

Abraham Lincoln | Lesson Plan

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

Students will gain a comprehensive understanding of Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States, focusing on his pivotal role in preserving the Union during the Civil War and his efforts to abolish slavery. They will explore Lincoln's life, his significant contributions as president, and his enduring impact on American history. Through this study, students will appreciate how Lincoln's leadership provided the necessary guidance and stability during one of the most challenging periods in the nation's history.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify reasons for tension and division in the United States during Lincoln's presidency.
- Explain how Abraham Lincoln united the country and abolished the institution of slavery during his presidency.
- Analyze how Abraham Lincoln's response to the Confederacy helped achieve his ultimate goal of reunifying the nation.
- Identify the goals of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and Second Inaugural Address.
- Evaluate Abraham Lincoln's leadership skills, decisions, and character, which earned him the reputation of one of the United States' greatest presidents.

Key Vocabulary:

- **Abolish:** To end something.
- **Abolitionist:** A person who wants to stop or abolish slavery.
- **Union:** The United States government during the Civil War that fought to prevent the Confederate states from seceding.
- **Slavery:** A system in which people are allowed to own other people and make them work without paying them.
- **Kansas-Nebraska Act:** A law from 1854 that allowed people living in the territories of Kansas and Nebraska to decide whether or not to allow slavery.
- **Secede:** To leave an organization or government.
- **Emancipation Proclamation:** Issued by President Lincoln on January 1, 1863, declaring that all slaves were free.
- **Gettysburg Address:** A speech President Lincoln delivered on November 19, 1863, to dedicate a cemetery near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

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

Academic Subject Areas: Biography, U.S. Presidents, Character Development



What You'll Need

- Video: *Abraham Lincoln: The President Who Saved the Union* (Watch [Here](#))
- Worksheet: *Abraham Lincoln: The President Who Saved the Union* (Click [Here](#))
- Pictures of Abraham Lincoln

Lesson Plan (45 minutes)

Warm-Up: (15 minutes)

1. Initiate a class discussion on the importance of strong leaders, especially during times of conflict and division.
2. Encourage students to think of some of our most famous U.S. presidents, what they did for our country to earn so much respect and admiration, and the different ways we honor them today (e.g., monuments, currency, etc). Invite students to share examples aloud and brainstorm together.
3. Transition discussion to focus on Abraham Lincoln. Ask students why they think President Lincoln is considered one of our most beloved and respected presidents and is still honored today.
4. Display a copy of the "Abraham Lincoln Worksheet" and pass out individual worksheets to students.
5. Instruct students to complete the Warm-Up Activity. Students will write why they think Abraham Lincoln is considered one of the United States' greatest presidents.
6. Once completed, instruct students to write down everything they already know about Abraham Lincoln in the "Know" section of the KWL chart on their worksheet. Once completed, students will fill out the "Wonder" section with 3-5 questions or things they wonder about Abraham Lincoln.
7. Read over the rest of the worksheet as a class so students know what to listen for during the video.
8. Set the stage for the upcoming video by highlighting the theme of leadership and forgiveness. Encourage students to look for ways throughout the video that Abraham Lincoln displayed strong leadership through his work to reunite a divided country. Instruct students to complete the "Learn" section of the KWL chart as they watch the video.

Watch and Complete: (20 minutes)

1. Watch the video.
2. Assist students with completing the worksheet alongside the video, encouraging note-taking and active listening.
3. Pause throughout the video to allow students to answer questions—especially short answer responses. If necessary, model short answer responses by restating the question and writing a complete sentence.

Wrap-Up: (10-15 minutes)

1. Allow students 10 minutes to complete the worksheet independently.
2. Collect as formative assessment or discuss in class.

3. Ask students to read aloud their responses to the “Making Connections” section, reflecting on what they have learned from Lincoln’s leadership and ways they can be more quick to forgive when they are wronged.
4. Conclude by reviewing the lesson’s key points. Explain why Abraham Lincoln is known as one of the greatest presidents and encourage students to apply his leadership qualities in their own lives. Some ideas to recap:
 - Abraham Lincoln is known as one of the greatest presidents because he led the country through its toughest time, the Civil War. He believed in the importance of freedom and equality for everyone and made decisions that helped bring the country back together.
 - He was a great leader because he was brave, honest, and determined. He never gave up, even when things were very difficult. He listened to others, thought carefully about his decisions, and always tried to do what was right.
5. Ask students to think about how they can use the lessons learned from Lincoln in their own lives. Provide examples, such as being brave when facing challenges and not being afraid to stand up for what is right, even if it's hard. Lincoln was known for being honest, so students should always try to tell the truth and be fair in their actions. Lincoln never gave up, even when things were tough, so students should work hard and keep trying to overcome obstacles and achieve their goals. Lincoln believed in treating everyone equally and with kindness, so students should treat others with respect and kindness in their own lives.
6. Remind students that they can make a difference, just like Lincoln did, by being good leaders in their own way. Whether it's helping a friend, standing up for someone, or working hard at school, they have the power to make a positive impact.

Don't have time for the full lesson? Quick Activity (15-20 minutes)

Distribute the worksheet and allow students to complete it while they follow along with the video.