

Comparison and Contrast: Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass

What did each believe about the following subjects?	Abraham Lincoln	Frederick Douglass	Do they agree (yes/no)?
The American Union			
The U.S. Constitution			
The Future of Slavery			



Abraham Lincoln, the 1860 Election and the Future of the American Union and Slavery

Student Name _____ Date _____

Group 3: Textual Analysis of Stephen Douglas’s Speech and Letter

Stephen Douglas, “Lincoln-Douglas Debates (1858): Second Debate at Freeport, Illinois,” Excerpt (August 27, 1858): <http://www.nps.gov/liho/debate2.htm>

The next question propounded to me by Mr. Lincoln is, can the people of a Territory in any lawful way, against the wishes of any citizen of the United States, exclude slavery from their limits prior to the formation of a State Constitution? I answer emphatically, as Mr. Lincoln has heard me answer a hundred times from every stump in Illinois, that in my opinion the people of a Territory can, by lawful means, exclude slavery from their limits prior to the formation of a State Constitution. Mr. Lincoln knew that I had answered that question over and over again. He heard me argue the Nebraska bill on that principle all over the State in 1854, in 1855, and in 1856, and he has no excuse for pretending to be in doubt as to my position on that question. It matters not what way the Supreme Court may hereafter decide as to the abstract question whether slavery may or may not go into a Territory under the Constitution, the people have the lawful means to introduce it or exclude it as they please, for the reason that slavery cannot exist a day or an hour anywhere, unless it is supported by local police regulations.... Those police regulations can only be established by the local legislature, and if the people are opposed to slavery they will elect representatives to that body who will by unfriendly legislation effectually prevent the introduction of it into their midst. If, on the contrary, they are for it, their legislation will favor its extension. Hence, no matter what the decision of the Supreme Court may be on that abstract question, still the right of the people to make a slave Territory or a free Territory is perfect and complete under the Nebraska bill. I hope Mr. Lincoln deems my answer satisfactory on that point.

Question	Answer
Does Douglas believe the people of a federal territory can exclude slavery prior to becoming a state of the union?	
Why does he think that a Supreme Court decision regarding slavery in the territories does not matter when it comes to the local wishes of the territorial population?	

What does he mean by “unfriendly legislation”?	
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Stephen A. Douglas, “Letter to J.B. Dorr” (June 22, 1859):

If, as I have full faith they will, the Democratic party shall determine in the Presidential election of 1860 to adhere to the principles embodied in the Compromise measures of 1850, and ratified by the people in the Presidential election of 1852, and re-affirmed in the Kansas-Nebraska act of 1854, and incorporated into the Cincinnati [Democratic Party] platform in 1856, as expounded by Mr. [James] Buchanan in his letter accepting the nomination, and approved by the people in his election—in that event my friends will be at liberty to present my name to the convention, if they see proper to do so.

If, on the contrary, it shall become the policy of the Democratic party, which I cannot anticipate, to repudiate these their time-honored principles, on which we have achieved so many patriotic triumphs; and, in lieu of them, the Convention shall interpolate [or insert] into the creed of the party such new issues as the revival of the African slave trade, or a Congressional slave code for the Territories, or the doctrine that the Constitution of the United States either establishes or prohibits slavery in the Territories beyond the power of the people legally to control it as other property—it is due to candor to say that, in such an event, I could not accept the nomination if tendered to me.

Question: Would Douglas’s letter encourage or discourage the following groups to support him as their nominee for president in 1860? For each group, write one sentence that explains your answer.

Southern Democrats	
Northern Democrats	
Abolitionists	
Republicans	

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