

**U.S. HISTORY DBQ**  
**THE 1864 ELECTION**  
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**Advanced Placement U.S. History**  
**Lake Region High School**

"If the election were to occur now, the result would be extremely doubtful, and ... my impression is, the chances would be against us ... the Democratic leaders ... have infused their poison into the minds of the people to a very large extent, and the changes are against us," **Source:** Pennsylvania Governor Curtin's letter to Lincoln, September, 1863.

"This morning ..., it seems exceeding probable that this Administration will not be re-elected. Then it will be my duty to so co-operate with the President elect, as to save the Union between the election and the inauguration, as he will secure his election on such ground that he cannot possibly save it afterwards. **Source:** *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln, Volume 7.*

**BACKGROUND:**

As the two above quotes indicate, Abraham Lincoln and many of his friends and associates did not feel that he could win the election on November 8, 1864 especially when the Democrats nominated the popular general, George B. McClellan, as their presidential candidate at their Chicago convention held in the end of August, 1864. However, even with Lincoln's earlier misgivings, the results of the elections were not even close.

**DIRECTIONS;**

The following question requires you to construct a coherent essay that integrates your interpretation of Documents A – M and your knowledge of the period referred to in the question.

**PROMPT;**

Using the following documents and your knowledge of outside sources, assess the reasons as to why Lincoln won such a stunning victory in November when only a few months earlier it appeared that he was headed for a humiliating defeat.

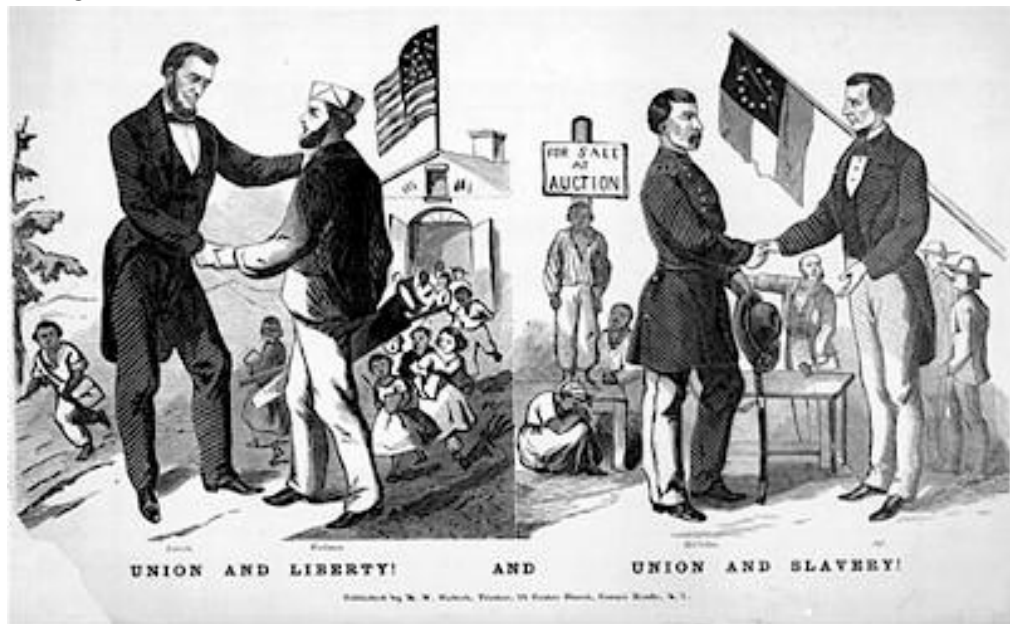
**DOCUMENT A:**

“Whether certain Republican leaders in Congress, who have been assailing and deceiving the Administration, and the faultfinding journals of New York have, or will, become conscious of their folly, we shall soon know. They have done all that was in their power to destroy confidence in the President and injure those with whom they were associated. If, therefore, the reelection of Mr. Lincoln is not defeated, it will not be owing to them. **Source:** *Diary of Gideon Welles*, August 31, 1864.

**DOCUMENT B:**

“New York City is shouting for McClellan, and there is a forced effort elsewhere to get a favorable response to the almost traitorous proceeding at Chicago ... As usual, some timid Union men are alarmed . . . lingering hope that they can yet have an opportunity to make a new candidate.” **Source:** *Diary of Gideon Welles*, September 3, 1864.

**DOCUMENT C:**



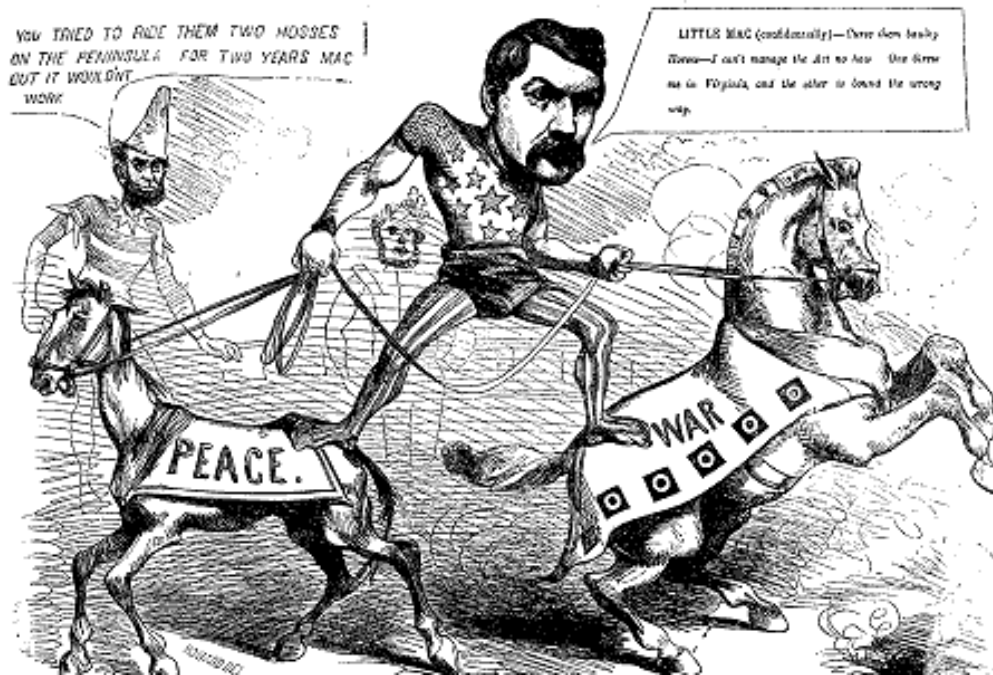
**DOCUMENT D:**

“General McClellan ... is the candidate of the Democratic party for the Presidency. The platform of the party which nominated him is only too evidently a peace-on-any-condition platform. It declares explicitly in favor of an immediate armistice, which will restore to the rebels all which they have lost ...” **Source:** *Harper's Weekly*, September 17, 1864.

**DOCUMENT E:**

**To General William T. Sherman** – “The State election of Indiana occurs on the 11<sup>th</sup> of October, and the loss of it to the friends of the Gov’t would go far towards losing the whole Union cause ... Indiana is the only important State, voting in October, whose soldiers cannot vote in the field. Anything you can safely do to let her soldiers, or any part of them, go home and vote at the State election will be greatly in point.” **Source:** *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln, Volume 8.* September 19, 1864.

**DOCUMENT F:**



**DOCUMENT G:**

“Much is said and done in regard to the soldier’s and many of the States not only have passed laws but altered their constitutions to permit it.” **Source:** *Diary of Gideon Welles*, October 11, 1864.

**DOCUMENT H:**

“The personal character of the President is the rock upon which the Opposition is wrecked. It dashed against him and his administration hissing and venous, but falls back again baffled.”  
**Source:** *Harper’s Weekly*, October 15, 1864

**DOCUMENT I:**



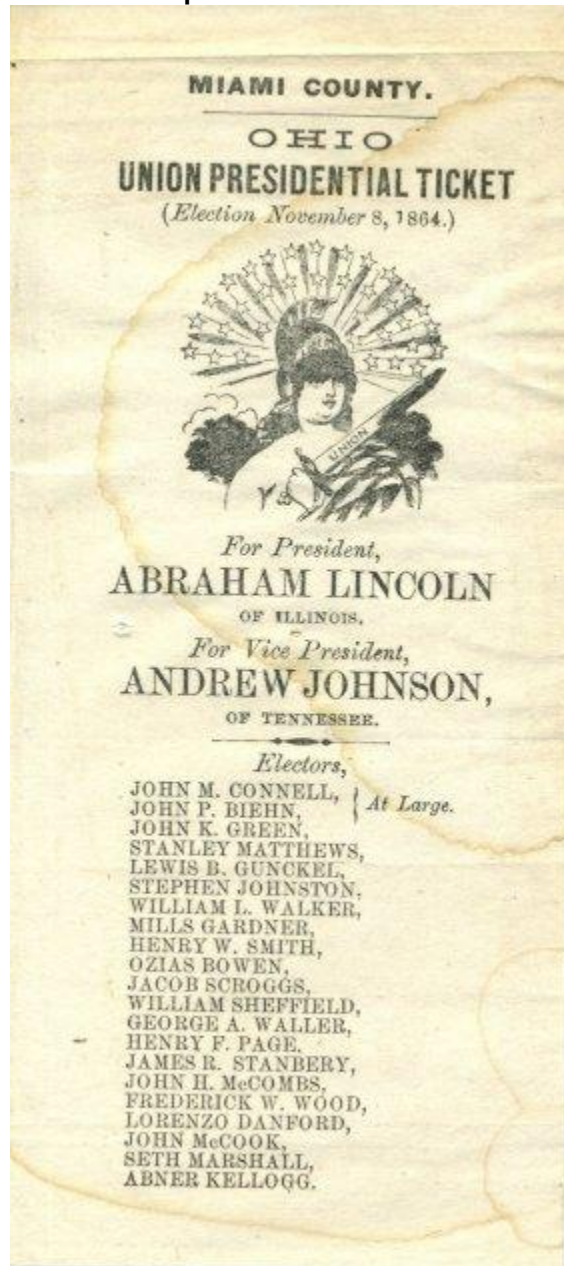
**DOCUMENT J:**

“His speeches of Jeff Davis betoken the close of the War. The rebellion is becoming exhausted, and I hope ere many months will be entirely suppressed.” **Source:** *The Diary of Gideon Welles*, October 15, 1864

**DOCUMENT K;**

“General Philip Sheridan differs from the Chicago Convention. That patriotic body . . . pronounces the war a failure. ‘Do you think so?’ Cries Sheridan, as he and his brave men win another glorious victory.” **Source:** *Harper’s Weekly*, November 5, 1864.

DOCUMENT L: A sample of the Lincoln/Johnson ballot ticket for the 1864 election



DOCUMENT M:

