**Lincoln and Slavery Document Analysis**

**Directions:** Attached to this handout is a set of documents related to the following question: During the Civil War, how much did Lincoln care about freeing the slaves? Pick 6 of the 8 documents provided and complete the chart below.

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| **Doc** | **How Much Did Lincoln Care About Freeing Slaves? (A Lot or A Little?)** | **How Can You Tell?** |
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Document A: Lincoln’s Speech During Lincoln-Douglass Debates, 1858

I will say then that I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races – that I am not nor ever have been in favor of making voters or jurors out of negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people; and I will say in addition to this that there is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality.”

Document B: Excerpt from Lincoln’s First Inaugural Address, March 1861

Apprehension seems to exist among the people of the Southern States, that by the accession of a Republican Administration, their property, and their peace, and personal security, are to be endangered. There has never been any reasonable cause for such apprehension. Indeed, the most ample evidence to the contrary has all the while existed, and been open to their inspection. It is found in nearly all the published speeches of him who now addresses you. I do but quote from one of those speeches when I declare that "I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so."

Document C: Abraham Lincoln, Letter to Newspaperman Horace Greeley, 1862

My paramount object in this struggle *is* to save the Union, and is *not* either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing *any* slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing *all* the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that.

Document D: Excerpts from the Emancipation Proclamation, 1863

That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free;

And I further declare and make known, that such persons of suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

Doc E: Recruitment Poster, 1863



Document F: Lincoln’s Letter to Albert Hodges, 1864

I am naturally anti-slavery. If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I can not remember when I did not so think, and feel. And yet I have never understood that the Presidency conferred upon me an unrestricted right to act officially upon this judgment and feeling. It was in the oath I took that I would, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.

Document G: Excerpt from Lincoln’s Message to Union Troops, 1865

Whenever I hear anyone arguing for slavery, I feel a strong impulse to see it tried on him personally.

Document H: Excerpt from Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address, March 1865

One-eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was somehow the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union even by war, while the government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it.