



## Abigail Adams | Lesson Plan

How did Abigail Adams demonstrate valor in her life?

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Students will understand how Abigail Adams, the second First Lady of the United States, advocated for women's rights, education for all, and the abolition of slavery. Students will also understand how Abigail Adams actively influenced America's founding and early U.S. politics.

### Learning Objectives:

- Identify the key life events of Abigail Adams.
- Explain how Abigail Adams actively influenced America's founding and early U.S. politics.
- Identify which important causes Abigail Adams was an advocate for.
- Examine how Abigail Adams advocated for women's rights, education, and the abolition of slavery.
- Evaluate how Abigail Adams utilized her position as First Lady of the United States to voice her beliefs and opinions.

### Key Vocabulary:

- **Abolition:** The act of doing away with or the state of being done away with, as in the ending of slavery.
- **Advocate:** One who argues for a cause; a supporter or defender.
- **Besieged:** To surround and attack.
- **Inauguration:** A formal ceremony that marks the beginning of service in public office.
- **Musket balls:** One of the earliest forms of bullets that were fired from muskets and rifles.
- **Representation:** The right of having a spokesperson for your interests in a governing body.
- **Typhoid fever:** A highly infectious disease characterized by high fever, headache, coughing, and reddish spots on the skin.

**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, Women of History, Historical Figures

### What You'll Need

- Video: *Guess or Mess: Abigail Adams* (Watch [Here](#))
- Worksheet: *Guess or Mess: Abigail Adams* (Click [Here](#))
- PragerU Kids *Women of Valor* biographical book: *Abigail Adams* (Download [Here](#))
- Large paper or poster board for each group, along with markers



## Lesson Plan: Read, Discuss, Complete (60 minutes)

### Introduction to Abigail Adams (5 minutes):

1. Begin by discussing the concept of **valor**: a combination of courage and moral integrity, where someone acts for a noble cause or higher purpose, often at personal risk. Explain that valor involves a commitment to justice, defending important values, and standing up for what is right, even when it's difficult. Ask students how they see examples of valor in their own lives or in the world around them.
2. Display the *Abigail Adams* digital book using an electronic device. Briefly explain how Abigail Adams exemplified these ideals of valor by advocating for women's rights, education, and the abolition of slavery, all while navigating a time when women had little political voice. Show images from the digital book to give a visual overview of her life and contributions.

### Adams' Advocacy Huddle (25 minutes):

1. Read the "Meet Abigail Adams" section on page 2 of the biographical book as a class, with the teacher leading the reading to model fluency and intonation and set the tone for the lesson.
2. Divide the class into small groups and assign each group a different section of the digital book to explore. The following are recommendations:
  - Group 1: Young Abigail (page 3)
  - Group 2: A New Life, Life in Boston in the 1770s (page 4)
  - Group 3: The Revolutionary War (page 5)
  - Group 4: Living Overseas, Being First Lady, Did You Know? (page 6)
  - Group 5: Retirement & Later Life, Fascinating Facts about Abigail (pages 7-8)
3. Allow time for each group to read their assigned section, taking turns reading aloud. As students read, they should discuss the main ideas.
4. Provide each group with a large piece of paper or a poster board and markers to write down key points and any interesting facts or quotes they find.
5. Allow each group one to two minutes to present their findings to the class. After each presentation, provide time for classmates to ask questions and discuss the content.

### Worksheet Workshop (15 minutes):

1. Distribute individual copies of the worksheet to each student. The worksheet is designed to be adaptable to different ability levels. Provide clear instructions on how to complete each section, explaining the steps as follows:
  - **Symbols of Leadership:** Students will draw a symbol representing one of Abigail Adams' core principles (for example, a torch, quill and ink, or broken chains) and explain its meaning.
  - **Vocabulary of Valor:** Have students choose a word from the glossary (e.g., advocate, abolition) and use it in a sentence that shows their understanding of its meaning.

- **Comprehension Questions & Patriot Pop Quiz:** Explain that students should complete this section of the worksheet individually. (Note: This section corresponds to the *Guess or Mess* episode about Abigail Adams and can be used to play along while watching. See “Extension Activity” below.)
- **Making Connections:** This section can serve as a long-answer portion of the worksheet or as a class discussion.

### **Reflection Round-Up (10 minutes):**

1. Summarize the key takeaways from the lesson about Abigail Adams.
  - Champion for Women's Representation: Abigail Adams was a strong advocate for the voice of women, famously urging her husband, John Adams, to "Remember the Ladies" during the formation of the U.S. government.
  - Commitment to Education: She believed in education for all, especially women, and was self-taught through extensive reading.
  - Abolition of Slavery: Abigail Adams opposed slavery, believing it was morally wrong based on her Christian principles.
  - Influence through Correspondence: Her letters to John Adams played a significant role in shaping his political views and provided insight into her leadership and values.
  - Legacy of Valor: She demonstrated valor by standing up for her beliefs during a time when women had little political influence.
2. Think-Pair-Share: Have students recall one fact they learned about Abigail Adams and share it with a partner.
3. Wrap up with an encouraging thought, for instance: "Valor isn't just about courage in big moments; it's also about standing up for what's right in everyday situations. Like Abigail Adams, you can show valor by using your voice to help others and defend what you believe in."
4. Call to Action: Challenge students to find one small way to show valor this week, whether by helping a friend or standing up for justice. Students may also be interested in learning more about an issue they care about.

### **Extension Activity:** (20 minutes)

*Guess or Mess* Trivia Show: After the lesson, students can participate in the *Guess or Mess* trivia show for Abigail Adams—direct students to the Comprehension Questions section of the worksheet. Students can play along with the contestants to see if they can answer the trivia questions correctly.

### **Don't have time for a full lesson? Quick Activity (30 minutes)**

Read the *Abigail Adams* book together as a class, with students taking turns reading aloud. Then, watch the *Guess or Mess* video and play along with the trivia questions.