

# How did the relationship between Abraham Lincoln and George McClellan affect the Civil War?



President Abraham Lincoln meets with General George McClellan at Antietam a few weeks after the end of the battle in October of 1862.

(Source: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/ppmsca.23719>)

## Supporting Questions

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1. What was the nature of Lincoln and McClellan relationship in the spring of 1862?
2. How did Lincoln and McClellan's relationship deteriorate over the summer of 1862?
3. How were Lincoln and McClellan getting along in the fall of 1862?

## How did the relationship between Abraham Lincoln and George McClellan affect the Civil War?

Inquiry Standard	United States History Standards for Grades 5-12. <i>Standard 2A</i> - Identify the turning points of the war and evaluate how political, military, and diplomatic leadership affected the outcome of the conflict.
Staging the Compelling Question	Discuss things that people should and should not do when trying to build a successful relationship.

Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3
What was the nature of Lincoln and McClellan relationship in the spring of 1862?	How did Lincoln and McClellan's relationship deteriorate over the summer of 1862?	How were Lincoln and McClellan getting along in the fall of 1862?
Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task
Make a chart listing on one side concerns that President Lincoln had for General McClellan and on the other side concerns offered by McClellan.	Expand the chart begun in the first formative task and make an initial claim about the relationship between Lincoln and McClellan.	Write a response from General McClellan to President Lincoln's letter of October 13, 1862.
Featured Sources	Featured Sources	Featured Sources
Telegrams between George B. McClellan and Abraham Lincoln, April and May	Telegrams between George B. McClellan and Abraham Lincoln, June and July	Source A: Lincoln letter to McClellan, October 13, 1862

Summative Performance Task	<b>ARGUMENT</b> How did the relationship between Abraham Lincoln and George McClellan affect the Civil War? Construct an argument that takes a position on the impact of the Lincoln and McClellan's disagreements. The argument should include claims supported by evidence from the sources.
	<b>EXTENSION</b> Create a timeline of military events in 1862 with annotations about the events from the argument.
Taking Informed Action	<b>UNDERSTAND</b> Identify a relationship at a local, national, or international stage where the relationship has gone bad. <b>ASSESS</b> Create a list of actions the people in these relationships could take to improve the situation. <b>ACTION</b> Share some guidelines for improving relationships among leaders in a public forum (e.g. a town hall meeting, a school website, or pamphlet).

## Inquiry Description

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This inquiry focuses on the relationship between President Abraham Lincoln and his commanding General George McClellan and the impact of their relationship on the Civil War. President Lincoln and General McClellan knew each other long before the Civil War having worked together on the Illinois Central Railroad in the late 1850s, where McClellan was the general superintendent and Lincoln an attorney. When the American Civil War began in 1861, Lincoln held McClellan in high regard. Lincoln was not alone in his admiration of McClellan as evidenced by the "Young Napoleon" moniker given him by his fellow officers.

After the disastrous Union defeat at the first battle of Bull Run, President Lincoln was in search of a new commanding general of the Army of the Potomac. Given his impression of McClellan's success commanding Union efforts in West Virginia, Lincoln promoted McClellan to commanding general of the newly established Army of the Potomac and then as the General in Chief of the entire Union Army, position he held from November 1861 to March 1862. This brief period of time proved to be both the high point of their relationship and the beginning of a bitter rivalry that culminated in the 1864 presidential election.

1862 was a tumultuous year in American history. Not only was the United States in the middle of a growing Civil War, but it was also dealing with a growing conflict between Lincoln as Commander in Chief and McClellan as the General in Chief of the Army. In the early stages of his command, McClellan was able to help build up the Union army into a more powerful unit than the Confederacy had faced at Bull Run. Despite these organizational successes, Lincoln grew increasingly frustrated by McClellan's failure to move more aggressively against the southern armies. Lincoln relieved McClellan, first from serving as the General in Chief of the Union Army in March of 1862, and then of his command over the Army of the Potomac in November of that same year. What had begun as a budding relationship working together on the Illinois Central Railroad during the late 1850's had turned into pure hostility by the end of 1862.

Of course, this would not be the last encounter between these two men. In the 1864 presidential election, Lincoln as the incumbent would run into a familiar foe running on the Democratic ticket, that being George McClellan.

## Structure

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The questions and tasks shaping this inquiry examine the interactions between Lincoln and McClellan in the final months of McClellan's command of the Army of the Potomac. The inquiry is both concerned with the question of how people build and maintain relationships as well as the potential impact on larger events.

At the start of the inquiry, students consider their perspectives and ideas about relationships and what causes their success or failure. With this connection in place, the inquiry moves into the substance of the relationship between Lincoln and McClellan.

Using selected telegram correspondence between Lincoln and McClellan from the Thomas T. Eckert papers, students complete formative performance tasks responding to three supporting questions. The supporting questions proceed in chronological fashion from April to November 1862. The inquiry picks up the story of Lincoln and McClellan's relationship in April, 1862 after Lincoln had removed McClellan as General in Chief the previous month.

In completing the inquiry tasks, students will analyze a collection of telegrams exchanged between the two men in the spring, summer, and fall of 1862. Through their examination of the telegram messages, students will have an opportunity to examine a turning point in the Civil War and will evaluate how political, military, and diplomatic leadership affected the outcome of the conflict.

The inquiry culminates with an argument in response to the compelling question, "How did the relationship between Abraham Lincoln and George McClellan affect the Civil War?"

# Staging the Compelling Question

Compelling  
Question

How did the relationship between Abraham Lincoln and George McClellan affect the Civil War?

## Staging the compelling question

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This inquiry examines one of the most controversial relationships in United States history. The compelling question is in some ways introspective and provides an opportunity for students to think about why some relationships work and other may not. In this staging task, students focus on their personal relationships to set the stage for a close examination of the relationships between Lincoln and McClellan.

## Supporting Question 1

Supporting Question	What was the nature of Lincoln and McClellan relationship in the spring of 1862?
Formative Performance Task	Make a chart listing on one side concerns that President Lincoln had for General McClellan and on the other side concerns offered by McClellan.
Featured Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Source A:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 05 April 1862</li> <li>● <b>Source B:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 06 April 1862</li> <li>● <b>Source C:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 08 April 1862</li> <li>● <b>Source D:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 14 April 1862</li> <li>● <b>Source E:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 18 April 1862</li> <li>● <b>Source F:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 02 May 1862</li> <li>● <b>Source G:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 14 May 1862</li> <li>● <b>Source H:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 25 May 1862</li> <li>● <b>Source I:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 26 May 1862</li> <li>● <b>Source J:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 26 May 1862</li> <li>● <b>Source K:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 26 May 1862</li> <li>● <b>Source L:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 26 May 1862</li> <li>● <b>Source M:</b> Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 06 April 1862</li> <li>● <b>Source N:</b> Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 21 April 1862</li> <li>● <b>Source O:</b> Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 29 April 1862</li> <li>● <b>Source P:</b> Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 01 May 1862</li> <li>● <b>Source Q:</b> Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 15 May 1862</li> <li>● <b>Source R:</b> Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 21 May 1862</li> <li>● <b>Source S:</b> Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 25 May 1862</li> <li>● <b>Source T:</b> Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 28 May 1862</li> <li>● <b>Source U:</b> Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 29 May 1862</li> <li>● <b>Source V:</b> Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 31 May 1862</li> </ul>

This supporting question picks up the telegram correspondence between President Lincoln and General McClellan just after McClellan's removal as General in Chief of the Union Army in March of 1862. McClellan's reluctance to move against the Confederate armies had put him at odds with Lincoln and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. After much planning, in late March McClellan began the long awaited offensive in what became known as the Peninsula Campaign. Lincoln and McClellan sparred over the campaign in the led up and as it unfolded in March, April, and May. Ultimately, Union troops under McClellan's command retreated having failed to accomplish their goal of capturing the capital of the Confederacy in Richmond, Virginia.

### Formative Performance Task

This formative performance task will help students gather and organize detailed information about the relationship between Lincoln and McClellan. There were increasingly few points of agreement between the two men. Despite the back and forth as detailed in these telegrams, the larger question of how much they needed each other remains open.

The featured sources for this task include 12 telegram messages from McClellan to Lincoln and another 11 from Lincoln to McClellan. Taken together, these telegrams paint a picture of a tense relationship, with few points of agreement.

# Supporting Question 1

Featured Source A

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 05 April 1862

## Excerpt

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Time sent 7:30 pm April 5

A Lincoln,

The enemy are in large force along our front and apparently intend making a determined resistance. A reconaissance just made by General Barnard shows that their line of works extend across the entire Peninsula from York Town to Warwick River. Many of them are very formidable. Deserters say they are being reinforced daily from Richmond and from Norfolk.

Under these circumstances, I beg that you will reconsider the order detaching the first corps from my command. In my deliberate judgment the success of our cause will be imperiled by so greatly reducing my force, when it is actually under the fire of the enemy and active operations have commenced.

Two or three of my divisions have been under fire of artillery most of the day. I am now of the opinion that I shall have to fight all the available force of the rebels not far from here. Do not force me to do so with diminished numbers; but whatever your decision may be, I will leave nothing undone to obtain success. If you cannot leave me the whole of the first corps, I urgently ask that I may not lose Franklin and his Division.

G. B. McClellan  
Major General

*Source: Image mssEC\_01\_124\_125\_pp122\_123\_tel170, Ledger EC 01, pp. 122-123, telegram 170, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

# Supporting Question 1

Featured Source B

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 06 April 1862

## Excerpt

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April 6, 11 a.m.  
Fort Monroe,  
Head Quarters, Army of Potomac

A Lincoln,

The order forming new Departments if rapidly enforced deprives me of the power of ordering up majors and troops absolutely necessary to enable me to advance to Richmond. I have by no means the transportation I must have to move my army even a few miles. I respectfully request I may not be placed in this position, but that my orders for wagon trains ammuniton and other material that I have prepared and necessarily left behind as well as Woodburg's brigade may at once be complied with.

The enemy is strong in my front and I have a most serious task before me in the fulfillment of which I need all the aid the Government can give me. I again repeat the urgent request that General Franklin and his division may be restored to my command.

G.B. McClellan  
Major General

*Source: Image mssEC\_03\_064\_p062\_tel082, Ledger EC 03, p. 062, telegram 082, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

# Supporting Question 1

Featured Source C

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 08 April 1862

## Excerpt

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A. Lincoln  
Washington

Your telegram of yesterday received. In reply, I have the honor to state that my entire force for duty only amounts to about eighty five thousand men. General Wools command, as you will observe from the accompanying order, has been taken out of my control. Although he has most cheerfully cooperated with me, the only use that can be made of this command is to protect my communication in rear of this point. At this time only fifty three thousand men have joined me, but they are coming up as rapidly as my means of transportation will permit. Please refer to my dispatch to the Secretary of War of tonight for the details of our present situation.

Geo. B. McClellan  
Major General

*Source: Image mssEC\_01\_125\_126\_pp123\_124\_tel171, Ledger EC 01, pp. 123-124, telegram 171, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*



# Supporting Question 1

Featured Source D

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 14 April 1862

## Excerpt

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Camp Winfield Scott

April 14

Near Yorktown

A. Lincoln

I have seen General Franklin and beg to thank you for your kindness & consideration. I now understand this matter which I did not before our field guns annoyed the enemy considerably today. Roads and bridges are now progressing rapidly. Siege guns & ammunition coming up very satisfactory - shall have nearly all up tomorrow. The tranquility of Yorktown is nearly at an end

G. B. McClellan

Major General

*Source: Image mssEC\_01\_128\_p126\_tel176, Ledger EC 01, p. 126, telegram 176, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 1

Featured Source E

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 18 April 1862

### Excerpt

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Camp Winfield Scott

April 18

A. Lincoln

If compatible with your impression as to the security of the Capitol and not interfering with operations of which I am ignorant, I would be glad to have McCalls division so as to be enabled to make a strong attack upon West Point to turn position of the Enemy. After all that I have heard of things which have occurred since I left Washington and before, I would prefer that General McDowell should not again be assigned to duty with me.

G. B. McClellan

Major General

Source: *Image mssEC\_01\_131\_p129\_tel183, Ledger EC 01, p. 129, telegram 183, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

# Supporting Question 1

Featured Source F

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 02 May 1862

## Excerpt

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Head Quarters, Army of the Potomac

May 2

A Lincoln

I asked for the parrott guns from Washington for the reason that some expected. Had been two weeks nearly on the way and could not be heard from. They arrived last night. My arrangements had been made for them, and I thought time might be saved by getting others from Washington. My object was to hasten not procrastinate all is being done that human labor can accomplish.

G. B. McClellan

Major General

*Source: Image mssEC\_03\_065\_p063\_tel083, Ledger EC 03, p. 063, telegram 083, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

# Supporting Question 1

Featured Source G

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 14 May 1862

## Excerpt

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Cumberland, Va May 14th

His Excellency Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States

I have more than twice telegraphed to the Secretary of War, stating that, in my opinion, the enemy were concentrating all their available force to fight this army in front of Richmond, and that such ought to be their policy. I have received no reply whatever to any of these telegraphs. I beg leave to repeat their substance to Your Excellency, and to ask that kind consideration which you have ever accorded to my representations and views.

All my information from every source accessible to me, establishes the fixed purpose of the rebels to defend Richmond against the army, by offering us battle with all the troops they can collect from east, west, and south, and my own opinion is confirmed by that of all commanders whom I have been able to consult.

Casualties, sickness, garrisons, and guards have much weakened my force, and will continue to do so. I cannot bring into actual battle against the enemy, more than 80,000 men at the utmost, and with them I must attack in position, probably entrenched, a much larger force, perhaps double my numbers. The Confederate leaders must employ their utmost efforts against the army in Virginia.

I most respectfully and earnestly urge upon Your Excellency, that the opportunity has come for striking a fatal blow at the enemies of the Constitution, and I beg that you will cause this army to be reinforced without delay, by all the disposable troops of the Government. I ask for every man that the War Department can send me.

Any commander of the reinforcements whom Your Excellency may designate will be acceptable to me, whatever expression I may have heretofore addressed to you on that subject. Strong reinforcements will at least save the lives of many of them. The greater our force, the more perfect will be our combinations, and the less our loss."

For obvious reasons, I beg you to give immediate consideration to this communication and to inform me fully, at the earliest moment, of your final determination.

Geo. B. McClellan  
Major General

*Source: Image mssEC\_01\_135\_138\_pp133\_136\_tel191, Ledger EC 01, pp. 133-136, telegram 191, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 1

Featured Source H

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 25 May 1862

### Excerpt

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5 p.m

A. Lincoln

The time is very near when I shall attack Richmond. The object of enemy's movements is probably to prevent reinforcements being sent to me. All the information obtained from balloon, deserters, prisoners, and contrabands agree in the statement that the mass of rebel troops are still in immediate vicinity of Richmond, ready to defend it. I have no knowledge of General Bank's position and force, nor what there is at Manassas, therefore cannot form a definite opinion as to the force against him. I have two corps across the Chickahominy, within six miles of Richmond. The others on this side at other crossings within same distance, and ready to cross when bridges completed.

Geo. B. McClellan  
Major General

*Source: Image mssEC\_01\_138\_p136\_tel192, Ledger EC 01, p. 136, telegram 192, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 1

Featured Source I

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 26 May 1862

### Excerpt

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10 a.m.

A. Lincoln

Telegraph of last night received. I am glad to know affairs are not as bad as might have been. I would earnestly call your attention to my instructions to General Banks of March 16th to General Wadsworth of same date, and my letter of April first to Adjunct General. I cannot but think that a prompt return to the principles those laid down would relieve all probability of danger. I will forward copies by mail. I beg to urge the importance of Manassas and Front Royal in contradistinction to Fredericksburg.

G. B. McClellan  
Major General

*Source: Image mssEC\_01\_139\_p137\_tel193, Ledger EC 01, p. 137, telegram 193, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 1

Featured Source J

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 26 May 1862

### Excerpt

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May 27

A. Lincoln,

I have lost three thousand men in the last ten days by sickness and casualties in addition to the guards I am obliged to leave behind me. In view of the fact that I have no child's play before me and that General Wool probably has no further active operations in contemplation, I would request that he may be instructed to furnish at once one Regiment of Infantry to garrison Yorktown and Gloucester, 5 companies of infantry and 4 of cavalry for Williamsburg, 1 regiment and 5 companies of infantry to garrison White House and the Rail road. All of these points up to White House be in Wools Department. If in addition to this move infantry could be spared from the Department of Virginia to cover my right it will prevent my breaking up brigades and divisions and give me so many more reliable men in the battle. I would ask a speedy reply to this that I may arrange accordingly. It will be dangerous to leave troops idle in such an emergency as this. All goes quiet.

G. B. McClellan  
Major General

*Source: Image mssEC\_01\_140\_p138\_tel195, Ledger EC 01, p. 138, telegram 195, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 1

Featured Source K

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 26 May 1862

### Excerpt

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May 26

A. Lincoln,

Have arranged to carry out your last orders. We are quietly closing in upon the enemy preparatory to the last struggle. Situated as I am, I feel forced to take every possible precaution against disaster and to secure my flank against the probably superior force in front of me. My arrangements for tomorrow are very important and if successful will leave me free to strike on the return of the force detached.

G. B. McClellan  
Major General

*Source: Image mssEC\_01\_141\_p139\_tel196, Ledger EC 01, p. 139, telegram 196, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*



## Supporting Question 1

Featured Source L

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 26 May 1862

### Excerpt

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May 26

A Lincoln

Have cut the Virginia Central Railroad in three places between Hanover Court House and the Chickahominy. Will try to cut the other. I do not think Richmond entrenchments formidable, but am not certain. Hope very soon to be within shelling distance. Have Railroad in operation from White House to Chickahominy. Hope to have Chickahominy bridge repaired tonight. Nothing of interest today.

G. B. McClellan

Major General

*Source: Image mssEC\_24\_044\_p. 042\_tel059, Ledger EC 24, p. 042, telegram 059, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 1

Featured Source M

Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 06 April 1862

### Excerpt

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April 6

Fortress Monroe

Major General McClellan,

Yours of 11. A.M. to-day received. Secretary of War informs me that the forwarding of transportation, ammunition, & Woodbury's brigade, under your orders, is not, and will not be interfered with. You now have over 100,000 troops, with you independent of General Wool's command. I think you better break the enemies line from Yorktown to Warwick River, at once. They will probably use time, as an advantageously as you can.

A. Lincoln

*Source: Image mssEC\_24\_008\_p. 006\_tel004, Ledger EC 24, p. 006, telegram 004, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 1

Featured Source N

Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 21 April 1862

### Excerpt

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Washington City,D.C.

April 21, 1862

Major Gen. McClellan

Your dispatch of the 19th was received that day. Fredericksburg is evacuated and the bridges destroyed by the enemy, and a small part of McDowell's command occupies this side of the Rappahannock opposite the town. He proposes moving his whole force to that point.

A. Lincoln

*Source: Image mssEC\_15\_105\_p103\_tel212, Ledger EC 15, p. 103, telegram 212, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 1

Featured Source O

Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 29 April 1862

### Excerpt

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Executive Mansion,  
Washington, April 29, 1862 .

Major Genl McClellan

Would it derange, or embarrass your operations, if I were to appoint Captain Charles Griffin, a Brigadier General of Volunteers? Please answer.

A. Lincoln

*Source: Image mssEC\_15\_106\_p104\_tel213, Ledger EC 15, p. 104, telegram 213, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 1

Featured Source P

Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 01 May 1862

### Excerpt

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Washington, May 1, 1862 .

Major General McClellan

Your call for parrott guns from Washington alarms me chiefly because it argues indefinite procrastination. Is anything to be done?

A. Lincoln

*Source: Image mssEC\_15\_106\_p104\_tel215, Ledger EC 15, p. 104, telegram 215, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 1

Featured Source Q

Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 15 May 1862

### Excerpt

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Washington City, D. C. Major General McClellan  
Cumberland, Va.

Your long dispatch of yesterday is just received. I will answer more fully soon. Will say now that all your dispatches to the Secretary of War have been promptly shown to me. Have done, and shall do, all I could and can to sustain you. Hoped that the opening of James River, and putting Wool and Burnside in communication with an open road to Richmond or to you, had effected something in that direction. I am still unwilling to take all our force off the direct line between Richmond and here.

A. Lincoln

*Source: Image mssEC\_24\_042\_p040\_tel056, Ledger EC 24, p. 040, telegram 056, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 1

Featured Source R

Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 21 May 1862

### Excerpt

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Washington City, D. C.

Major General McClellan,

I have just been waited on by a large Committee who present a petition signed by twenty three Senators and eighty four Representatives, asking me to restore General Hamilton to his Division. I wish to do this, and yet I do not wish to be understood as rebuking you. Please answer at once.

A. Lincoln.

*Source: Image mssEC\_24\_043\_p041\_tel057, Ledger EC 24, p. 041, telegram 057, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 1

Featured Source S

Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 25 May 1862

### Excerpt

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Washington, 1:30 P.M.

Major Gen. McClellan

The enemy is moving North in sufficient force to drive Banks before him—precisely in what force we can not tell. He is also threatening Leesburg and Geary on the Manassas Gap Railroad from both North and South—in precisely what force we cannot tell. I think the movement is a general and a concerted one—such as could not be if he was acting upon the purpose of a very desperate defense of Richmond. I think the time is near when you must either attack Richmond, or give up the job and come to the defense of Washington. Let me hear from you instantly.

A. Lincoln

Sent in Cipher

*Source: Image mssEC\_15\_110\_p108\_tel219, Ledger EC 15, p. 108, telegram 219, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*



## Supporting Question 1

Featured Source T

Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 28 May 1862

### Excerpt

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Washington, May 28. 1862

Major Gen. McClellan

What of F. J. Porter's expedition? Please answer.

A Lincoln

(Sent in Cipher)

*Source: Image mssEC\_15\_110\_p108\_tel220, Ledger EC 15, p. 108, telegram 220, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 1

Featured Source U

Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 29 May 1862

### Excerpt

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(Cypher) May 29, 1862.  
10:30 A.M.

Major General McClellan,

I think we shall be able, within three days, to tell you certainly whether any considerable force of the enemy, Jackson or any one else, is moving onto Harper's Ferry or vicinity. Take this expected development into your calculations.

A. Lincoln

*Source: Image mssEC\_15\_111\_p109\_tel221, Ledger EC 15, p. 109, telegram 221, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 1

Featured Source V

Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 31 May 1862

### Excerpt

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Washington City, D.C.

May 31

10 p.m.

Major General McClellan

A circle whose circumference shall pass through Harper's Ferry, Front-Royal, and Strasburg, and whose center shall be a little North East of Winchester, almost certainly has within it this morning, the forces of Jackson, Ewell, and Edward Johnson. Quite certainly they were within it two days ago. Some part of these forces attacked Harper's Ferry at dark last evening, and are still in sight this morning. Shields, with McDowell's advance, re-took Front Royal at 11 A.M. yesterday, with a dozen of our own prisoners taken there a week ago, 150 of the enemy, two locomotives and 11 cars, some other property and stores, and saved the bridge. Fremont, from the direction of Moorefield, promises to be at or near Strasburg at 5:00 P.M. today. Banks at Williamsport with his old forces, and his new force at Harpers Ferry, are directed to co-operate. Shields, at Front-Royal, reports a rumor of still an additional force of the enemy, supposed to be Anderson, having entered the valley of Virginia. This last may or may not be true. Corinth is certainly in the hands of Gen. Halleck.

A. Lincoln

*Source: Image mssEC\_15\_116\_117\_pp114\_115\_tel232, Ledger EC 15, pp. 114-115, telegram 232, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Supporting Question	How did Lincoln and McClellan's relationship deteriorate over the summer of 1862?
Formative Performance Task	Expand the chart begun in the first formative task and make an initial claim about the relationship between Lincoln and McClellan.
Featured Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Source A:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 03 June 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source B:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 04 June 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source C:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 05 June 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source D:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 18 June 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source E:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 20 June 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source F:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 03 July 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source G:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 10 July 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source H:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 11 July 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source I:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 11 July 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source J:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 12 July 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source K:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 14 July 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source L:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 15 July 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source M:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 16 July 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source N:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 17 July 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source O:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 18 July 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source P:</b> George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 20 July 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source Q:</b> Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 01 June 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source R:</b> Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 01 June 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source S:</b> Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 03 June 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source T:</b> Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 07 June 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source U:</b> Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 18 June 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source V:</b> Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 19 June 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source W:</b> Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 20 June 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source X:</b> Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 21 June 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source Y:</b> Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 26 June 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source Z:</b> Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 28 June 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source AA:</b> Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 02 July 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source BB:</b> Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 03 July 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source CC:</b> Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 05 July 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source DD:</b> Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 05 July 1862 -cypher</li> <li>○ <b>Source EE:</b> Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 13 July 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source FF:</b> Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 14 July 1862</li> <li>○ <b>Source GG:</b> Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 21 July 1862</li> </ul>

As spring turned to summer in 1862, the fortunes of McClellan and the Army of the Potomac took a turn for the worse in the Peninsula Campaign. That summer saw Confederate troops successfully defend Richmond and ultimately force Union troops to withdraw from the Virginia Peninsula in what would prove to be a major set back for the Union War effort.

Over this period of time, Lincoln's impatience intensified as McClellan failed to make major progress against the Confederate armies.

### Formative Performance Task

To complete this formative performance task, students will build on the list of disagreements between Lincoln and McClellan and begin to think about how they might characterize their relationship. The compelling question asks about the implications of the deteriorating relationship. In building up toward being able to answer that question, students get clear in this task about the nature of Lincoln and McClellan's relationship and begin to make claims about how the tensions between the men may have impacted the war.

The featured sources for this task include 16 telegram messages from McClellan to Lincoln and another 17 from Lincoln to McClellan. These telegrams contain information that can help to build a more complete story of how the tensions between these two leaders grew over time.

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source A

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 03 June 1862

### Excerpt

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June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 8:30 PM Received June 5th, 62

A. Lincoln,

You despatch of 5 P M just received as the Chickahominy has been almost the only obstacle in my way for several days your Excellency may rest assured that it has not been overlooked. Every effort has been made and will continue to be to perfect the communication across it nothing of importance except that it is again raining.

G. B. McClellan

*Source: Image mssEC\_01\_146\_p144\_tel205, Ledger EC 01, p. 144, telegram 205, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source B

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 04 June 1862

### Excerpt

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A. Lincoln

Terrible rain storm during the night and morning not yet cleared off. Chickahominy flooded bridges in bad condition. Are still at work at them. I have taken every possible step to insure the security of the corps on the right bank, but I cannot reinforce them from here until my bridges are all safe as my force is too small to insure my right and rear. Should the enemy attack in that direction, as they may probably attempt, I have to be very cautious now.

Our loss in the late battle will probably exceed five thousand. I have not yet full returns on account of the effect it might have on our men and the enemy. I request that you will regard this information as confidential for a few days. I am satisfied that the loss of the enemy was very considerably greater. They were terribly punished.

I mention these facts now merely to show you that the Army of the Potomac has had serious work and that no child's play is before it. You must make your calculations on the supposition that I have been correct from the beginning in asserting that the serious opposition was to be here.

G. B. McClellan

*Source: Image mssEC\_01\_147\_p145\_tel206, Ledger EC 01, p. 145, telegram 206, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source C

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 05 June 1862

### Excerpt

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A. Lincoln

May I again invite Your Excellency's attention to the great importance of occupying Chattanooga & Dalton by our Western forces. The evacuation of Corinth would appear to render this very easy. The importance of the move in force cannot be exaggerated.

G. B. McClellan

*Source: Image mssEC\_01\_148\_p146\_tel207, Ledger EC 01, p. 146, telegram 207, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source D

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 18 June 1862

### Excerpt

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A. Lincoln

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch of today. Our Army is well over the Chickahominy except the very considerable forces necessary to protect our flanks and communications. Our whole line of pickets in front runs within six miles of Richmond. The rebel line runs within musket range of ours. Each has heavy support at hand. A general engagement may take place any hour. An advance by us involves a battle more or less decisive.

The Enemy exhibit at every point a readiness to meet us. They certainly have great numbers and extensive works. If ten or fifteen thousand men have left Richmond to reinforce Jackson, it illustrates their strength and confidence. After tomorrow we shall fight the rebel army as soon as Providence will permit. We shall only await a favorable condition of the earth and sky and the completion of some necessary preliminaries.

G. B. McClellan

*Source: Image mssEC\_01\_156\_p154\_tel218, Ledger EC 01, p. 154, telegram 218, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*



## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source E

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 20 June 1862

### Excerpt

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A. Lincoln

Your Excellency's Despatch of 11 A M received, also that of Genl Sigel. I have no doubt that Jackson has been reinforced from here. There is reason to believe that General R. S. Ripley has recently joined Lee's Army with a brigade or division from Charleston. Troops have arrived recently from Goldsboro. There is not the slightest reason to expect that the enemy intend evacuating Richmond. He is daily increasing his defenses. I find him everywhere in force and every reconnoissance costs many lives, yet I am obliged to feel my way foot by foot at whatever costs. Great are the difficulties of the country.

By tomorrow night the defensive works covering our position on this side of the Chickahominy should be complete. I am forced to this by my inferiority in members so that I may bring the greatest possible members into action and secure the Army against the consequences of unforeseen disaster. I would be glad to have permission to lay before Your Excellency by letter or telegram my views as to the present state of military affairs throughout the whole country. In the meantime, I would be pleased to learn the disposition as to member and position of the troops not under my command in Virginia and elsewhere

G. B. McClellan

*Source: Image mssEC\_01\_157\_158\_pp155\_156\_tel219, Ledger EC 01, pp. 155-156, telegram 219, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source F

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 03 July 1862

### Excerpt

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11:40am

Berkley Harrisons Bar

A Lincoln

I have succeeded in getting this Army to this place on the banks of the James River. I have lost but one gun, which had to be abandoned last night because it broke down. An hour and a half ago, the rear of the wagon train was within a mile of camp and only one wagon abandoned.

As usual we had a severe battle yesterday and beat the Enemy badly, the men fighting even better than before. We fell back to this position during the night and morning. Officers and men thoroughly worn out by fighting every day and working every night for a week. They are in good spirits and after a little rest will fight better than ever If not attacked during this day.

I will have the men ready to repulse the enemy tomorrow. General Frey is here. Our losses have been very heavy for we have fought every day since last Tuesday. I have not yielded an inch of ground unnecessarily, but have retired to prevent the superior force of the enemy from cutting me off and to take a different base of operations. I thank you for the reinforcements. Every thousand men you send at once will help me much

G B McClellan

*Source: Image mssEC\_01\_178\_179\_pp176\_177\_tel247, Ledger EC 01, pp. 176-177, telegram 247, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source G

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 10 July 1862

### Excerpt

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For the President

All quiet. Enemy certainly beyond Malvern Hill. Hourly expect more definite news. Hope to have men refitted in all except artillery in two days

G B McClellan

*Source: Image mssEC\_01\_186\_p184\_tel258, Ledger EC 01, p. 184, telegram 258, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source H

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 11 July 1862

### Excerpt

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A. Lincoln

The enemy have certainly retreated, but it has been in good order and with a fair amount of wagons. Our cavalry follow their rear guard closely and have taken a few prisoners, but have made no decided impression. None of the enemy appear to have crossed the long bridge, but all to have gone in direction of Richmond some crossing White Oak swamp; none towards mouth of Chickahominy now. Considerable force of enemy at Hexalls yesterday, probably cavalry almost entirely.

Stonewall Jackson not dead.

Prisoners all state that I had two hundred thousand enemy to fight. A good deal more than two to one and they knowing the ground

G B McClellan  
Maj Gen

*Source: Image mssEC\_01\_187\_p185\_tel259, Ledger EC 01, p. 185, telegram 259, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source I

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 11 July 1862

### Excerpt

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A. Lincoln

Today received letter from General R E Lee offering to return to me on parole our wounded. I have accepted the offer and will send transports as soon as he designates the place. Enemy in some force at Hoxalls. None in direction of Long Bridge or lower Chickahominy. None nearer than seven miles from here on this side James River. We are very strong here now so far as defensive is concerned. Hope you will soon make us strong enough to advance and try it again. All in fine spirits

G B McClellan  
Maj Gen

*Source: Image mssEC\_01\_189\_p187\_tel262, Ledger EC 01, p. 187, telegram 262, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source J

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 12 July 1862

### Excerpt

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Berkley

A. Lincoln

Hill and Longstreet crossed into New Kent County via Long Bridge. I am still ignorant what road they afterwards took, but will know shortly. Nothing else of interest since last dispatch.

Rain ceased and everything quiet. Men resting well, but beginning to be impatient for another fight. I am more and more convinced that this Army ought not to be withdrawn from here, but promptly reinforced and thrown again upon Richmond. If we have a little more than half a chance, we can take it. I dread the effect of any retreat upon the morale of the men.

G B McClellan

*Source: Image mssEC\_01\_189\_190\_pp187\_188\_263, Ledger EC 01, pp. 187-188, telegram 263, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source K

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 14 July 1862

### Excerpt

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7.30 A M

A. Lincoln

Nothing new of interest. Position of enemy's rear guard unchanged varies from six to eight miles from us. Health of troops improving somewhat. Good forage and medical supplies abundant. Will get quite a large number of our sick and well from the enemy today.

Have informed General Lee that we are ready to negotiate a general exchange and asked him to appoint someone to meet General Goldsborough. Everything going on very well. I am very anxious to have my old regiments filled up rather than have new ones formed.

What of Burnside?

G B McClellan

*Source: Image mssEC\_01\_190\_p188\_tel264, Ledger EC 01, p. 188, telegram 264, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source L

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 15 July 1862

### Excerpt

A Lincoln

Your telegram of yesterday has been received. The difference between the effective force of troops and that expressed in returns is considerable in every army. All commanders find the actual strength less than the strength represented on paper.

I have not my returns for the tri-monthly period since arriving at Fort Monroe at hand at this moment, but even on paper I will not, I am confident, be found to have received one hundred and sixty thousand officers and men present, although present and absent my returns will be accountable for that number.

You can arrive at the number of absentees, however, better by my return of July 10, which will be ready to send shortly. I find from official reports that I have present for duty: Officers, three thousand two hundred and fifteen; enlisted men, eighty-five thousand four hundred and fifty; in all, present for duty, eighty-eight thousand six hundred and sixty-five; absent by authority, thirty-four thousand four hundred and seventy-two; without authority, three thousand seven hundred and seventy-eight; present and absent, one hundred and forty-four thousand four hundred and seven.

The number of officers and men present sick is sixteen thousand six hundred and nineteen. The medical director will fully explain the causes of this amount of sickness, which I hope will begin to decrease shortly. Thus, the number of men really absent is thirty-eight thousand two hundred and fifty. Unquestionably, of the number present some are absent — say forty thousand will cover the absentees.

Quite agree with you that more than one-half of these men are probably fit for duty to-day. I have frequently called the attention lately of the War Department to this evil of absenteeism. I think that the exciting of the public press to persistent attack upon officers and soldiers absent from the army, the employment of deputy marshals to arrest and send back deserters, summary dismissal of officers whose names are reported for being absent without leave, and the publication of their names, will exhaust the remedies applicable by the War Department.

It is to be remembered that many of those absent by authority are those who have got off either sick or wounded, or under pretense of sickness or wounds, and having originally pretext of authority, are still reported absent by authority. If I could receive back the absentees, and could get my sick men up, I would need but small re-enforcements to enable me to take Richmond. After the battles of Williamsburg, Fair Oaks, &c., most of these men got off; well men got on board hospital boats, taking care of sick.

There is always confusion and haste in shipping and taking care of wounded after a battle. There is no time for nice examination of permits to pass here or there. I can now control people getting away better, for the natural opportunities are better. Leakages by desertion occur in every army, and will occur here, of course, but I do not at all, however, anticipate anything like a recurrence of what has taken place.

G B McClellan

*Source: Image mssEC\_01\_192\_194\_pp190\_192\_tel268, Ledger EC 01, pp. 190-192, telegram 268, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*



## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source M

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 16 July 1862

### Excerpt

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A Lincoln

None of the enemy retired by the Long Bridge. All here gone in direction of Richmond. Their pickets are strong ranging about seven miles from this place.

What news has Pope from his front? I would be glad to be kept informed by him.

Generals Dix and Hill are to meet on Thursday at Hoxalls to arrange general exchange of prisoners. I hope to see Burnside today and arrange with him. Will telegraph you fully when I have conferred with him

G B McClellan

*Source: Image mssEC\_01\_195\_p193\_tel269, Ledger EC 01, p. 193, telegram 269, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source N

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 17 July 1862

### Excerpt

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A. Lincoln

I have consulted fully with General Burnside and would commend to your favorable consideration the General's plan for bringing seven additional regiments from North Carolina by leaving Newbern to the care of the gunboats. It appears manifestly to be our policy to concentrate here everything we can possibly spare from less important points to make sure of crushing the enemy at Richmond, which seems clearly to be the most important point.

Nothing should be left to chance here. I would recommend that General Burnside with all his troops be ordered to this Army to enable it to assume the offensive as soon as possible

Very Respectfully  
G B McClellan  
Maj General

*Source: Image mssEC\_01\_197\_p195\_tel273, Ledger EC 01, p. 195, telegram 273, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source O

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 18 July 1862

### Excerpt

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A. Lincoln

No change worth reporting in the state of affairs. Some twenty thousand to twenty five thousand of enemy are at Petersburg and others thence to Richmond. Those at Petersburg say they are part of Beauregard's Army.

New troops arriving via Petersburg. I am anxious to learn determination of Government that no time may be lost in preparing for it. Hours are very precious now and perfect unity of action necessary

G B McClellan

*Source: Image mssEC\_01\_197\_p195\_tel274, Ledger EC 01, p. 195, telegram 274, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source P

George B. McClellan to Abraham Lincoln, 20 July 1862

### Excerpt

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A Lincoln

I have again heard from return prisoners that Jackson troops commenced leaving Richmond about one week ago by rail, either towards Gordonsville or Fredericksburg and that the movement continued for some three days by night and day. This comes through so many sources that I feel obliged to call your close attention to it.

I also learn that large numbers of conscripts are constantly arriving in Richmond from the south. My cavalry scouts are today amusing themselves with the enemy at Malvern Hill. Jackson's movement may be against Buell. The fact of his taking the Gordonsville route would in that case be accounted for by the necessity of their keeping the Petersburg and Danville roads free for the transit of wounded recruits and supplies.

In any event, I try to urge concentration of the masses of troops in front of Washington and the sending of cavalry far to the front. If I am to have Burnside's troops, I would be glad to avail myself of at least a portion of them to occupy a point on south bank of James River. Health of the command improving a little. I should be glad to hear daily from General Pope's outpost. It is important that I should do so

G B McClellan

*Source: Image mssEC\_01\_200\_201\_pp198\_199\_tel278, Ledger EC 01, pp. 198-199, telegram 278, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source Q

Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 01 June 1862

### Excerpt

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Washington City, D. C.

5. P.M.

Major Gen. McClellan.

Thanks for what you could, and did say, in your despatch of noon to-day to the Sec. of War. If the enemy shall not have renewed the attack this afternoon, I think the hardest of you work is done.

Shield's advance came in collision with part of the enemy yesterday evening six miles from Front-Royal in a direction between Winchester and Strausburg, driving them back, capturing a few prisoners and one rifled cannon. Firing in that direction to-day, heard both from Harper's Ferry and Front Royal, indicate a probability that Fremont has met the enemy.

We have concluded to send General Sigel to Harper's Ferry, so that what I telegraphed you about him this morning, is revoked. Dix goes to Fort Monroe tonight.

A. Lincoln

*Source: Image mssEC\_15\_117\_p115\_tel233, Ledger EC 15, p. 115, telegram 233, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source R

Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 01 June 1862

### Excerpt

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Washington City, D. C.

1.15 P.M.

Major Gen. McClellan.

You are already notified than General Sigel is to report to you for duty. I suggest— (do not order) that he have command of such of the forces about Fort Monroe, Norfolk, Newport's News, as you may see fit to put into active service, or such other command as may be suitable to his rank.

A. Lincoln

*Source: Image mssEC\_15\_118\_p116\_tel234, Ledger EC 15, p. 116, telegram 234, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source S

Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 03 June 1862

### Excerpt

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Washington City, D.C.

Majr Gen. McClellan

With these continuous rains, I am very anxious about the Chickahominy, so close in your rear, and crossing your line of communication. Please look well to it.

A. Lincoln

*Source: Image mssEC\_15\_118\_p116\_tel236, Ledger EC 15, p. 116, telegram 236, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source T

Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 07 June 1862

### Excerpt

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Washington, D.C.

Major Gen. McClellan

Your despatch about Chattanooga and Dalton was duly received and sent to General Halleck. I have just received the following answer from him.

We have Fort-Pillow, Randolph, and Memphis.

A Lincoln

*Source: Image mssEC\_15\_121\_p119\_tel242, Ledger EC 15, p. 119, telegram 242, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*



## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source U

Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 18 June 1862

### Excerpt

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Washington, D. C.,

June 18, 1862.

Major General McClellan

Yours of today making it probable that Jackson has been reinforced by about ten thousand from Richmond, is corroborated by a despatch from Gen. King at Fredericksburg, saying a Frenchman just arrived from Richmond by way of Gordonsville, met ten to fifteen thousand passing through the latter place to join Jackson.

If this is true, it is as good as a reinforcement to you of an equal force. I could better dispose of things if I could know about what day you can attack Richmond, and would be glad to be informed, if you think you can inform me with safety.

A. Lincoln

*Source: Image mssEC\_15\_132\_p130\_tel255, Ledger EC 15, p. 130, telegram 255, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source V

Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 19 June 1862

### Excerpt

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Washington City. D. C.

June 19, 1862

Major Genl McClellan

Yours of last night just received, and for which I thank you. If large reinforcements are going from Richmond to Jackson, it proves one of two things, either that they are very strong at Richmond, or do not mean to defend the place desperately. On reflection, I do not see how reinforcements from Richmond to Jackson could be in Gordonsville as reported by the Frenchman. It induces a doubt whether the Frenchman and your deserters have not all been sent to deceive.

A. Lincoln

*Source: Image mssEC\_15\_133\_p131\_tel257, Ledger EC 15, p. 131, telegram 257, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source W

Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 20 June 1862

### Excerpt

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Washington City. D. C.

June 20. 1862

Major Gen. McClellan

We have, this morning, sent you a despatch of General Sigel corroborative of the proposition that Jackson is being reinforced from Richmond. This may be reality, and yet may only be despatch contrivance for deception; and to determine which, is perplexing.

If we knew it were not true, we could send you some more force, but on as the condition case stands, we do not think we safely can. Still we will watch the signs, and do so if possible.

In regard to a contemplated execution of Captains Sprigg and Triplett, the government here has no information whatever, but will inquire and advise you.

A. Lincoln

*Source: Image mssEC\_15\_134\_p132\_tel258, Ledger EC 15, p. 132, telegram 258, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source X

Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 21 June 1862

### Excerpt

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Washington City. D. C.

June 21, 1862

Major General McClellan

Your despatch of yesterday, 2. P.M. was received this morning. If it would not divert too much of your time, and attention from the Army under your immediate command, I would be glad to have your views as to present state of military affairs throughout the whole country, as you say you would be glad to give it. them. I would rather it should be by letter, than by telegraph, because of the better chance of secrecy.

As to numbers and position of the troops, not under your command, in Virginia and elsewhere, and even if I could do it with accuracy, which I can not, I would rather not transmit either by telegraph or letter, because of the chances of it reaching the enemy. I would be very glad to talk with you, but you cannot leave your camp, and I cannot well leave here.

A. Lincoln

*Source: Image mssEC\_15\_136\_p134\_tel262, Ledger EC 15, p. 134, telegram 262, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source Y

Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 26 June 1862

### Excerpt

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Washington

11:30 AM

Major General G B McClellan

Your three dispatches of yesterday in relation to the affair ending with the statement that you completely succeeded in making your point are very gratifying. The later one of six fifteen PM suggesting the probability of your being overwhelmed by two hundred thousand and talking of where the responsibility will belong pains me very much.

I give you all I can and act on the presumption that you will do the best you can with what you have.

While you continue ungenerously I think to assume that I could give you more if I would. I have omitted and shall omit no opportunity to send you reinforcements whenever I possibly can.

A Lincoln

President

*Source: Image mssEC\_15\_138\_p136\_tel265, Ledger EC 15, p. 136, telegram 265, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source Z

Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 28 June 1862

### Excerpt

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Washington, D. C.

June 28, 1862

Major Gen. McClellan

Save your army at all events. Will send reinforcements as fast as we can. Of course they can not reach you to-day, to-morrow, or next day. I have not said you were ungenerous for saying you needed reinforcement. I thought you were ungenerous in assuming that I did not send them as fast as I could. I feel any misfortune to you and your Army quite as keenly as you feel it yourself.

If you have had had a drawn battle, or a repulse, it is the price we pay for the enemy not being in Washington. We protected Washington, and the army concentrated on you. Had we stripped Washington, he would have been upon us before troops sent could have got to you. Less than a week ago you notified us that reinforcements were leaving Richmond to come in front of us. It is the nature of the case, and neither you or the government is to blame. Please tell at once the present condition of things.

A. Lincoln

*Source: Image mssEC\_15\_139\_p137\_tel267, Ledger EC 15, p. 137, telegram 267, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source  
AA

Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 02 July 1862

### Excerpt

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Washington, D.C.  
July 2, 1862.

Major Gen. McClellan

Your despatch of Tuesday morning induces me to hope your Army is having some rest. In this hope, allow me to reason with you a moment.

When you ask for fifty thousand men to be promptly sent you, you surely labor under some gross mistake of fact. Recently you sent papers showing your plan disposal of forces, made last spring, for the defense of Washington, and advising a return to that plan. I find it included in, and about Washington, 75 thousand men. Now please be assured, I have not men enough to fill that very plan by fifteen thousand. All of Fremont in the Valley, all of Banks, all of McDowell, not with you, and all in Washington, taken together do not exceed, if they reach sixty thousand. With Wool and Dix added to those mentioned, I have not, outside of your army, 75 thousand men east of the mountains.

Thus, the idea of sending you fifty thousand, or any other considerable force promptly, is simply absurd. If in your frequent mention of responsibility, you have the impression that I blame you for not doing more than you can, please be relieved of such impression. I only beg that in like manner, you will not ask impossibilities of me. If you think you are not strong enough to take Richmond just now, I do not ask you to try just now. Save the army, material and personal; and I will strengthen it for the offensive again, as fast as I can. The governors of eighteen states offer me a new levy of three eighteen hundred thousand, which I accept.

A. Lincoln

*Source: Image mssEC\_24\_064\_065\_pp062\_063\_tel092, Ledger EC 24, pp. 062-063, telegram 092, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source BB

Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 03 July 1862

### Excerpt

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Washington City, D. C.

July 3, 1862.

Major Genl McClellan

Yours of 5:30 yesterday, is just received. I am satisfied that yourself, officers and men have done the best you could. All accounts say better fighting was never done. Ten thousand thanks for it.

On the 28th we sent Gen. Burnside an order to send all the force he could spare, to you. We then learned that you had requested him to go to Goldsborough, upon which, we said to him our order was intended for your benefit, and we did not wish to be in conflict with your views. We hope you will have help from him soon. To-day we have ordered Gen. Hunter to send all you all he can spare.

I repeat what I have before said, save the army, at all events. At last advices, Halleck thinks he can not send reinforcements, without endangering all he has gained.

A. Lincoln

*Source: Image mssEC\_24\_065\_066\_pp063\_064\_tel093, Ledger EC 24, pp. 063-064, telegram 093, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*



## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source CC | Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 05 July 1862

### Excerpt

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Washington City, D.C.

July 5, 1862.

Major Genl McClellan

A thousand thanks for your the relief your two dispatches of twelve and one P M yesterday. Be assured the heroism and skill of yourself, officers, and men, are, and forever will be appreciated. If you can hold your present position, we shall have the enemy yet.

A. Lincoln

*Source: Image mssEC\_24\_068\_p066\_tel097, Ledger EC 24, p. 066, telegram 097, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source  
DD

Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 05 July 1862 -cypher

### Excerpt

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*In Cypher*

For Andes

I send you the following dispatch recd this morning from Arno for your information signed Berlin Corinth fifth to the president Genoa for the last week there has been great uneasiness among union men in Tennessee on account of the recent Organization of insurgents to cooperate in Any Oyster of the rampant

*Source: Image mssEC\_24\_069\_p067\_tel100, Ledger EC 24, p. 067, telegram 100, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source EE

Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 13 July 1862

### Excerpt

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Washington  
July 13 1862.

Major General McClellan

My dear Sir—

I am told that over 160,000 men have gone into your Army on the Peninsula. When I was with you the other day we made out 86,500 remaining, leaving 73,500 to be accounted for. I believe 23,500 will cover all the killed, wounded and missing in all your battles and skirmishes, leaving 50,000 who have left otherwise. Not more than 5,000 of these have died, leaving 45,000 of your Army still alive, and not with it. I believe half, or two thirds of them are fit for duty to-day.

Have you any more perfect knowledge of this than I have? If I am right, and you had these men with you, you could go into Richmond in the next three days. How can they be got to you? and how can they be prevented from getting away in such numbers for the future?

A. Lincoln

*Source: Image mssEC\_15\_152\_p150\_tel287, Ledger EC 15, p. 150, telegram 287, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source FF

Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 14 July 1862

### Excerpt

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Washington, D.C.

July 14, 1862.

Major Gen. McClellan

Gen. Burnside's force is at Newport News, ready to move on short notice, one way or the other, when ordered.

A Lincoln

*Source: Image mssEC\_15\_154\_p152\_tel290, Ledger EC 15, p. 152, telegram 290, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source  
GG

Abraham Lincoln to George B. McClellan, 21 July 1862

### Excerpt

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Washington City. D.C.  
July 21, 1862

Major Gen. McClellan

This is Monday. I hope to be able to tell you on Thursday, what is to be done with Burnside.

Signed, A. Lincoln

*Source: Image mssEC\_15\_162\_p160\_tel304, Ledger EC 15, p. 160, telegram 304, Thomas T. Eckert Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.*

## Supporting Question 3

Supporting Question	How were Lincoln and McClellan getting along in the fall of 1862?
Formative Performance Task	Write a response from General McClellan to President Lincoln's letter of October 13, 1862.
Featured Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ <b>Source A:</b> Lincoln letter to McClellan, October 13, 1862</li></ul>

This third supporting question aims to explore the final stages of Lincoln and McClellan's relationship with McClellan as the commander of the Army of the Potomac. The fall of 1862 saw a brief resurgence in the fortunes of McClellan through a combination of good fortune in discovering information about the movements of Confederate troops and an important tactical victory at Antietam.

Following the success of the Army of the Potomac in stalling the offensive campaign of General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia at Antietam, McClellan failed to pursue Lee's army. His inaction infuriated Lincoln, who under growing pressure from his cabinet, removed McClellan from his command of the Army of the Potomac on November 5, 1862, effectively ending McClellan's military career.

### Formative Performance Task

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On October 13, 1862, Lincoln delivered to McClellan a letter with ideas for a military offensive against Confederate troops. In the letter, Lincoln was highly critical of McClellan, but also hesitant to order McClellan into action.

After having read the telegram communication between Lincoln earlier in 1862, students should have a good idea of the styles and impulses of each man. In this task, students write a letter from the perspective of McClellan in response to Lincoln's October 13th letter. The letter, while fictionalized, should incorporate information from Lincoln and McClellan's previous telegram exchanges and should be representative of the style McClellan used in his communication with Lincoln.

## Supporting Question 3

Featured Source A

Lincoln letter to McClellan, October 13, 1862

### Excerpt

Executive Mansion, Washington, Oct. 13, 1862.

Major General McClellan

My dear Sir

You remember my speaking to you of what I called your over-cautiousness. Are you not over-cautious when you assume that you can not do what the enemy is constantly doing? Should you not claim to be at least his equal in prowess, and act upon the claim?

As I understand, you telegraph Gen. Halleck that you can not subsist your army at Winchester unless the Railroad from Harper's Ferry to that point be put in working order. But the enemy does now subsist his army at Winchester at a distance nearly twice as great from railroad transportation as you would have to do without the railroad last named. He now wags from Culpepper C.H. which is just about twice as far as you would have to do from Harper's Ferry. He is certainly not more than half as well provided with wagons as you are. I certainly should be pleased for you to have the advantage of the Railroad from Harper's Ferry to Winchester, but it wastes all the remainder of autumn to give it to you; and, in fact ignores the question of time, which can not, and must not be ignored.

Again, one of the standard maxims of war, as you know, is "to operate upon the enemy's communications as much as possible without exposing your own." You seem to act as if this applies against you, but can not apply in your favor. Change positions with the enemy, and think you not he would break your communication with Richmond within the next twentyfour hours? You dread his going into Pennsylvania. But if he does so in full force, he gives up his communications to you absolutely, and you have nothing to do but to follow, and ruin him; if he does so with less than full force, fall upon, and beat what is left behind all the easier.

Exclusive of the water line, you are now nearer Richmond than the enemy is by the route that you can, and he must take. Why can you not reach there before him, unless you admit that he is more than your equal on a march. His route is the arc of a circle, while yours is the chord. The roads are as good on yours as on his.

You know I desired, but did not order, you to cross the Potomac below, instead of above the Shenandoah and Blue Ridge. My idea was that this would at once menace the enemies' communications, which I would seize if he would permit. If he should move Northward I would follow him closely, holding his communications. If he should prevent our seizing his communications, and move towards Richmond, I would press closely to him, fight him if a favorable opportunity should present, and, at least, try to beat him to Richmond on the inside track. I say "try"; if we never try, we shall never succeed. If he make a stand at Winchester, moving neither North or South, I would fight him there, on the idea that if we can not beat him when he bears the wastage of coming to us, we never can when we bear the wastage of going to him. This proposition is a simple truth, and is too important to be lost sight of for a moment. In coming to us, he tenders us an advantage which we should not waive. We should not so operate as to merely drive him away. As we must beat him somewhere, or fail finally, we can do it, if at all, easier near to us, than far away. If we can not beat the enemy where he now is, we never can, he again being within the entrenchments of Richmond.

Recurring to the idea of going to Richmond on the inside track, the facility of supplying from the side away from the enemy is remarkable—as it were, by the different spokes of a wheel extending from the hub towards the rim—and this whether you move directly by the chord, or on the inside arc, hugging the Blue Ridge more closely. The chord-line, as you see, carries you by Aldie, Hay-Market, and Fredericksburg; and you see how turn-pikes, railroads, and finally, the Potomac by Acquia Creek, meet you at all points from Washington. The same, only the lines lengthened a little, if you press closer to the Blue Ridge part of the way.

The gaps through the Blue Ridge I understand to be about the following distances from Harper's Ferry, to wit: Vestal's five miles; Gregorie's, thirteen, Snicker's eighteen, Ashby's, twenty-eight, Mannassas, thirty-eight,

Chester fortyfive, and Thornton's fiftythree. I should think it preferable to take the route nearest the enemy, disabling him to make an important move without your knowledge, and compelling him to keep his forces together, for dread of you. The gaps would enable you to attack if you should wish. For a great part of the way, you would be practically between the enemy and both Washington and Richmond, enabling us to spare you the greatest number of troops from here. When at length, running for Richmond ahead of him enables him to move this way; if he does so, turn and attack him in rear. But I think he should be engaged long before such point is reached. It is all easy if our troops march as well as the enemy; and it is unmanly to say they can not do it.

This letter is in no sense an order.

Yours truly

A. LINCOLN

Source:

*Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*. Volume 5.

New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1953.



Summative Performance Task	
Compelling Question	<b>How did the relationship between Abraham Lincoln and George McClellan affect the Civil War?</b>
Argument	How did the relationship between Abraham Lincoln and George McClellan affect the Civil War? Construct an argument that takes a position on the impact of the Lincoln and McClellan's disagreements. The argument should include claims supported by evidence from the sources.
Extension	Create a timeline of military events in 1862 with annotations about the events from the argument.

## Argument

President Abraham Lincoln and George McClellan had a long and sometimes tumultuous relationship. Beginning before the Civil War, the two men found common ground on a number of issues including the importance of a well structured and disciplined army. However, their differences on how that army should be used in battle proved to be insurmountable.

In this argument, students may make claims with evidence about the personal relationship between Lincoln and McClellan, their views on military strategy, and even the extent to which the disagreements between the two men impacted the war effort.

Students' arguments will vary, but may include some of the following ideas.

- Lincoln and McClellan disagreed, but their differences were simply stylistic. They ultimately wanted the same things.
- McClellan's reluctance to use his military advantage more aggressively, in ways suggested by Lincoln, were wrongheaded and may have caused the war to last longer than it should have.
- Lincoln was a micromanager and should have just left McClellan alone. With less interference and more support from Lincoln, McClellan would have been able to have more success on the battlefield.

## Extension

Regardless of the impact of Lincoln and McClellan's relationship, the military events of 1862 were very telling. From the failure of Union troops on the offense in Virginia to the Confederate failure in Maryland, 1862 was in some ways a stalemate and a confirmation that the war would drag on longer than many initially thought. In this extension, students make a timeline of military events in 1862 and describe those events given what they learned from the telegrams in this inquiry.

Taking Informed Action	
Understand	Identify a relationship at a local, national, or international stage where a relationship has gone bad.
Assess	Create a list of actions the people in these relationships could take to improve the situation.
Action	Share some guidelines for improving relationships among leaders in a public forum (e.g. a town hall meeting, a school website, or pamphlet).

The telegraph was a powerful and revolutionary tool in the 1860s. In ways never before possible, people were able to carry on in-depth relations from a distance. Improving communications has its ups and downs. As was the case in the 1860s, we see today how public figures are using new technologies such as Twitter to engage in some good and some bad behavior with others.

In this taking informed action task, students identify public figures who are in a problematic public relationship that is facilitated with a new technology. In an effort to emphasize the importance of decorum and civil discourse, students propose and share guidelines for how public (and private) citizens should act in these settings.

