., [1865]

Link: <https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/alhtml/alrb/stbdsd/00502200/001.html>

Purpose: Image analyzed and used by students to write their narratives.

Source 6:

Image:



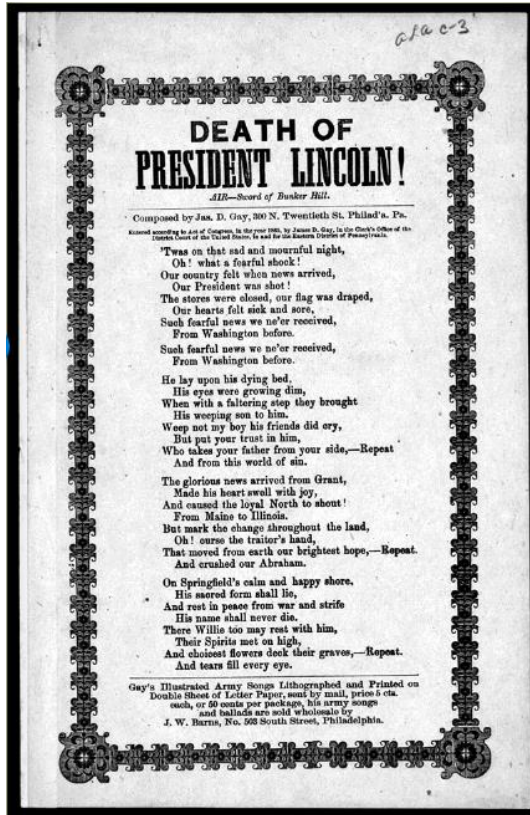
Title: U.S. War Dept. \$100,000 Reward!!

Link: <https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/alhtml/alrb/stbdsd/00502400/001.html>

Purpose: Image analyzed and used by students to write their narratives.

Source 7:

Image:



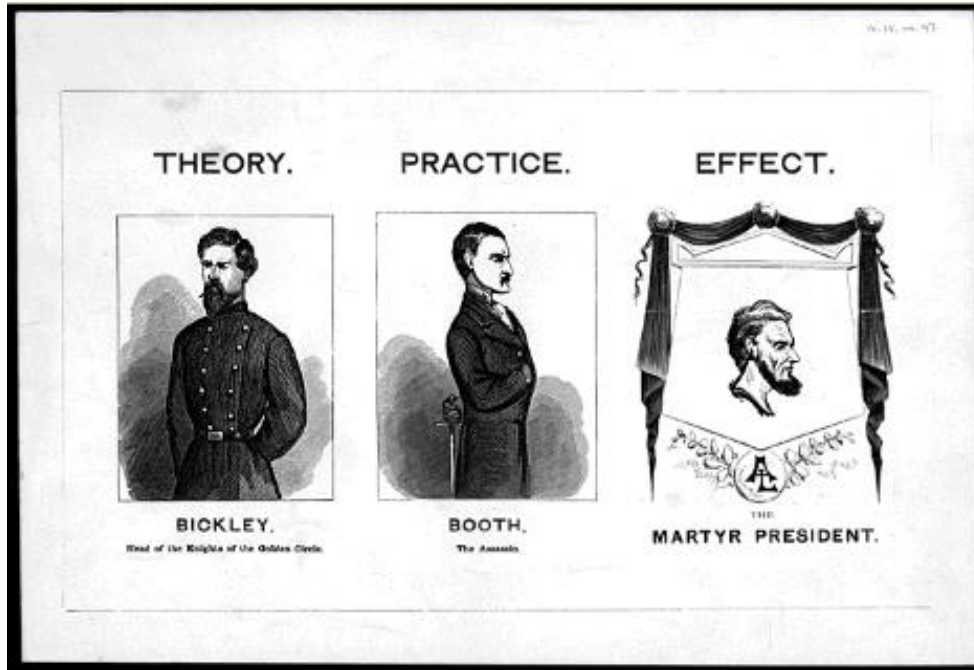
Title: Gay, James D. Death of President Lincoln! Air-Sword of Bunker Hill. Philadelphia, 1865.

Link: <https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/alhtml/alrb/stbdsd/00501700/001.html>

Purpose: Image analyzed and used by students to write their narratives.

Source 8:

Image:



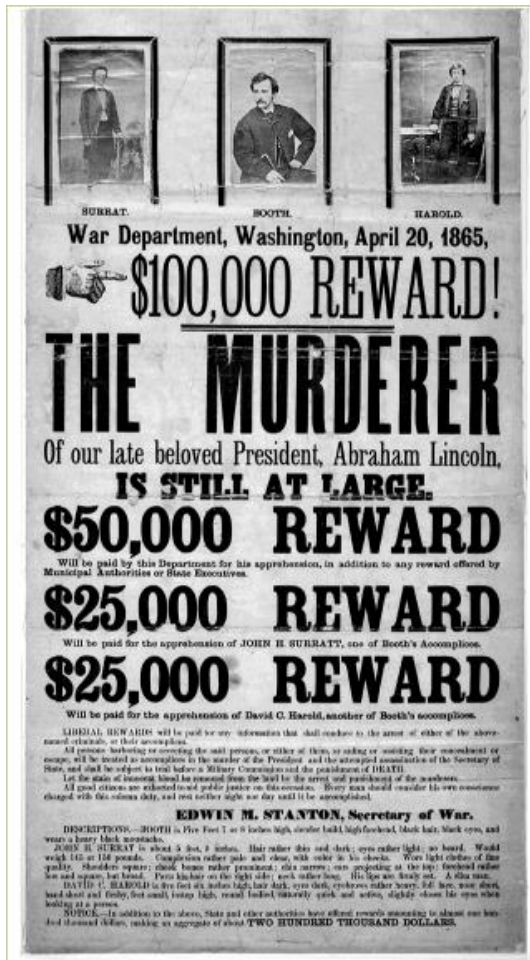
Title: Theory. Practice. Effect. Bickley, Head of the Knights of the Golden Circle. Booth, the Assassin. The Martyr President.

Link: <https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/alhtml/alrb/stbdsd/00404700/001.html>

Purpose: Image analyzed and used by students to write their narratives.

Source 9:

Image:



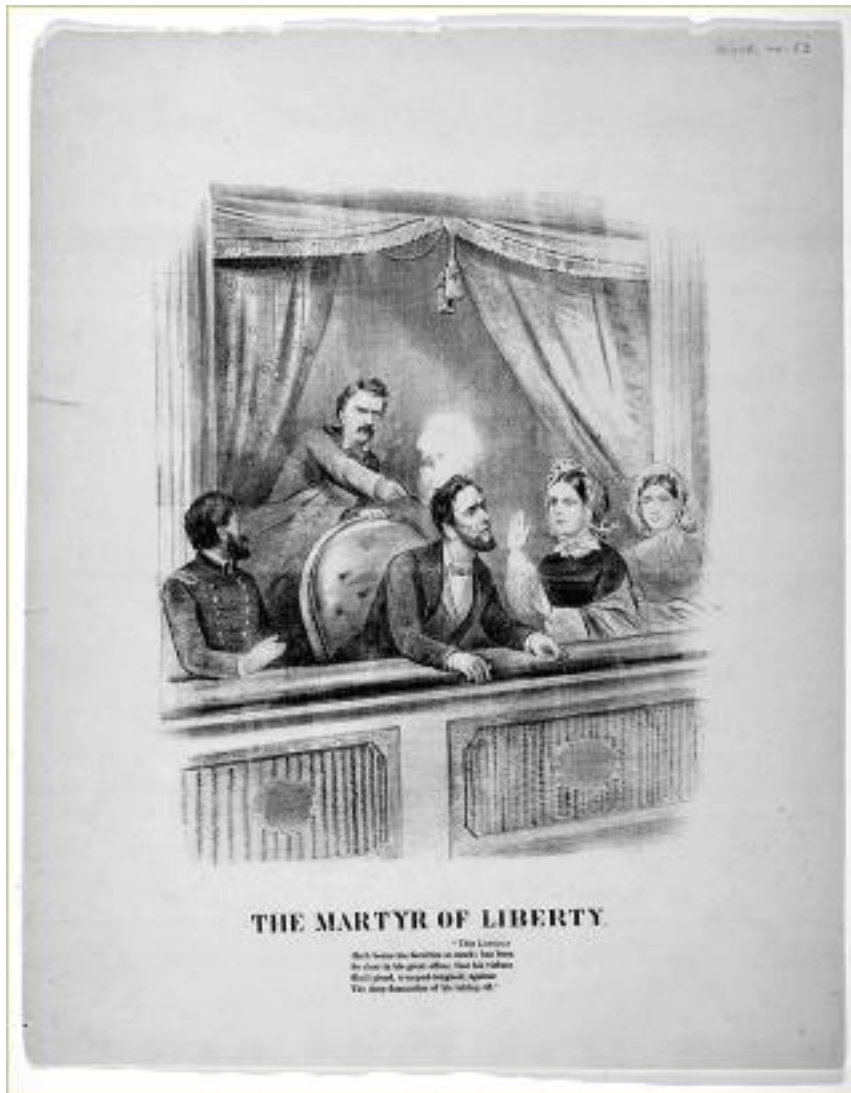
Title: U.S. War Dept. War department, Washington, April 20, 1865. 100,000 reward!

Link: <https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/alhtml/alrb/stbdsd/00003900/001.html>

Purpose: Image analyzed and used by students to write their narratives.

Source 10:

Image:



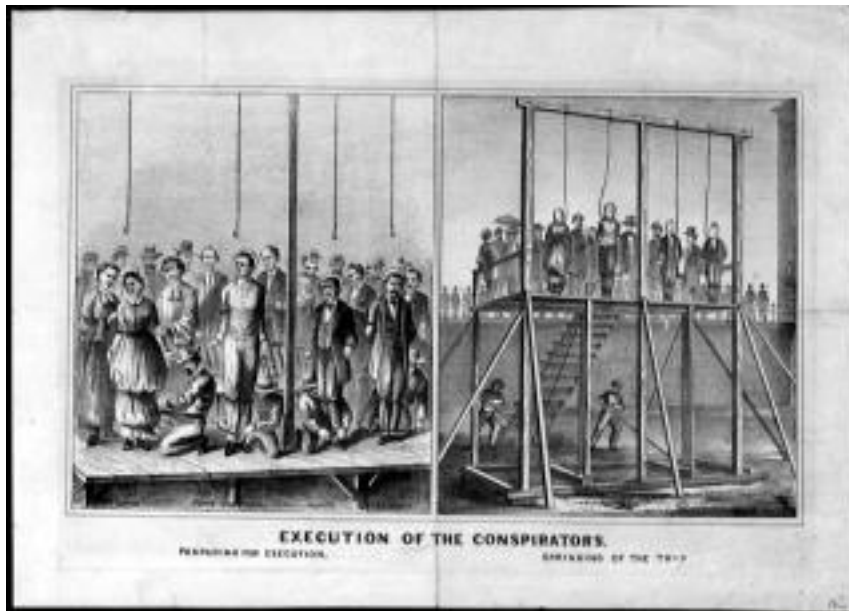
Title: The Martyr of liberty. "This Lincoln Hath born his faculties so meek ... the deep damnation of his taking off."

Link: <https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/alhtml/alrb/stbdsd/00405300/001.html>

Purpose: Image analyzed and used by students to write their narratives.

Source 11:

Image:



Title: Execution of the conspirators.

Link: <https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/alhtml/alrb/stbdsd/00408900/001.html>

Purpose: Image analyzed and used by students to write their narratives.

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