



Ford's Theatre Society  
Necessary Sacrifices Workshop Outline  
Lincoln, Douglass and the Establishment of the United States Colored Troops

Grade(s): 5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>

Duration: 55 minutes

Content areas: Social Studies, History, ELA

**Introduction:**

In this workshop participants will learn about one of the difficult decisions Abraham Lincoln made during the Civil War, the establishment of the United States Colored Troops (USCT). Students will delve into primary source material as well as a portion of theatre commissioned by Ford's to examine the challenges Lincoln and Frederick Douglass faced as they worked to establish the U.S. Colored Troops.

**Prior Knowledge Needed:**

Students should have studied the Civil War prior to this lesson

**Learning Objectives:**

- Students will be able to compare and contrast the leadership styles of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass
- Students will be able to perform a close reading of a primary source letter
- Students will participate in a dramatic reading of a piece of theater.

**Materials:**

- Excerpt of the *Necessary Sacrifices* script
- Copy of 8/12/1863 letter from Frederick Douglass to George L. Stearns
- PowerPoint images of USCT photographs and posters
- One paragraph overview of the establishment on the USCT
- Library of Congress Teacher's Guide to Analyzing Photographs & Prints

**Procedure:**

- I. Introduction to the establishment of the USCT (5 minutes)
- II. Group Reading of a Scene from *Necessary Sacrifices* (25 Minutes)
  - Read aloud the selected portion of *Necessary Sacrifices*.
  - Consider how the form of drama based on primary source information is useful in exploring Lincoln and Douglass' leadership styles
  - Compare and contrast the goals and leadership styles of AL and Frederick Douglass by using the essential questions below

*Essential Questions:*

- How do Lincoln and Douglass' leadership styles differ based on the scene in the play?
  - Why does Lincoln feel the need to proceed cautiously in establishing the USCT?
  - Why can Douglass act more aggressively in his demands?
  - What goals do you think they have in common?
- III. Close reading of a primary source letter from Frederick Douglass to George L. Stearns about the establishment of USCT (20 minutes)
- Compare and Contrast the scene from the play with the primary source letter.
    - What is the same between the letter and the scene in the play?
    - What parts of the scene did the playwright invent or create?
    - Why do you think the playwright chose to differ from the primary source?
    - How does the scene help you understand the history? How does the letter?
- IV. Group for debrief and reflection (5 minutes)
- V. Optional additional activity
- Close reading of four primary source photographs of USCT using the Library of Congress Teacher's Guide to Analyzing Photographs & Prints