



Abraham Lincoln | Lesson Plan

How did Abraham Lincoln unite the country and abolish the institution of slavery in the United States?

Students will understand how Abraham Lincoln kept the Union together during the Civil War and ended slavery. They will also understand how Lincoln provided the leadership America needed during tense and uncertain times in the United States.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify the key life events of Abraham Lincoln.
- Explain how Abraham Lincoln united the country and abolished the institution of slavery during his presidency.
- Compare the key hardships and key achievements of Abraham Lincoln that made him a strong leader and successful president.
- Evaluate Abraham Lincoln's leadership skills and decisions, which have named him one of the United States' greatest presidents.

Key Vocabulary:

- **Union:** The United States government during the Civil War that fought to prevent the Confederate states from seceding.
- **Slavery:** A system in which people own other people and make them work without pay.
- **Kansas-Nebraska Act:** An 1854 law that allowed the territories of Kansas and Nebraska to decide whether or not to allow slavery.
- **Popular Sovereignty:** An idea from the United States in the 1850s that people should have the choice to allow slavery in the territory in which they live.
- **Abolitionist:** A person who wants to stop slavery.
- **Secede:** To leave an organization or government.
- **Emancipation Proclamation:** Issued by President Lincoln on January 1, 1863, declaring that all enslaved persons in the rebellious states and territories were to be forever free.
- **Gettysburg Address:** A short speech delivered by President Lincoln on November 19, 1863, to dedicate a cemetery near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, resolving "that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

Educational Standards: CCRA.R.7, CCRA.W.2, CCRA.W.4, CCRA.W.9, CCRA.L.1, CCRA.L.2, CCRA.L.4, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2

Academic Subject Areas: Biography, U.S. Presidents, Civil War

What You'll Need

- Video: *Guess or Mess: Abraham Lincoln* (Watch [Here](#))



Scan to watch episode:

- Worksheet: Guess or Mess: Abraham Lincoln (Click [Here](#))
- Optional Book Lesson: PragerU Kids biographical book [U.S. Presidents: Abraham Lincoln](#)

Lesson Plan: Watch and Complete (45 minutes)

Warm-Up: (15 minutes)

1. Engage students in a discussion sharing what they already know about President Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War. Some questions to consider asking would be:
 - Are you aware of where Abraham Lincoln grew up?
 - Have you heard any stories about his life or his legacy?
 - Do you know why he is considered one of the most important figures in American history?

Other Activity Suggestions:

1. Initiate a class discussion on overcoming challenges in one's life. Encourage students to share when they have overcome a challenge to achieve a goal.
2. Introduce the topic of the Civil War—what it was about and who was fighting. Facilitate a brainstorming session to elicit students' prior knowledge and assumptions.
3. Provide an overview of the “Guess or Mess: Abraham Lincoln Worksheet.” Invite students to predict what they might learn about Abraham Lincoln and his presidency.
4. Set the stage for the upcoming video by highlighting the theme of leadership and overcoming challenges.

Watch and Complete: (20 minutes)

1. Show the video, pausing at key moments to allow students to process and discuss the information presented.
2. Assist students with completing the worksheet alongside the video, encouraging note-taking and active listening.
3. Offer opportunities for students to confirm or adjust their initial answers based on new information from the video.

Wrap-Up: (10-15 minutes)

1. Provide time for students to finalize their worksheet answers independently.
2. Ask students to read their responses to the “Making Connections” section.
3. Collect worksheets as a formative assessment or allow students to use them for discussion.
4. Discussion: In American history, few figures loom as large as Abraham Lincoln. Reflect on the significance of Lincoln's presidency and prompt students with the following discussion questions:
 - Why do you think Abraham Lincoln continues to captivate the American imagination? What aspects of his life and leadership make him such a compelling figure?

- Consider the impact of Lincoln’s leadership during the Civil War. Why was his role as Commander-in-Chief crucial to the outcome of the conflict?
 - Reflect on the significance of the *Emancipation Proclamation*. Why was this executive order such a pivotal moment in American history?
 - Think about the concept of democracy and Lincoln’s commitment to preserving the Union. How did his beliefs in government “of the people, by the people, for the people” impact the nation?
5. Optional Group Project: Divide students into pairs or teams and instruct each group to create a visual timeline of Abraham Lincoln’s life and presidency, highlighting four or five key events or milestones. Encourage students to include illustrations and descriptions for each event to deepen their understanding.
 6. The closing challenge to the students: Ask students to reflect on Lincoln’s legacy and its relevance today. Encourage them to think about how they can embody Lincoln’s leadership, integrity, and perseverance in their own lives. As a closing activity, invite students to share their thoughts on what it means to be a “Lincolnesque” leader in the modern world.

Alternate Lesson Plan with Biographical Book: Read and Complete (45 minutes - 1 hour)

1. Distribute individual copies of PragerU Kids biographical book [U.S. Presidents: Abraham Lincoln](#) to students. Allow them to choose between individual reading or group reading sessions.
2. Reading and Worksheet Activities:
 - During Reading: Encourage students to complete the worksheet that includes:
 - Factual Questions: Key details about Abraham Lincoln’s life and presidency.
 - Critical Thinking Questions: Reflect on Lincoln’s upbringing and how his early life impacted his character qualities, decision-making skills, and their impact on American history.
 - Alternatively, the worksheet’s multiple-choice questions can be used as a quick quiz to assess comprehension immediately after reading.
3. Use the “Making Connections” section of the worksheet to facilitate discussion and reinforce key points covered in the book.
4. Play the *Guess or Mess: Abraham Lincoln* video, pausing for discussion and answer checks.
5. Conclude with a discussion focusing on Lincoln’s character and the historical impact of his presidency. Use insights from the worksheet to guide the conversation, encouraging students to share their thoughts on Lincoln’s legacy. Discuss how Lincoln’s leadership during the Civil War and his commitment to equality continue to resonate today.

6. Collect worksheets to evaluate students' understanding and engagement with the material. Use the discussion to gauge deeper comprehension and address any lingering questions or misconceptions.

Extension Activity (Optional):

Encourage students to further research Abraham Lincoln's speeches, letters, and writings. They can choose one of his famous speeches, such as the "Gettysburg Address," or another significant document, like the *Emancipation Proclamation*, and present a short analysis to the class focusing on aspects such as rhetorical strategies, historical context, and societal impact.