



# Civil War Did Not Stop the 1864 Election

In this activity you will consider the re-election of Lincoln during the Civil War.

## CRITICAL THINKING ACTIVITY FOR POLITICAL CARTOON 30

Directions Read the following information about the last years of the Civil War and study the cartoon on page 59. Then answer the questions.

President Lincoln had trouble finding a general to lead the Union army as effectively as General Robert E. Lee commanded the Confederate army. One popular but not very successful general was George “Little Mac” McClellan. General McClellan frustrated Lincoln by repeatedly asking for more troops, supplies, and preparation time rather than fighting. Lincoln reportedly joked after one of McClellan’s requests for troops that the army seemed to grow smaller “like a shovelful of fleas tossed from one place to another.” Eventually Lincoln relieved McClellan of his command. General Ulysses S. Grant later took command of the Union army.

The United States held a presidential election while the nation was caught up in the war that had torn it in two. Even in 1864 there was doubt about a Northern victory, and Lincoln thought he would lose the election. His opponent was none other than George McClellan. McClellan’s party, the Democrats, hoped to win the White House because of the war-weariness of the country and Little Mac’s popularity. The Republicans hoped voters would support the President during the war. Lincoln’s story-telling, small-town manner and calm determination appealed to some people during the crisis. What contributed most to his chances for re-election, however, was the news of Union victories, especially the capture of Atlanta by General William Tecumseh Sherman’s troops in autumn of 1864. Lincoln won the election.

The North defeated the weary South in 1864 and 1865, and Lee surrendered to Grant. The President tried to reconcile the North and South, but just after the Confederate surrender in 1865, he was assassinated. The cartoon was published earlier, during the election campaign of 1864.

1. Who are the two men in the cartoon?

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### CRITICAL THINKING

**2. Determining Relevant Information** To what “little joke” might the cartoonist be referring by showing the smaller figure holding a shovel?

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**3. Making Comparisons** The most obvious contrast in the cartoon is in the sizes of Lincoln and McClellan. Which man seems more in control?

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**4. Testing Conclusions** Suppose someone told you that, since Lincoln and McClellan both worked for the Union side during the war, the cartoon must be meant to show them working cooperatively. Do the cartoon and the historical information above support this conclusion? Explain.

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**5. Drawing Conclusions** Is this a pro-Lincoln or a pro-McClellan cartoon? Give a reason for your choice.

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