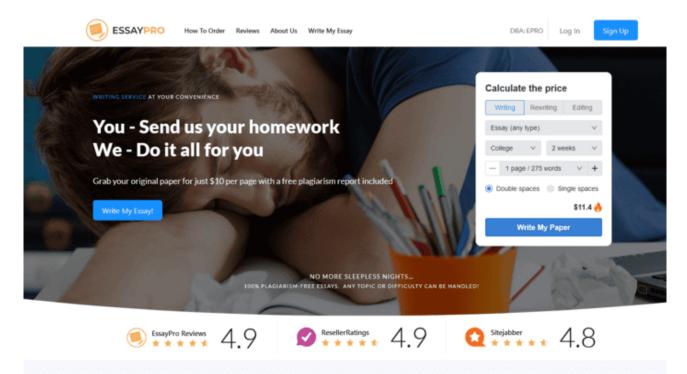
## Lincoln and the Outbreak of Civil War



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## Lincoln and the Outbreak of Civil War

The Civil War was the worst crisis in American history, pitting two sides of a split nation against one another in bloody battles that persisted for four exhausting years. It was a war that neither side claimed to want, and that neither side claimed to start. Although popular belief places the blame with the South because they fired the first shot, there is considerable evidence that <u>Lincoln</u>, realizing war was inevitable, coerced the South into firing that first fateful shot.

At the time of Lincoln's inauguration, the tension between the North and the South was nearing a breaking point. Seven states—South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas—had already seceded from the Union, although the federal government refused to recognize their government, the Confederate States of America. And eight other slave states—Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, and Arkansas—strongly sympathized with the Confederates. President James Buchanan seemed to have been waiting for his term to end, thereby avoiding making an actual decision. Thus, the public realized that the handling of this delicate and potentially explosive issue rested on the shoulders of the new

government and the new president, Abraham Lincoln.

As the people watched and waited, all questioned what Lincoln's position would be. Their first clue was his Inaugural Address. In this speech, he said that he would use his power to "hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the government" (Doc. 1). This statement seemed to imply that Lincoln would maintain the status quo—keeping what he had, but not seeking more. Perhaps a better indic...

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...rawford, May 6, 1882.

Document 22: Letter from Captain H. A. Adams, commanding U. S. S. Brooklyn and U.S. Frigate Sabine off Pensacola, to Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy. The letter is dated April 1, 1861.

Document 30: Letter from Lincoln to Robert S. Chew, Special Messenger of the State Department, April 6, 1861.

Document 34: Letter from General Beauregard, C. S. A., to Major Anderson, April 11.

Document 35: Major Anderson to General Beauregard, April 11.

Document 37: Anderson to Beauregard, April 12, between one and two a.m.

Document 38: Letter from James Chesnut, Jr., and Stephen D. Lee, aides to General Beauregard, to Major Anderson. Written at Fort Sumter, 3:20 a.m., April 12, 1861.

Document 39: Excerpt from the diary of Orville H. Browning, United States Senator from Illinois and a friend of Lincoln. Entry is for July 3, 1861.

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