

Questions related to Lincoln's First Inaugural Address

1. Beginning his term in office, a president normally addresses the whole country on Inauguration Day, but this was not the case with Abraham Lincoln's first inaugural. Lincoln's speech, given on March 4, 1861, was directed at southerners. What does he say to reassure them about his intentions?
2. List three reasons why, according to Lincoln, the southern states have no legitimate grounds to leave the Union. What does Lincoln say about whether the Constitution expressly protects slavery in the territories?
3. According to Lincoln, what is the problem with the idea of secession?
4. How is the majority restrained, within our system of government, so that it cannot abuse the rights of a minority?
5. In the Dred Scott decision (1857) the Supreme Court held that Congress had no power to prohibit slavery in the territories. This decision ran counter to the constitutional convictions of Lincoln, the Republican Party, and northerners in general. What does Lincoln imply about the authority of the Supreme Court to determine constitutionality?

