

Instructions for Teachers:

If your class has computer and internet access, the students can practice research skills by searching for the necessary documents using the links and instructions below. If not, you could gather and print the documents from the links or from other activities on this DVD.

1. Before sending students to work with the documents, explain the definitions of primary, secondary and mixed sources.
2. Divide the class into three groups. Each group will be given print-outs of one set of materials relating to Lincoln's death and the worksheet. First have students examine the original documents carefully in their individual groups, and answer the questions on the worksheet.
 - Group 1: Mary Henry diary, April 15 and 16, 1865,
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/deathoflincoln.htm>
 - Group 2: Civil War era images of the Smithsonian,
<http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/documents/dcduringcw.htm>
and
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ammemhome.html>
Search for: "Assassination of President Lincoln" and pick two or three of the images, such as an engraving of Lincoln being shot, and a photograph of Lincoln's funeral.
 - Group 3: New York Times coverage of Lincoln's assassination.
<http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/browser>
Search for: April 15 and 16, 1865
3. After students have thoroughly analyzed and read their documents and answered their questions in the small groups, bring the class back together for a large discussion. Have each group share a summary of their documents and the answers they found. Ask these questions to begin a discussion:
 - What do these documents tell you about Washington, D.C., at the time of President Lincoln's death?
 - How does studying these documents differ from reading a chapter on the Civil War in a textbook?
 - Why is it important/valuable to look at primary sources?
 - How do primary sources help you understand history?