

"A House Divided" Speech

Springfield, Illinois, June 16, 1858

Directions: Read excerpts from Lincoln's House Divided Speech and answer the questions following each passage.

In my opinion, it will not cease, until a crisis shall have been reached, and passed.

"A house divided against itself cannot stand."

I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half slave and half free.

I do not expect the Union to be dissolved--I do not expect the house to fall--but I do expect it will cease to be divided.

It will become all one thing, or all the other.

Using the excerpt—

1. Restate, in your own words, the main idea of this passage: _____

2. What do you think he means by "crisis"? _____

Using your background knowledge—

3. This speech was made in 1858. What office was he running for at this time? _____

4. Lincoln made this speech in a debate with what candidate? _____

5. What was the central topic surrounding this series of debates? _____

6. What major events had occurred prior to 1858 that influenced the subjects of these debates? List at least two events:

Either the opponents of slavery, will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward, till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new--North as well as South.

Using the excerpt—

7. According to Lincoln, what are the two possibilities regarding the future of slavery in the United States?

Using your background knowledge—

8. What is the ultimate fate of slavery in the United States and how and when was the final decision made?

9. What was Lincoln's primary goal during the Civil War? _____