

Handout A: Lincoln and Habeas Corpus in the Civil War Answer Key

1. *Habeas corpus* is the power of a judge to force the government to provide a legitimate reason for putting someone in jail. It is known as the “Great Writ,” so important in the history of liberty because without this guarantee, tyrants can lock up their opponents for any reason or no reason. It is a crucial aspect of the principle of rule of law, which holds that the law applies equally to everyone; no one is above the law.
2. *Habeas corpus* be suspended “when in cases of rebellion or invasion the public safety may require it.”
3. Accept reasoned responses. Students may say that the three document excerpts provided show that Lincoln was very reluctant to suspend *habeas corpus*.