

U.S. Presidents Abraham Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln was America's 16th President and perhaps one of our nation's greatest leaders. He helped keep America from splitting apart during the Civil War. Lincoln also helped end slavery in the United States. His leadership proved that America's democratic government could survive even a war at home. Sadly, Lincoln was assassinated near the end of the Civil War in 1865. He became the first U.S. President to be killed in office.

Lincoln became President in 1860 in a very tight election. Most people didn't know much about Lincoln or his humble background. He was born Feb. 12, 1809, in a Kentucky log cabin. When he was 8, his family moved to the wild Indiana frontier. Shortly after, Lincoln's mother died. Lincoln helped his father farm and work the fields. He barely had time for school. He only spent one year in a classroom. Even so, he learned how to read and write on his own. Books were scarce on the frontier. He read every book he could get his hands on. Lincoln pored over the family bible. He would walk for miles to borrow great titles like *Aesop's Fables* and *Pilgrim's Progress*.

As a young man, Lincoln worked many jobs to earn a living. He was tall and strong. He split logs and fence rails for neighbors. He helped take a flatboat down a river to New Orleans. Eventually, he started a general store with a friend. When the store went into debt, he paid those debts off working other jobs for a year. His **integrity**¹ earned him the nickname "Honest Abe." A friend eventually encouraged Lincoln to become a lawyer. In Lincoln's day there were few law schools. Again, that didn't stop him. Lincoln taught himself what he needed to know. "Your own **resolution**² to succeed is more important than any one thing," he would later say.

Lincoln had a keen sense of people and great judgment. He saw ways to deal with the deep differences between Northerners and Southerners over slavery. He also persuaded people with his great speeches. One of his most famous is the Emancipation Proclamation. It said slaves fighting in the Civil War would be freed. The

¹ **integrity** – honesty or sincerity

² **resolution** -- determination

proclamation³ paved the way for the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which ended slavery in the U.S. In another speech, The Gettysburg Address, Lincoln's words reassured a suffering people at war that democracy would survive.

Lincoln's stand against slavery caused him to have many enemies. Even so, his assassination was felt across the nation from North to South. Millions of people admired his spirit and service to his country. They called him "Father Abraham" and mourned as if they had lost a father. Mourners lined the tracks as a train carried his body to Springfield, Illinois. People visit Lincoln's grave to pay their respects to this day.

³ **proclamation** – an official announcement

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. A good title for the passage about Lincoln might be
 - a. Lincoln: Our Nation's Greatest Leader.
 - b. Lincoln: A Man of Few Talents.
 - c. Lincoln: A Man of Many Enemies.
 - d. Lincoln: His Life as a Farm Boy.

2. In the second sentence of the last paragraph the word "his" refers to
 - a. Lincoln's father.
 - b. Lincoln's uncle.
 - c. Abraham Lincoln.
 - d. Lincoln's friend.

3. According to the passage, the word *keen* means
 - a. dull.
 - b. sharp.
 - c. distracted.
 - d. uneven.

4. Which of the following is an opinion?
 - a. Lincoln taught himself what he needed to know.
 - b. Millions of people admired Lincoln's spirit and service to his country.
 - c. Lincoln stand against slavery caused him to have many enemies.
 - d. "Your own resolution to succeed, is more important than any one thing."

5. Lincoln worked in all of the following jobs *except*:
 - a. lawyer
 - b. teacher
 - c. flatboat worker
 - d. general store worker

6. Lincoln believed that, “Your own resolution to succeed, is more important than any one thing.” How did Lincoln apply these words to his own life?

7. What could be a reason for Lincoln’s death being mourned even in the South?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

During the Civil War, the American people were deeply divided _____ the issue of slavery.

- a. with
- b. over
- c. between
- d. among

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

After the Emancipation Proclamation, Congress passed the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution in order to free the slaves.

Who? Congress

(did) What? _____

Why? _____

When? _____

10. **Vocabulary Word:** assassinate: murder an important person for political or religious reasons.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: _____

Teacher Guide and Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 700

Featured Text Structure: Descriptive – the writer explains, defines or illustrates a concept or topic

Passage Summary: This passage discusses the life of Abraham Lincoln, from his childhood to his death. His personal character is explored as well as the history of the United States during the Civil War.

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 - a. Lincoln's father.
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 - c. **Abraham Lincoln.**
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6. Lincoln believed that, “Your own resolution to succeed, is more important than any one thing.” How did Lincoln apply these words to his own life?

Suggested answer: He didn’t let the many obstacles in his way stop him. For example, when he didn’t have time to go to school he found a way to teach himself. When faced with the issue of slavery, he wrote a document that helped eventually free the slaves.

7. What could be a reason for Lincoln’s death being mourned even in the South?

Suggested answer: Even though he had many enemies, Lincoln was a man of integrity, which means a lot of people respected him even if they didn’t agree with him..

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(did) What? **passed the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution**

Why? **in order to free the slaves**

When? **after the Emancipation Proclamation**

10. **Vocabulary Word:** assassinate: murder an important person for political or religious reasons.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.