

# Teacher's Guide for Cobblestone Magazine: *Lincoln*

October 2008

Teacher's Guide prepared by: Sandra K. Athans, teacher, author, and freelance writer living in upstate New York.

This guide provides practical classroom activities teachers may wish to use to supplement the reading passages appearing in this issue. Vocabulary words are highlighted (italicized words are defined in the article) and small group and independent activities/projects that address a range of learning styles are suggested. Many of these are suitable for group work or homework.

Objective:

To supplement the reading and discussion of this magazine, students will:

- Understand significant events and circumstance surrounding Abraham Lincoln's life, from his humble beginnings to his rise to power and prominence as the 16<sup>th</sup> president of the United States. (Comprehend).
- Recognize the contributions, influences, and legacy of Abraham Lincoln, in his varied roles as politician, civil rights pioneer, and defender of the union, and develop a critical perspective in appreciation of why Lincoln is considered by many to be among our finest presidents (Analysis & Synthesis).
- Interpret primary documents such as monuments, photographs, and speech excerpts as a way to enhance an understanding of historic events (Inferencing).

Pre-reading Activity:

Introduce an essential question: *"What contributions did Abraham Lincoln make to the country during his presidency and how did these contributions help shape his reputation as one of our greatest presidents?"* While introducing this essential question, you may wish to begin a KWL chart to activate students' background knowledge. This KWL can be updated and reviewed periodically as students read through articles.

**"Frontier Boy" (page 3):** Lincoln's humble beginning, frontier lifestyle, and appreciation of knowledge helped shape his character and also contributed to his rise to the presidency.

Vocabulary: candidates, settlements, roughhousing, debating group, campaign, militia, state legislature

Discussion questions: In what way did Lincoln's early life help prepare him for his role as president? Which events in Lincoln's early life were most critical and why? Lincoln's lack of a formal education did not prevent him from rising to political prominence. Would the same be true today?

Activities: Students can identify from five to seven major events that helped shape Lincoln's rise to power and sequence them in proper order.

**“On the Debate Trail: Lincoln vs. Douglas” (page 6):** Although Lincoln was unsuccessful at his bid for a seat in the Senate during his 1858 debates with Stephen A. Douglas, he nonetheless gained national prominence and was subsequently nominated as the Republican party’s presidential candidate in 1860.

**Vocabulary:** *incumbent, ideological, controversial, unanimous, opponents, orator, abolitionist, conspiracy, accusations, endorsement*

**Discussion questions:** What critical difference was made clear between the rivals’ views during first debate? Explain Lincoln’s strategy (“trap”) during his August 27<sup>th</sup> debate with Douglas. Review the political cartoon on page 7 and interpret elements in the cartoon. Explain the meaning of the excerpt from Lincoln’s ‘House Divided’ speech on page 7.

**Activities:** Students can create a political cartoon depicting issues presented in the article, such as the outcome of the Senate campaign or the 1860 presidential campaign, the differences between the rivals, or the contenders’ differing opinions on slavery. Students can rewrite Lincoln’s ‘House Divided’ speech to a targeted audience of younger students.

**“Grace’s Advice” (page 10):** Advice from young Grace Bedell helped inspire Lincoln to grow whiskers, thus changing the image of the frontiersman.

**Discussion questions:** In addition to gaining a new physical image, what else did Lincoln gain as a result of his visit with Grace Bedell?

**Activities:** Create an “Advice Column” for Abraham Lincoln and ask students to write helpful advice letters on a variety of issues as they read through the articles in this issue. Create an Abraham Lincoln character trait chart and add some characteristics with support using information from this article. (“Chief Joker” on page 14 – 15 which documents Lincoln’s humor is another article that supports a lighter side of Lincoln; “Lincoln at a Glance,” page 17, and “Did You Know?,” page 24, contain fun facts about Lincoln, many of which could also be used for this activity.)

**“A Nation at War” (page 12):** Lincoln was not in office long before the Civil War broke out with the firing on Fort Sumter in April 1861. As battles raged between the North and South for four long years, Lincoln upheld his beliefs in a majority rule democracy, emancipation, and the necessity to preserve the union.

**Vocabulary:** *inauguration, seceded, democracy, treason, draft, rebellion, emancipation, martyr*

**Discussion questions:** What controversial measures did Lincoln take that caused his popularity to decline by the end of 1863? Explain the meaning of the excerpt from Lincoln’s speech in Cleveland, Ohio, February 15, 1861, on page 13; the excerpt from his speech to the 166<sup>th</sup> Ohio Regiment in August, 1864, on page 15; and the excerpt from his Second Inaugural Address, 1865, on page 16. Discuss the impact of the two major decisions Lincoln made in 1864.

**Activities:** Create a cause-and-effect chart documenting the relationship of events that took place during the Civil War. Write a brief reader’s theater skit surrounding

some of the major events of the Civil War and perform them. Using excerpts or references to web sites (listed within the articles), prepare monologues from Lincoln's speeches and deliver them. Create a map highlighting the locations of battles that took place during the Civil War and write brief annotations of the events that took place at each location. Debate Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, the military arrests of antiwar Northerners, and the establishment of the military draft.

**"The Coalition Cabinet and Other White House Triumphs" (page 18):** Remarkably, Lincoln relied on his rivals to help him run the government and assigned many to Cabinet positions. Together, they managed to keep the nation's progress moving forward despite the turbulence times brought on by the Civil War.

Vocabulary: *dark horse, rotunda*

Discussion questions: Why would Lincoln surround himself by his rivals? Describe the successes Lincoln was able to achieve with his administration.

Activities: Research additional information on the Homestead Act and present details to the class on the affects of this Act on the settlement of the west. Research information on Lincoln's involvement in expanding the nation's communication and transportation systems.

**"Striking at Slavery" (page 20):** Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, effective January 1, 1863, freed all slaves in any state that was still in rebellion against the Union and earned him the title of "Great Emancipator."

Vocabulary: economy

Discussion questions: Explain why some considered Lincoln's issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation "to offer too little too late"? What far-reaching effects did the Proclamation have on the Civil War?

Activities: Visit the web site provided on page 21 and read a transcription of the Emancipation Proclamation. Students may wish to perform this as a choral reading. Create a political cartoon that presents the varied reaction to Lincoln's proclamation and his efforts to launch an end to slavery. Students may wish to incorporate Lincoln's very visual words "The harpoon is in the monster."

**"A Historic Address" (page 22):** Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, delivered at the dedication ceremony of a national cemetery for the soldiers who died at Gettysburg, is considered one of the great speeches of all time despite its original intent to be nothing more than "a few appropriate remarks."

Vocabulary: procession, *annals*

Discussion questions: Explain the significance of the Battle of Gettysburg. What was the intended purpose of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address?

Activities: Visit the web site provided on page 23 and read a transcription of the Gettysburg Address. Students may rewrite this to a targeted audience of younger students. Select excerpts from the Gettysburg Address and interject facts about Lincoln from the information appearing on pages 17 and 24-25 within the excerpts and perform this as a reader's theater script. Write a persuasive essay supporting

the statement that Lincoln's Gettysburg Address is "one of the great speeches of all time."

**"Meet Mrs. Lincoln" (page 26):** Although complicated and often misunderstood, Mary Todd Lincoln was an intelligent and charitable woman who suffered the loss of three of her sons as well as her beloved husband. **"The Lincoln Sons" (page 28):** Lincoln took great delight in his sons.

**Vocabulary:** uncouth

**Discussion question:** Explain the differences in public reaction to Mary Todd Lincoln. Describe Lincoln's family life.

**Activities:** Write a journal entry on any of the events in the article from the point of view of Mary Todd Lincoln. Consider the statement in the article, "history has not always been kind to Mary Todd Lincoln," and write an essay on her behalf challenging this historic view. After reading the article "The Lincoln Sons," students might wish to create a venn diagram comparing their family life to the Lincoln's family life.

**"A Plan for Peace" (page 29):** At the close of the Civil War, Lincoln took swift and decisive action to begin restoration of the South.

**Vocabulary:** *leniency, pocket veto, treason, oath, hierarchy, unrepentant*

**Discussion questions:** Explain how the Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction was designed to help end the fighting. Explain the differences between this Proclamation and the Wade-Davis Bill. What enabled Lincoln to quash the Bill? What event signaled the end of the Civil War? How did Andrew Johnson's presidential appointment affect African American rights?

**Activities:** Students can debate whether or not Lincoln's decision to enact his powers as commander in chief and assume responsibility for Reconstruction policies. Read the article "What If" on page 31, and write an essay describing at least three possibilities that could have happened if Lincoln was able to carry out his second presidential term.

**"Assassinated" (page 32):** John Wilkes Booth and his band of conspirators grew desperate and devised a plan they hoped would cause the North to collapse. Abraham Lincoln, together with Secretary of State William H. Seward and Vice President Andrew Johnson were all targets of the assassination conspiracy.

**Vocabulary:** conspirators, assassinated, mezzanine, *retribution*

**Discussion questions:** Did the punishment fit the crime for all of the conspirators? Discuss what types of precautions are taken today to protect government officials including the President of the United States. Discuss differences in punishments from 1865 to today, reflecting on other presidential assassinations and/or attempts.

**Activities:** Students can hold a mock trial to raise issues regarding Mary Surratt's guilt or innocence. Research the outcome of the planned attacks on William H. Seward and Andrew Johnson and report the findings. Write an obituary capturing the sentiment of the nation over the tragic loss of Abraham Lincoln.

**“Lincoln Remembered” (page 36):** Many artists have tried to capture Lincoln’s greatness in a variety of ways.

Vocabulary: romanticize, commemorated

Discussion questions: In what ways has Lincoln been depicted artistically? Explain the differences among the ways in which Lincoln has been commemorated.

Activities: Students can create a work of art (drawing, painting, computer-generated work, etc.) depicting Lincoln in a unique way. Provide a critique on the way in which a particular artist portrayed Lincoln. Compare and contrast the similarities and differences among a selection of artistic works depicting Lincoln.

**“Brother Against Brother” (page 40):** As the Civil War was taking place within the United States, other internal conflicts were taking place in many parts of the world including Mexico, Japan, and Colombia.

Vocabulary: overthrown, treaty

Discussion questions: What was the War of Reform and explain the outcome? Explain the major conflict of the Boshin (“Year of the Dragon”) War. What caused the Colombian Civil War of 1860, and what was the outcome?

Activities: Organize students into groups and have them further research these global conflicts and share their findings with the class. Create a global memorial (in any medium) that recognizes some of the commonalities represented in these global conflicts. Write an essay that compares and contrasts the major issues present in these global conflicts.

**Closing Activity:** Students can return to the pre-reading activity and conclude their thoughts on the essential question: *“What contributions did Abraham Lincoln make to the country during his presidency and how did these contributions help shape his reputation as one of our greatest presidents?”* Students can review their KWL chart and reflect on their learning.