

# APRIL 1865:

## THE MONTH THAT SAVED AMERICA

### EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

#### TERMS TO KNOW:

Students should identify the following terms. Visit [www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com) for definitions.

Benevolent  
Confederate  
Dixie  
Egregious  
Guerrilla Warfare  
Inauguration  
Malice  
Retribution  
Segregation  
Strategy  
Trench Warfare  
Union  
Yankee

This 2-hour documentary is based on the best-selling book by historian Jay Winik. It covers the last few weeks of the Civil War from President Abraham Lincoln's second inauguration to the surrender at Appomattox; it concludes with the assassination of Lincoln and the final laying down of arms by the Confederacy.

#### CURRICULUM LINKS

The thesis of this program—that the terms of peace are as determinative historically as the terms of war—make this documentary a useful resource in government, political science and current events courses. Its application in a U.S. history course is clear. *April 1865* is recommended for grades 8-12 and for college-level courses.



Abraham Lincoln



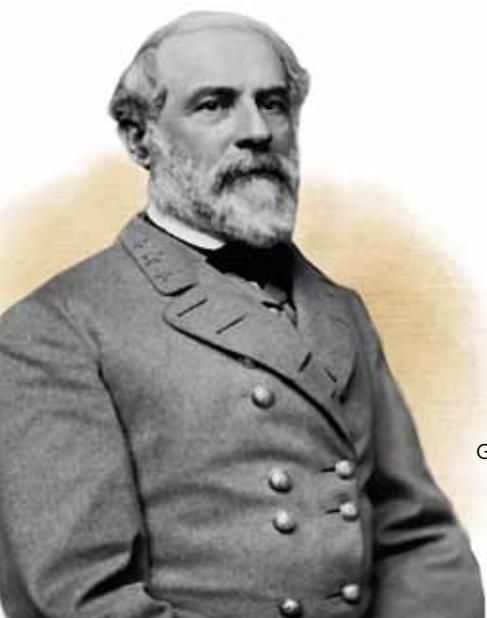
## ACTIVITIES

### PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Students should review and be familiar with the chapter on the Civil War in their textbooks. The Civil War Trust has compiled an extensive curriculum for teaching the Civil War for grades 5-12. Visit [www.civilwar.org](http://www.civilwar.org).

### VIEWING ACTIVITIES

- 1. Creating a Timeline:** As homework or as an in-class assignment, students may create a timeline beginning with the nomination of Lincoln as a Republican candidate and ending with the election of President Grant. The timeline should include at least fifteen events, especially Lincoln's election, the firing on Fort Sumter, important Civil War battles, Appomattox, Lincoln's assassination and the capture of Jefferson Davis.
- 2. Geography Review:** Students should be able to locate on a map the following places: the Mason-Dixon Line; the Potomac River; Washington, D.C.; Charleston, S.C.; Durham, N.C.; Appomattox; and Richmond, VA.
- 3. Identifying Historical Figures:** Students should be able to name the following people: Robert E. Lee, Ulysses S. Grant, Jefferson Davis, John Wilkes Booth, Joseph Johnston, Phillip Sheridan, William T. Sherman, Frederick Douglass, John S. Mosby, Henry Stanton and Andrew Johnson.



General Robert E. Lee





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## POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

- 1. Using a Primary Source:** Describe Lincoln's second inaugural address. Why might some people be surprised by his words? Paraphrase the last paragraph to clarify its meaning for your classmates. You can read the address online at [www.ourdocuments.gov](http://www.ourdocuments.gov).
- 2. Power Words:** List five adjectives that describe Lee's troops at the end of the war.
- 3. Compare and Contrast:** Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis disagreed about the surrender. On a wallboard, list their differences and the probable results of their opposing views.
- 4. Map Activity:** What was John Wilkes Booth's original plan? Why did he change it? What was the result? Create a map showing Booth's route from Lincoln's assassination to Booth's death.
- 5. Biography:** Research and write a one-page biography of a historic character featured in April 1865.
- 6. Research Presentation:** Create a presentation on one of the following subjects: the fall of Richmond, Lee's surrender at Appomattox, Mosby's Raiders, the racial integration of the Confederate Army, Jefferson Davis' presidency and the assassination of Lincoln. You may also choose your own topic. You should use more than three sources, one of which should be a primary source.
- 7. Classroom Discussion:** The last scene of the documentary, which takes place in a church after the war, is highly symbolic. Explain the scene, the people involved and why it has a special meaning in American history.

## Websites:

One great aspect to studying the Civil War today is the rich quantity and quality of resources available online.

**History.com American Civil War**  
[www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war](http://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war)

**The Civil War Trust**  
[www.civilwar.org](http://www.civilwar.org)

**Ford's Theatre**  
[www.fordstheatre.org](http://www.fordstheatre.org)

**Library of Congress Civil War Photographs**  
[www.memory.loc.gov/ammem/cwphhtml/cwphome.html](http://www.memory.loc.gov/ammem/cwphhtml/cwphome.html)

## Books:

Berlin, Ira, et. al., eds. *Freedom's Soldiers: The Black Military Experience in the Civil War*. (Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Seidman, Rachel Filene. *The Civil War: A History in Documents*. (Oxford University Press, 2001).

Shaara, Michael. *The Killer Angels*. (Ballantine Books, 1996).

Winik, Jay. *April 1865: The Month That Saved America*. (Harper Perennial, 2006).