

## ***Socratic Seminar: Governor vs. President “Who has the most Responsibility?”***

Socratic Discussion Circle

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**OVERVIEW:** The Civil War throughout the history books has shown the power and the prestige of President Abraham Lincoln, and what all he had to do to prepare for war. However, not much is talked about in terms of the responsibilities of the states involved. That gives a look at the governor of each state, and in particular the governor of our own state of Indiana. After looking through the first pages of dispatches sent and received from Governor Oliver P. Morton, he had a tremendous amount of items and requests he had to take care of. Therefore, the argument could be made that Governor Morton had just as many responsibilities in getting his state on a war footing as did the President. But, the debate could be, who had more?

**SUGGESTED COLLECTION PIECES:** Governor Morton Telegraph Books

Pages 70-85, Governor Morton telegraph books.

<http://indiamond6.ulib.iupui.edu/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/Telegraph&CISOPTR=706&CISOSHOW=606>

**OBJECTIVES:** *Learners will...*

- Analyze dispatches between Oliver P. Morton and various government and military officials.
- Use prior knowledge of what they have learned and know about Abraham Lincoln’s process of getting the nation on a war footing to debate with classmates.
- Evaluate the difficulties of both parts of government and use their knowledge or the texts to back their thinking.
- Debate the issue of which group had a more difficult time getting on a war footing.

**DESCRIPTION:**

- 1.) **Analyze.** The students should be given the dispatches to have read prior to the class period so they have the opportunity to read through them, take necessary notes, and have things prepared to have for their Socratic circle.
- 2.) **Open discussion.** For the students to do well, and have a good open discussion, questions should start with the “mediator” and the students should be encouraged to speak and do their very best to make solid arguments from what they have read and be able to go directly to a passage to back their claim. The questions should be given prior to and could include things such as these:
  - a. *What responsibilities does President Lincoln have when the government is at war?*
  - b. *Does President Lincoln have an obligation to listen to the leaders of his states or should the leaders of the states listen to him?*

- c. *Does Governor Morton have an obligation to listen to the President or should he be obligated only to the defense of his own state?*
  - d. *Governor Morton's first obligation is to his state: (1) true or false. (2) Should he listen to the thoughts of his constituents on what to do in the war, or to the leader of the United States (President Lincoln).*
- 3.) **Evaluation.** After the circle, give the students time to reflect on some of the points that were made in the discussion.

**STANDARDS:**

*USH.9.2 - Locate and analyze primary sources and secondary sources related to an event or issue of the past.*

*USH.9.3 - Investigate and interpret multiple causation in historical actions and analyze cause-and-effect relationships.*

*USH.9.4 - Explain issues and problems of the past by analyzing the interests and viewpoints of those involved.*

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