

## Assessing with Primary Sources

**Grade Level:** Middle School (6Grade)

**Standard(s) or Objectives:** CCSS.RI.6.6 - Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.  
CCSS.RI.6.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Library of Congress Resources:



Child, Lydia Maria, 1859-1860 (Manuscripts-Mrs. Child to Jon Brown)  
<http://www.loc.gov/item/mfd.13016/>

Specific Pages Used:  
<http://www.loc.gov/resource/mfd.13016/?sp=13>

### Topic Background:

John Brown (May 9, 1800 – December 2, 1859) was a white American abolitionist who believed armed insurrection was the only way to overthrow the institution of slavery in the United States. The main goal of abolitionist movement was to abolish slavery in all its forms and aspects, promote the moral and intellectual improvement of the colored people.

Excerpted from: [http://www.americaslibrary.gov/aa/douglass/aa\\_douglass\\_leader\\_2.html](http://www.americaslibrary.gov/aa/douglass/aa_douglass_leader_2.html) and [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Brown\\_%28abolitionist%29](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Brown_%28abolitionist%29)

### Source Used:

The source used for this assessment includes a letter from Mrs. Child to John Brown (1860). In the letter, Mrs. Child shows support and sympathy to John Brown but she criticizes the method he chose to achieve his goals.

### Multiple Choice Answer Key:

Question 1 – A

Question 2 –( A, D)

MRS. CHILD TO JOHN BROWN.

WAYLAND, Mass., Oct. 26th, 1859.

DEAR CAPT. BROWN: Though personally unknown to you, you will recognize in my name an earnest friend of Kansas, when circumstances made that Territory the battle-ground between the antagonistic principles of slavery and freedom, which politicians so vainly strive to reconcile in the government of the United States.

Believing in peace principles, I cannot sympathize with the method you chose to advance the cause of freedom. But I honor your generous intentions—I admire your courage, moral and physical. I reverence you for the humanity which tempered your zeal. I sympathize with you in your cruel bereavement, your sufferings, and your wrongs. In brief, I love you and bless you.

Thousands of hearts are throbbing with sympathy as warm as mine. I think of you night and day, bleeding in prison, surrounded by hostile faces, sustained only by trust in God and your own strong heart. I long to nurse you—to speak to you sisterly words of sympathy and consolation. I have asked permission of Governor Wise to do so. If the request is not granted, I cherish the hope that these few words may at least reach your hands, and afford you some little solace. May you be strengthened by the conviction that no honest man ever sheds blood for freedom in vain, however much he may be mistaken in his efforts. May God sustain you, and carry you through whatsoever may be in store for you!

Yours, with heartfelt respect, sympathy and affection,

L. MARIA CHILD.

**Questions:**

1) Based on the above primary source, which statement best states the author's support of John Brown? (CCSS.RI.6.6)

- A. The author supports John Brown's intention, but she does not like the method he chose to achieve his goals.
- B. The author does not support John Brown and she wishes he will stay at prison.
- C. The author encourages the method that John Brown chose to achieve his goals.
- D. The author neither supports nor opposes John Brown's intention and actions.

2) Which quotations from the source best support the answer in Question one (choose two answers)? (CCSS.RI.6.1)

- A. "I cannot sympathize with the method you choose to advance the cause of freedom."
- B. "May you be strengthened by the conviction that no honest man ever shed blood for freedom in vein"
- C. "If the request is not granted I cherish the hope those few words may at least reach your hands"
- D. "I honor your generous intention. I admire your courage, moral, and physical".