

# Abraham Lincoln

YOU ARE THE REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE for president of the United States in 1860. Most of your life you've been a politician. In fact, you were only 23 years old when you first ran for office. The only time you weren't in politics was a few years back when, because your party was too weak, you left political life to work as a lawyer. Your friends say that you are very ambitious and that what you want most in the world is to be president.

It's never easy to run for president, but these days it is especially difficult with the country deeply divided. Historically, you have been politically cautious and have not taken unpopular stands on issues. For example, in private you tell people how much you dislike slavery. But publicly, you have never said that slavery should be abolished where it currently exists. In fact, in public you never even spoke out against the Fugitive Slave Law, which required northerners in free states to help capture escaped slaves. In private, you wrote: "I confess I hate to see the poor creatures hunted down ... but I bite my lips and keep quiet." You are no abolitionist and have strongly condemned those abolitionists, like John

Brown, who broke the law and used violence in their efforts to stop slavery. However, you have always said that slavery should not be spread to any new states or territories.

You believe that what makes this a great country is the opportunity it provides its free citizens. If you work hard, you can rise and succeed. Look at you: Your parents were not rich and now you may become president.

Right now, what you want most is to be elected. That will require you to convince people who have very different interests and ideas to compromise and to see that your positions are the best. You will be able to please some of the people on some of the issues, but not all the people on all the issues. Good luck.

In the "Campaign" period, you will meet with as many of the groups as you can. Listen to their concerns and test out some of your positions. They will also be talking to each other to try to build alliances so that they can urge you to adopt their positions on various issues. **Hint:** In order to win, you will probably need a majority of at least three of the four groups.

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1. Read over the questions included in "Election of 1860: Issues." Come up with tentative positions on each of these issues. Don't feel that you need to be sure at this stage. Remember that you'll be meeting with each group and will be able to change positions afterwards.
  2. Decide among yourselves which of you will campaign with which groups. There are four other groups: northern workers, western farmers, southern planters, and northern manufacturers.
  3. Decide what questions you will ask the different social groups in the upcoming campaign session.