

Abe Lincoln's Jobs

Introduction: Abraham Lincoln was smart, strong, and sensible. With a love for learning but little formal education, the jobs he had in his youth often involved manual labor and hard work. He was able to use these early work experiences when he became president of the United States during one of the most challenging times in the nation's history.

Grade Level: 2–5

Time: 15–20 Minutes

Objectives:

- The student will rank jobs that were held by Abraham Lincoln according to various criteria.
- The student will discuss the merits and difficulties of various jobs.

Materials:

- *Abe Lincoln's Dream*
- Job Ranking Cards (below), printed on card stock and cut into individual cards
- Optional: A Penny for Your Thoughts activity sheet (below)
- Optional: 2009 bicentennial one-cent coins for student inspection

Procedure:

1. Introduce the lesson by telling the students that they will be listening to a story about a girl who meets the ghost of Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth president. Challenge the students to figure out what is true in the story and what is make-believe.
2. Read aloud the book *Abe Lincoln's Dream*. This takes about four minutes.
3. Share the author's afterword with the students. It gives details concerning the historical facts in the story.
4. Tell the students that before Abraham Lincoln became president he had many other jobs.
5. Ask the students if they know what a "job" is. *Job* can be defined as "a piece of work usually done on order at an agreed-upon rate or a paid position of regular employment."
6. Hold up the prepared job cards and read them one at a time, telling the students that these were some of the jobs that Lincoln had when he was younger. Discuss what kind of work each of these jobs entailed (Rail Splitter: physical strength and knowing how to cut wood with an axe. Flatboat Pilot: physical strength and knowledge of boats and the Mississippi River. Store Clerk: knowledge of money and merchandise and knowing how to get along with people. Postmaster: knowledge of postal regulations and geography. Surveyor: good math, writing, and geography skills. Lawyer: knowledge of the law and good speaking skills. US Congressman: knowledge of laws, history, and peoples' needs and wants). All of these jobs required the talent and energy of Mr. Lincoln.
7. Ask for seven volunteers to come to the front of the room and give each a job card. Tell the volunteers to hold the cards out so that the cards can be seen by the members of the class.
8. Instruct the students in the class to arrange the cardholders in order of the amount that Lincoln was paid for each job, from least to most. When students appear satisfied with the ranking order, discuss their decisions. There is no "correct" order to this ranking. Continue the activity by introducing other ranking scenarios:
 - Healthiest to the least healthy.
 - Most adventurous to the dullest.
 - Safest to the most dangerous.
 - Ones needing the most amount of training/education to the ones needing the least training/education.
 - Those that most prepared Abraham Lincoln to be president to the ones that least prepared him to be president.
9. This lesson may be enriched or extended using the A Penny for Your Thoughts activity sheet. The content for this activity is based on the 2009 bicentennial one-cent coins. If possible, have examples of these coins to show to the students.
10. Distribute the activity sheets and writing tools to the students. They may work independently or in small groups.
11. Read the introduction and directions to the students. Emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers and that creative answers are encouraged. Possible answers include architect, author, axe maker, barber, blacksmith, bricklayer, button manufacturer, cabin builder, cobbler, flag designer, glass maker, groundskeeper, lumberjack, printer, rail splitter, seamstress, shingle maker, stonemason, and weaver.

Job Ranking Activity Cards

Rail Splitter

Flatboat Pilot

Store Clerk

Postmaster

Surveyor

Lawyer

US Congressman

A Penny for Your Thoughts



These four designs appear on the reverse of one-cent coins minted in 2009, the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birthday. Each shows a time in Lincoln's life. The log cabin represents his birthplace in Kentucky. As a young man in Indiana, he read every chance he got, even when splitting rails. Later was elected to the Illinois General Assembly. The US Capitol dome was unfinished when he first became president (it was completed by the end of the Civil War).

Directions: Create a list of at least ten jobs represented by items on the coins above. Use your problem-solving skills and think "outside the circle."

Example: A tailor would have made Lincoln's suit.

1.

6.

2.

7.

3.

8.

4.

9.

5.

10.

Abe Lincoln's Dream

Extension Activities

Drama: Because Lane Smith uses a unique font for each character's dialog, this book can easily be turned into a four-part readers' theater script.

Reading: Throughout *Abe Lincoln's Dream*, Quincy and Abe Lincoln's ghost tell each other silly jokes. Take advantage of this silliness to introduce the students to the library's collection of joke and riddle books (DDC 818).

Web Resources: There are many Abraham Lincoln lessons and activities available.

Macmillan's activity guide features mapping skills, a creative writing prompt, an acrostic poem, and a word search puzzle: <http://media.us.macmillan.com/activityguides/9781596436084AG.pdf>

Some excellent Lincoln lessons and activities are posted on the US Mint Teacher Resource website: www.usmint.gov/kids/teachers/lessonPlans/cents.

- Story Hour with Lincoln includes a Lincoln Cent Images page, Lincoln Beard and Hat template, and a Lincoln Bookmark template.
- The 2009 Lincoln Bicentennial One Cent Program includes grade-level lesson plans, worksheets, and activities.

Research: This whimsical picture book references a great deal of historical content. The topics in the list below are all mentioned in *Abe Lincoln's Dream* and would work well as subjects for research projects. Some other suggestions for their use include the following:

- Select a topic. Write two facts and two opinions concerning it.
- Draw an illustration of one or more of the topics.
- Pick a topic and write down three questions you have concerning it.
- Choose two topics. List three ways they are alike and three ways they are different.
- Write song lyrics based on one of the topics to the tune of either "Old McDonald Had a Farm" or "London Bridge Is Falling Down."

● Research Topics ●

1. Abraham Lincoln
2. US Flag
3. US Civil War
4. Fala (Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Scottish terrier)
5. George Washington
6. Gettysburg Address
7. Lincoln's Bedroom
8. Apollo 11 Moon Landing
9. Mount Rushmore
10. National Cherry Blossom Festival
11. President's Day
12. Rex (Ronald Regan's Cavalier King Charles spaniel)
13. River Queen Steamboat
14. Statue of Liberty
15. Theodore Roosevelt
16. Thomas Jefferson
17. United States Capitol
18. Washington, DC
19. Washington Monument
20. White House
21. White House Rose Garden
22. Yuki (Lyndon Johnson's "mutt")

Abraham Lincoln's Wise Words

Introduction: The conversation between Quincy and Lincoln's ghost reveals that the president is concerned about the fate of the nation. However, as troubled as he is, this does not prevent him from revealing his love for jokes, riddles, and wordplay. Lincoln, one of our most quoted presidents, was also a master of practical advice and good common sense.

Grade Level: 2–5

Time: 20–30 minutes

Objectives:

- The student will use a decoding key to discover famous quotes from Abraham Lincoln.
- The student will interpret quotes using context clues and pre-knowledge.

Materials:

- *Abe Lincoln's Dream*
- Visual: Abraham Lincoln's Wise Words (see below)
- Activity sheets: Abraham Lincoln's Wise Words 1, 2, and 3 (see below)
- Writing tools

Procedure:

1. Introduce the lesson by telling the students that this activity is based on the wise sayings of President Abraham Lincoln. If time allows, read the book *Abe Lincoln's Dream* to the students. This takes about four minutes.
2. Display the Abraham Lincoln's Wise Words visual. Read the directions and fill in the remaining letters on the grid as a demonstration for the students. The completed quotation will read: "Leave nothing for tomorrow which can be done today."
3. Ask the students what they think Abraham Lincoln meant in this quote.
4. Distribute the activity sheets and writing tools. Students may work individually or in groups.
5. Check for understanding.
6. Discuss the quotes and their meanings with the students.

EXTENSION: Challenge students to create their own quotation codes. Be prepared to supply them with paper, pencils, and directions to the quotation books in the library's collection (DDC 082).

Answer Key

Activity I: "Whatever you are, be a good one."

Activity II: "The best way to destroy an enemy is to make him a friend."

Activity III: "Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe."

Abraham Lincoln's Wise Words

Abraham Lincoln had little formal education, yet he was a wise man. He is well known for his thoughtful speeches and sensible statements. Use the chart below to decode one of his quotations by placing the letter above the corresponding number. The first word has been done for you.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
L	M	N	O	R	T	V	W	Y
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18

“ L E A V E
10-5-1-16-5 12-13-15-8-9-12-7 6-13-14
15-13-11-13-14-14-13-17 17-8-9-3-8
3-1-12 2-5 4-13-12-5 15-13-4-1-18 ”

What do you think Abraham Lincoln meant when he said this?



Abraham Lincoln's Wise Words

Use the chart below to decode one of his quotations by placing the letter above the corresponding number.

A	B	D	E	G	H	N
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
O	R	T	U	V	W	Y
8	9	10	11	12	13	14

“
 $\overline{13-6-1-10-4-12-4-9}$ $\overline{14-8-11}$ $\overline{1-9-4}$ $\overline{2-4}$
 $\overline{1}$ $\overline{5-8-8-3}$ $\overline{8-7-4}$ ”

What do you think Abraham Lincoln meant when he said this?



Abraham Lincoln's Wise Words

Use the chart below to decode one of his quotations by placing the letter above the corresponding number.

A	B	D	E	F	H	I	K
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
M	N	O	R	S	T	W	Y
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16

“

14-6-4

2-4-13-14

15-1-16

14-11

3-4-13-14-12-11-16

1-10

4-10-4-9-16

7-13

14-11

9-1-8-4

6-7-9

1

5-12-7-4-10-3

”

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A	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	L	M
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
N	O	P	R	S	T	U	V	W	X
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20

“
 6-8-18-4 10-4 15-8-20 7-12-17-14-15 16-12 2-7-12-13
 3-12-19-11 1 16-14-4-4 1-11-3 8 19-8-9-9
 15-13-4-11-3 16-7-4 5-8-14-15-16 5-12-17-14
 15-7-1-14-13-4-11-8-11-6 16-7-4 1-20-4
 ”

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
L	M	N	O	R	T	V	W	Y
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18

“ LEAVE NOTHING FOR
 10-5-1-16-5 12-13-15-8-9-12-7 6-13-14

TOMORROW WHICH
 15-13-11-13-14-14-13-17 17-8-9-3-8

CAN BE DONE TODAY.”
 3-1-12 2-5 4-13-12-5 15-13-4-1-18

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Use the chart below to decode one of his quotations by placing the letter above the corresponding number.

A	B	D	E	G	H	N
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
O	R	T	U	V	W	Y
8	9	10	11	12	13	14

“W H A T E V E R Y O U A R E, B E
 13-6-1-10-4-12-4-9 14-8-11 1-9-4 2-4
 A GOOD ONE.”
 1 5-8-8-3 8-7-4

What do you think Abraham Lincoln meant when he said this?




 Abraham Lincoln's Wise Words

Use the chart below to decode one of his quotations by placing the letter above the corresponding number.

A	B	D	E	F	H	I	K
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
M	N	O	R	S	T	W	Y
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16

“ T H E B E S T W A Y T O
 14-6-4 2-4-13-14 15-1-16 14-11

D E S T R O Y A N E N E M Y I S
 3-4-13-14-12-11-16 1-10 4-10-4-9-16 7-13

T O M A K E H I M A F R I E N D .”
 14-11 9-1-8-4 6-7-9 1 5-12-7-4-10-3

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A	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	L	M
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
N	O	P	R	S	T	U	V	W	X
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20

“G I V E M E S I X H O U R S T O C H O P
 6-8-18-4 10-4 15-8-20 7-12-17-14-15 16-12 2-7-12-13
D O W N A T R E E A N D I W I L L
 3-12-19-11 1 16-14-4-4 1-11-3 8 19-8-9-9
S P E N D T H E F I R S T F O U R
 15-13-4-11-3 16-7-4 5-8-14-15-16 5-12-17-14
S H A R P E N I N G T H E A X E .”
 15-7-1-14-13-4-11-8-11-6 16-7-4 1-20-4

What do you think Abraham Lincoln meant when he said this?

