

About the Play

Paths to Freedom follows Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, and other notable individuals during the Civil War and recreates the events surrounding the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Through provided character biographies, journals, and a full script, students will research and perform their character to understand the many unique and complicated viewpoints as Lincoln considered how best to approach emancipation, as well as the alternatives. This play will help students to answer these essential questions:

- How did President Lincoln come to his decision to proclaim emancipation?
- How did President Lincoln use his Constitutional powers as president in signing the Emancipation Proclamation?
- How did other members of the military, US government, and Washington society view emancipation?

Process

The variety of materials included allows for multiple approaches to *Paths to Freedom*. By design, the execution of the character assignment, research, reading, and performance of the play during your class's Civil War unit is as follows:

- Use the Cast List to assign students their characters and speaking roles
- Distribute Character Biographies to the appropriate students, allowing them the opportunity to read and research their character and understand the role they play in the larger context of events.
- Allow students time to complete their Character Journal.
- Practice and perform the play
- Allow students time to reflect on the plot of the play and how the events and decision-making process unfolded.

Additional Resources

The White House Historical Association also offers a number of other free education resources, and many relevant articles hosted on our website at www.whitehousehistory.org.

Any questions please contact education@whha.org