

Two men in the united states essay example

[War](#), [Civil War](#)



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Compare/Contrast Essay: Abraham Lincoln vs. Thomas Jefferson

Introduction

The faces of Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln are both chiseled into Mount Rushmore as truly great presidents. Historian Arthur Schlesinger conducted two polls in 1948 and 1962 respectively. These polls ranked Abraham Lincoln at the first place in American Presidents. The same polls gave Thomas Jefferson a fifth-place ranking. Another poll conducted in 1982 by the Chicago Tribune revealed the same results (DeGregorio). Both the American presidents are renowned for leaving a legacy that is worthy of Presidents' Day celebrations. However, they accomplished so in completely different ways (Mukunda). There are several similarities and differences between both American Presidents. While both are ranked among the top most effective Presidents of all time, they differed in philosophy, preparation for the position of President, and party affiliations.

The first difference between these two American Presidents is philosophy.

Jefferson believed in the foundation of a voluntary republic that encouraged nonviolent secession as a natural right. Lincoln, on the other hand, denied states the right to secede as a natural right during the Civil War. When Southern States attempted to secede from the Union, Lincoln firmly maintained the importance of the United States as a union. This is the reason no one can find a greater visionary conflict than that between Abraham Lincoln and Thomas Jefferson throughout the history of the United States of America. However, it is rather astonishing that both men are revered although there was a significant contrast in their philosophies. One historian observed that Jefferson's blunt dedication for political autonomy strengthened America's philosophical foundations; Lincoln's denial of the same right transformed America into an empire (Eboch). Although the ways and philosophies of both American presidents were different, they proved fruitful for the country.

In addition to different philosophies about secession and unity of the United States, Jefferson and Lincoln took entirely different paths for transforming the American republic and nation. Both had different levels of preparation for being president. Jefferson was more prepared for office than any other American president. He had rendered his services as a significant Continental Congress member, emissary to France, Secretary of State, Virginia's Governor, and Vice President. It was made clear to American nation that they were right in choosing him as their President, after he got elected in 1801. As predicted, Jefferson's ample gifts of wisdom and intelligence produced an unbeaten and triumphant presidency. However, the Louisiana Purchase made his era an extraordinary time in the American

history (Mukunda).

On the other hand, Lincoln is considered the least prepared candidate to take White House as President. Unlike Jefferson, his political career comprised of a single Congressional term. According to Mukunda, Lincoln was given the ticket “ as the Republican nominee over former New York governor and U. S. senator William Henry Seward, the front-runner, largely because his abbreviated record allowed him to position himself as the least anti-slavery — and therefore most moderate — Republican”. After becoming the President of the United States of America, Lincoln demonstrated more dedication to oppose slavery. He maintained the Union enthusiastically. Moreover, his tactical and political intellect turned out to be a vital element in the victory of Union’s Civil War (Boritt).

According to many historians, the Louisiana Purchase was Jefferson’s greatest accomplishment. However, it is also assumed that it would have taken place even without him. If Jefferson had not been in the office, it is expected that either James Madison or John Adams would have been the American President when the selling of Louisiana territory was proposed by Napoleon. This is because both the mentioned individuals were in support of the purchase. It is likely that the same execution would have been possible if either of them were president. On the other hand, the Civil War’s conclusion would have been very different without Lincoln. This is because Lincoln presented the idea of sending provisions to the besieged fort. It was a brilliant strategy to goad Southern forces as they fired the Civil War’s first shots. Lincoln’s tactic made the North united (Gienapp). If there would have been any other President instead of Lincoln, the consequences would have

been completely different.

Besides the Louisiana Territory purchase from France in 1803, Jefferson accomplished a number of successes domestically (Goldberg 38). Unlike his predecessor, John Adams, Jefferson became the advocate of states' rights over governmental institutions. He was also able to bring a drastic change in the federal government by cutting its spending significantly. He also made a twenty five percent reduction in the national debt. In contrast, Lincoln accomplished much more as a president. He was responsible for the issuing of the Emancipation Proclamation which gave Army the authority to provide protection to escaped slaves. The same Proclamation also gave encouragement to Border States for outlawing slavery. In addition, Lincoln abolished slavery in the United States of America on a permanent basis after signing the 13th Amendment (Holzer & Wayne). He was also the creator of the first income tax. He introduced this tax for financing the expenses of Union in the Civil War (Eig 23).

Conclusion

All in all, despite their differences, both leaders raised American nation to greater heights. There is no doubt in the fact that the American nation has been extremely lucky as it had great leaders who made possible for the country to achieve the position of a globally-acknowledged Super Power.

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