



Futility at the Top

In the years leading up to the American Civil War, Presidents Franklin Pierce and James Buchanan failed to stem the rising tide of secession. Both Pierce and Buchanan were Northerners who were known to be sympathetic to the “plight” of the South. The greatest conflict in the history of the United States was thus left in the lap of Abraham Lincoln.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_rankings_of_Presidents_of_the_United_States

Presidential Rankings		
 Pierce – 14 th President	 Buchanan – 15 th President	 Lincoln – 16 th President
Ranking: 41/43	Ranking: 43/43	Ranking: 1/43

In the 1800's, two of the lowest ranked presidents (based on performance) were followed by the highest ranked president. What do you think were the main differences between the way Lincoln led the nation and his two predecessors? What is the difference between a great leader and a poor leader? Write your response on the lines provided. Use another page if necessary.