



# Lincoln Lesson Plans

Grade Level:  
4-12

### Materials

- Play script for *I, Too, Am a Kentuckian: A Lincoln Travelogue*
- Student Handout: Developing a Character
- Background Information for Teacher

### Technology

- DVD player or computer
- Optional: computer with LCD projector and screen (to project photos of the sites from the Kentucky Lincoln Heritage Trail on the wall or on a screen).

### Vocabulary

Confederacy  
heritage  
legacy  
primary source  
secondary source  
Union

## I, too, am a Kentuckian: A Lincoln Travelogue

### Length

This activity is designed to be very flexible. If conducted by a team of teachers, with each class taking on a specific task, it will require 10, 50-minute class sessions (two weeks). If conducted by an individual teacher with one class, it will require 15, 50-minute class sessions (three weeks). However, this time can be spread out over a longer period or it can be condensed by spending more time each day. The production may also require more time if students contribute their own content and/or are responsible for building scenery and making costumes.

### Concepts/Objectives

- Students will learn that Abraham Lincoln was influenced by the years he spent in Kentucky as a child and by the connections he had to people and places in Kentucky.
- Students will learn that Kentucky values the legacy of Lincoln.

### Activity

Students will prepare for and present the play, *I, too, am a Kentuckian: A Lincoln Travelogue* for parents or for other classes. The play showcases 13 stops on the Kentucky Lincoln Heritage Trail, incorporates music and dance, and shows the strong influence of Kentucky and Kentuckians on Lincoln's childhood, his political beliefs, and his presidency. The script is designed to be flexible so that students may add their own creative interpretations based on the research they have conducted.

### Lincoln Resource

- KET documentary, *I, too, am a Kentuckian*
- Segment 1: Lincoln's Ties to Kentucky

## Instructional Strategies and Activities

### Introducing the Activity

Begin by showing the students the first video segment from the KET documentary. Explain to the students that they will take part in a performance to showcase Abraham Lincoln as a Kentuckian.

In the discussion following the viewing, ask students to share what they already know about Lincoln, especially about his connection to Kentucky. Jot the information down on note cards and fix each card to a bulletin board or to the wall. Tell the students that they each can add cards to this "Mr. Lincoln Wall" as they discover new information.

The next day, explain the meanings of the terms legacy and heritage; tell the students how they relate to Lincoln in Kentucky. Then give students time to explore the Kentucky Lincoln Heritage Trail interactive web site [www.kylincolntrail.com](http://www.kylincolntrail.com). This

is the content that drives the play. (If you do not have access to a computer lab, you may have students take turns using the classroom computers while the others work on their research and writing assignments.)

## Assigning the Roles

How did other candidates in the election of 1860 propose to solve the problems with slavery?

Divide the students in the way that works best with your student population. There are four main speaking parts (Mother, Father, Girl, Boy) and seven minor speaking parts, as well as four group singing performances: the Kentucky pioneers, the play-party children, the soldiers, and the Camp Nelson families.

If four classes are collaborating, then make each class responsible for one of the group performances. People with speaking parts can meet separately, perhaps with a resource teacher or even a parent volunteer. The script includes only a short version of each song; these can be extended, or new songs can be added, for a longer performance.

If only one class of students is performing, then students playing the seven supporting roles must also take part in the group performances. The whole class (excepting the four lead roles) should be involved in each of the group performances. You may wish to have more than one student play each of the main roles for a portion of the play.

## Developing the Roles

Once roles have been assigned, have students come up with their own 18th or 19th century identities—name, age, occupation, and more. Students given the roles of historic characters must stick to the truth, but other students can make up much of their own identities. For example, if a student chooses to be or is assigned to be one of the pioneers, why is this person coming to Kentucky? Where is this person from? Is this person a part of a family also coming to Kentucky? What does this person want to do in Kentucky? Share basic information from books or websites, and have plenty of books available for students to do their own research. You can also bookmark web sites for individual research.

Dates are important as students begin to build the mental framework for understanding history. As they develop characters, make sure they know what year their character comes in contact with Lincoln.

- Kentucky pioneers: Lincoln's father came to Kentucky through the Cumberland Gap in 1781.
- Play-party children: Lincoln was born in 1809 and left Kentucky in 1816.
- Civil War soldiers: The Battle of Perryville took place in 1862.
- Camp Nelson families: The Union Army at Camp Nelson started accepting African-American recruits in 1864.

### **Kentucky Academic Content**

#### **Academic Expectations**

2.19  
2.20

#### **Program of Studies**

*Understandings*  
SS-5-HP-U-2  
SS-4/5-HP-U-3

*Skills and Concepts*  
SS-4/5-HP-S-1  
SS-4/5-HP-S-2

#### **Core Content**

SS-04/05-5.1.1

Also, make sure they know that all of them (except the play-party children) are playing the roles of adults.

Each student, whether they are developing a character or portraying historic characters, should each complete the biography included in this lesson as a handout. (Depending on the time you have available, you may wish to make this a homework assignment.) A writing assignment based on the character each student develops is explained below under “Writing for the Lesson.” (Students can work on both these assignments while you are rehearsing with other students.)

## Rehearsals for Lead Roles

Choose the lead roles (Mother, Father, Girl, Boy) carefully. These characters have the major responsibility for setting the pace of the performance. They don't need to memorize their lines; the brochure they refer to can actually be a copy of the script. Either supply one copy of the brochure, which the characters share (this is how it is written in the script), or each character may have his/her own copy of the brochure. Even though memorization is not required, they should be very familiar with their lines, going over them many times so that they can speak them directly to the audience, with only occasional glances at the script.

The lead roles should also go over their blocking (how they move on stage) many times with the stagehand. Their blocking is actually directed by the stagehand because they will move towards the placards the stagehand puts on stage.

## Rehearsals for Group Performances

To learn the songs, have students listen to the recorded music several times, then sing along with it, and finally, sing on their own. Piano accompaniment is great, but not necessary. The voices need not be perfect. (Not everyone could sing in tune in the 19th century either.) You can also ask for help from the music teacher.

## Full Rehearsals

Only two rehearsals with the entire group will be needed if you work with the individual groups so that they know where to sit before they go on stage, how they go on stage, and where they go when they leave the stage. It's best to keep all groups in the audience (in the front rows) until it is time for their entrance.

## Costumes

Costumes are not absolutely necessary, but they definitely enhance the performance. You might establish a costume committee responsible for coming up with suggestions for each of the characters. Ask parents to help, but bear in mind that some won't, or can't, so you may have to have a few costume pieces of your own on hand. The costume crew can also be put in charge of keeping the costumes organized and safe before and after the performance. (Have them label boxes or paper bags with the students' names.)

You can do without costumes for the group performances or depend on very simple ones. The Camp Nelson families and the Kentucky pioneers should look rumpled,

poor, and somewhat worn out: long skirts for the girls and loose shirts and pants for the boys, perhaps with rope belts.

Finding enough blue and gray for the soldiers will be difficult. A solution is to use large pieces of blue and gray construction paper or craft paper. Make a simple tunic by using string or ribbon to attach two pieces together at the shoulders.

## Set and Props

A bare stage is perfectly acceptable. The play, after all, really takes place in the audience's mind. However, students may want to make backdrops. You can have a set committee create the backdrops on long pieces of craft paper, like murals. Then for each "scene," two students unroll the backdrop across the stage, one holding onto one end of the mural and the other walking across stage to unroll it fully.

If you don't want to use backdrops but you do want something more than a bare stage, consider projecting slides of the 13 stops on the trail directly on the wall behind the students or on a screen off to the side.

A props committee can concentrate on the few props mentioned in the script (a cardboard car, a chair for Lincoln, a portrait of Lincoln)—they can add to this list if they wish. The props committee can also prepare the placards.

## Support/Connections/Resources

### Field Trips:

Visiting the various sites mentioned in the Travelogue would be a wonderful experience for students either before or after they perform the play. Complete field trip information to Kentucky Lincoln sites is included in the following publication:

Carpenter, Katie Fraser. *Learning About Lincoln*. Louisville: EvaMedia, 2009.

Publication for teachers contains biographical information, a timeline, complete lesson plans, resources lists, more ideas for classroom study, field trip information, full text of important speeches and letters, and more.

Individual web sites also include field trip information. Access them easily by going to the Kentucky Lincoln Heritage Trail interactive web site [www.kylincolntrail.com](http://www.kylincolntrail.com) and clicking on each icon.

### Books:

There are hundreds of books about Lincoln that are suitable for student research. Your school library undoubtedly has a wide selection. The following two are particularly good.

Herbert, Janis. *Abraham Lincoln for Kids*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2007.

This biography of Lincoln combines a well-written narrative with an assessment of the effects of his decisions as president. Activities include "Draw a Political Cartoon," "Learn Morse Code," "Hold a Debate," and "Make a Stovepipe Hat." Includes

## Writing for the Lesson

To enlarge and enliven their understanding of their roles, each actor should research and write a first-person account of their character's connection to Lincoln. (You might have each student in the class choose a character and do this.) The account can be a memoir, a series of letters or journal articles, a speech, or any other written document.

Begin by explaining to students the difference between a primary and a secondary source. Have examples to show them.

- A primary source is a document (letters, manuscripts, diaries, newspapers, speeches, interviews, journals, maps, documents, notes, photographs) created at the time historical events occurred. Primary sources provide firsthand evidence of historical events.
- A secondary source is based on a primary source. Most nonfiction books are secondary sources, e.g., textbooks, biographies, history books.

Students will have their own ideas, but here are some suggestions for the ones whose imaginations may be stalled:

- A Kentucky pioneer can write a letter to his/her mother back in North Carolina about the challenges the group has faced migrating to Kentucky.
- Henry Clay can write a speech to be delivered in Congress stating his political beliefs.
- Mary Todd can write a series of journal entries about meeting and marrying Lincoln.
- Josiah Speed can write a letter to Lincoln advising him on Kentucky's feelings about the war.
- One of the recruits at Camp Nelson can write a memoir explaining why it was so important for him to enlist in the Union army.
- Cassius Marcellus Clay can write a newspaper editorial stating his views.
- One of the play-party children can write a memoir about childhood in Kentucky.

The script is designed to be flexible. As written, it allows only a few words to be spoken by Mary Todd Lincoln, Joshua Speed, Henry Clay, and Cassius Marcellus Clay. However, any of the students' writings can be substituted for their lines. You can also add one of the writings by the pioneers, the play-party children, the soldiers, or the Camp Nelson families to the script.

historical photos and illustrations, a timeline, list of places to visit, and an annotated bibliography.

Freedman, Russell. *Lincoln: A Photobiography*. Boston: Clarion, 1987.

Winner of several awards, including the Newbery Medal. On Amazon.com, it is described as "the most complete and enjoyable children's book ever written about one of the nation's most fascinating and important figures." Copiously illustrated with period photographs and drawings.

#### Web Sites:

Lincoln's Kentucky connections are highlighted in the following web sites.

The Kentucky Lincoln Heritage Trail  
**[www.kylincolntrail.com](http://www.kylincolntrail.com)**

A cooperative effort by the Kentucky Heritage Council, the Kentucky Department of Tourism, and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, this site features an interactive map of all the Lincoln-related sites in Kentucky that welcome visitors. If students click on the site, they're taken to a pop-up that explains its significance, tells a story from Lincoln's life, and offers additional information about the history or the time period. You can access the 27 stories directly at <http://www.kylincolntrail.com/lincolnStory.aspx>; they're useful for student research on Mr. Lincoln.

Lincoln's Kentucky  
The Filson Historical Society  
**[www.filsonhistorical.org/lincoln](http://www.filsonhistorical.org/lincoln)**

Well-designed, succinct overview of Lincoln's life and legacy. Nice illustrations. Great for student research.

Kentucky Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission  
**[www.kylincoln.org](http://www.kylincoln.org)**

The Kentucky Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission focuses on Lincoln's connections to Kentucky. It includes a list of bicentennial events, information about Lincoln sites to visit, educational resources, and information about grants.

#### Music:

All the songs mentioned in the script can be downloaded from iTunes.

Folk musician Jerry Ernst performs songs from the mid-19th century on period instruments, including a small parlor organ and a fretless banjo. Mr. Ernst also maintains a web site on nineteenth century music **[members.aol.com/jerund/jerund.html](http://members.aol.com/jerund/jerund.html)** where you can sample the songs.

On his CD *Abe Lincoln In Song* (2007), Chris Vallilo combines storytelling, contemporary music, and period folk songs to bring Lincoln and his times to life. Vallilo also performs the program for schools and community organizations. Check his web site **[www.ginridge.com](http://www.ginridge.com)** for more information.

Of several recordings of music from the Civil War era, *Songs of the Civil War* (Sony, 1991) is particularly good; artists include Kate & Anna McGarrigle, Rufus Wainwright, Kathy Mattea, John Hartford, Sweet Honey in the Rock, and Judy Collins. The collection includes “Give Us a Flag,” by Richie Havens; the song was written by a soldier in the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, the Union Army unit featured in the movie *Glory*.

Sheet music for several of the songs can be found online at the Library of Congress’s Lincoln Virtual Library <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/alhtml/alhome.html>.

Instructions for several play-party games can be found in the following:

Spurgeon, Alan L. *Waltz the Hall: The America Play Party*. Missouri: UP of Missouri, 2005.

## Open Response Assessment

**Prompt:** Kentucky was an important part of Abraham Lincoln’s life.

**Directions:** Answer each of the following, elaborating your answer with pertinent details. Give at least three reasons Kentucky was an important place for Lincoln and explain each of them fully.

Open Response Scoring Guide				
4	3	2	1	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student explains that Lincoln’s first seven years in Kentucky formed his basic character; that Lincoln was influenced by many friends and acquaintances in Kentucky; and that Kentucky played a very important part in the Civil War.</li> <li>• Explanations are insightful and relevant and demonstrate extensive knowledge of Lincoln’s connection to Kentucky.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student give three reasons why Kentucky was an important place for Lincoln and explains them.</li> <li>• Examples are relevant and show broad knowledge of Lincoln’s connection to Kentucky</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student only gives two reasons why Kentucky was an important place for Lincoln, or lists three reasons without explanations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student only gives one reason why Kentucky was an important place for Lincoln, or gives two reasons without explanations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No answer or irrelevant answer.</li> </ul>

### Applications Across the Curriculum

The performance can also work especially well as a collaboration between the arts and humanities teachers and the social studies teacher, as it involves much of the core content from the arts & humanities. In art, for example, students can be responsible for backdrops, picturing either the sites that the family visits or scenes from Lincoln’s life. If the play is presented as part of a celebration of Lincoln’s legacy, art students can draw portraits of Lincoln or scenes from his life to line the hallway. Music/dance teachers can help students learn the songs and play-party games, using the appropriate vocabulary. (The script features one play-party game, but more could be added so that all students can perform.) The drama teacher can help the lead characters with their blocking and with delivering their lines.

## **Adaptations for Diverse Learners/Lesson Extensions**

- Let highly motivated students work together to create additional skits, songs, or other products inspired by the sites on the Lincoln Heritage Trail. These can be incorporated into the play script or presented separately.
- Pair students with differing abilities to conduct research on visuals (in books or online). What kind of a costume would a Kentucky pioneer wear, as opposed to someone like Mary Todd, who lived in a thriving city? What did a typical farm on the frontier look like? What did Kentucky's capital look like? How many different images of Lincoln can students find? (He was the most photographed person of his time.) Print out or photocopy the images and add them to the "Mr. Lincoln Wall" in the classroom. Make sure each image is labeled with the appropriate date.

## **Answer Key for Multiple Choice Questions**

1. C
2. B
3. A
4. A
5. D

**Author: Katie Fraser  
Carpenter**

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# **Multiple Choice Questions**

1. In the 1800s, thousands of people came to Kentucky through the Cumberland Gap. Why did most of them come?
  - A. Land speculators had driven them out of their homes back east.
  - B. They were looking for adventure.
  - C. They wanted a better life for themselves and their children.
  - D. They were following Daniel Boone.
2. Abraham Lincoln lived in Kentucky until he was seven years old. What major influence did this have on his life?
  - A. He made a lot of friends in Kentucky.
  - B. His basic personality and his character were formed in Kentucky.
  - C. Kentucky was a slave-owning state and so he learned to hate slavery.
  - D. He learned a lot from moving around so much.
3. Why did Lincoln consider Senator Henry Clay his personal hero?
  - A. Lincoln learned a lot about politics from Senator Clay.
  - B. Senator Clay was against slavery.
  - C. Senator Clay was the senator from Kentucky.
  - D. Senator Clay was his closest childhood friend.
4. Why did African Americans come to Kentucky's Camp Nelson during the Civil War?
  - A. They wanted to enlist in the Union Army so they could join the fight against slavery.
  - B. They wanted to live in Kentucky.
  - C. The Union army paid more money than the Confederate army.
  - D. They were forced to come.
5. What did Lincoln want to accomplish with his Gettysburg Address?
  - A. To honor the soldiers who gave their lives in battle.
  - B. To inspire the Union to continue the Civil War.
  - C. To remind people that, In the United States, "all men were created equal."
  - D. All of the above.

# A Lincoln Travelogue

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

The Kentucky Lincoln Heritage Trail is a scenic driving trail through central Kentucky that highlights historic sites associated with President Abraham Lincoln and the family and friends who influenced him throughout his lifetime.

Completed in 2008, the trail actually updates the original Lincoln Trail introduced by the American Petroleum Institute in 1963. It has been a joint project of the Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office in partnership with the Kentucky Historical Society, Kentucky Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, Kentucky Department of Tourism and Kentucky Transportation Cabinet.

The trail features highway signage, a brochure, a map, and an interactive website. The web site [www.lincolntrail.gov](http://www.lincolntrail.gov) includes links to stories from Lincoln's life associated with each historic site, as well as additional information about the location and nearby attractions.

In rough chronological order as to their importance in Lincoln's life, the major stops on the trail are as follows:

### 1. Springfield sites

*Sites in Springfield include the Lincoln Homestead and the Mordecai Lincoln House, both of which exhibit buildings and memorabilia related to Lincoln's parents and their families.*

### 2. Lincoln Marriage Temple, Harrodsburg

*The log cabin in which Lincoln's parents were married was moved to this site from its original location in Washington County.*

### 3. Hardin County sites

*Lincoln-related sites in Hardin County include the Hardin County Museum, Lincoln Heritage House, Helm Cemetery, and the Sarah Bush Johnston Lincoln Memorial.*

### 4. Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site, Hodgenville

*A cabin similar to the one in which Mr. Lincoln was born in 1809 is preserved in a memorial building at the site of his birth.*

### 5. Abraham Lincoln Boyhood Home

*Lincoln's family moved to this home when he was two and left for Indiana when he was seven.*

**6. The Lincoln Museum and Lincoln Statue, Hodgenville**

*The museum contains twelve dioramas illustrating pivotal times in Lincoln's life, memorabilia, and an art gallery devoted to images of Lincoln.*

**7. Ashland: The Henry Clay Estate, Lexington**

*Lincoln greatly admired Henry Clay, who was the most prominent U.S. senator of his time.*

**8. Farmington Historic Plantation, Louisville**

*This home was owned by the parents of Joshua Speed, one of Lincoln's closest friends. Lincoln spent three weeks here in 1841.*

**9. White Hall State Historic Site, Richmond**

*White Hall was the home of Cassius Marcellus Clay, emancipationist, newspaper publisher, and friend to Lincoln*

**10. The Mary Todd Lincoln House, Lexington**

*Lincoln's future wife, Mary Todd, moved to this house when she was 13 years old. Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln stayed here when they visited Lexington.*

**11. Kentucky State Capital Rotunda in Frankfort**

*A statue of President Lincoln stands in the Rotunda.*

**13. Perryville Battlefield State Historic Site**

*Perryville was the site of the most destructive Civil War battle in the state.*

**14. Camp Nelson Civil War Heritage Park and National Cemetery, Nicholasville**

*Camp Nelson was the largest Africa-American recruitment camp in Kentucky and third largest in the nation.*

**15. Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History**

*A major exhibit tells the story of Lincoln's lifelong engagement with Kentucky and Kentuckians.*

# Developing a Character

My name is	My age is
I was born in _____ in the year _____	
Here are the names and ages of my family.	This is a picture of me.
We are in Kentucky because	
This is what I did for a living before I came to Kentucky:	
Here is some more information about me:	

(You can also write on the back.)

# I, TOO, AM A KENTUCKIAN: A LINCOLN TRAVELOGUE

## Characters

Mother, Father, Girl, Boy, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, Thomas Lincoln, Abraham Lincoln, Joshua Speed, Henry Clay, Cassius Marcellus Clay, Mary Todd Lincoln, various other Kentuckians, and a stagehand.

## Setting

Thirteen stops along the Lincoln Heritage Trail in Kentucky. The stage decorations may be as complex or as simple as the director desires. The stage may be bare, with nothing more than placards on easels to identify the name and place. The director may also choose to project slides of the various stops upon the wall or a screen. There may be painted backdrops of the various stops. Costumes are essential, but props may also be left to the director's imagination.

*The play begins when the family (Mother, Father, Girl, Boy) enters. Girl holds a brochure labeled "Kentucky Lincoln Heritage Trail" and reads as she walks.*

## Girl

*(reading from the brochure)*

"Abraham Lincoln was our most famous and admired president. He always remained true to his Kentucky roots.

## Mother

Well, I always thought he came from Illinois.

## Girl

No, he was born right here in Kentucky, on February 12, 1809.

## Father

*(takes the brochure from Girl)*

Hmm. It says here that this Lincoln Heritage Trail (now reading) "will take us across the central portion of the Bluegrass State to explore historic sites highlighting the Kentucky people, places, and events that shaped the Lincoln legacy." What do you say, kids? Are you ready to learn about President Lincoln in Kentucky?

## Boy

I sure am!

## Mother

Well then, let's go.

*The family climbs into their “car” (perhaps a cardboard cutout) and heads for a corner of the stage where a placard set on an easel announces “Stop1: Lincoln Homestead, Springfield.” The family steps out of their car; they all look around, puzzled. There is nothing to see.*

**Girl**

This is it, Stop Number One: The Lincoln Homestead. But I don’t see anything.

**Boy**

They’re coming. There they are!

*Enter several students dressed in 18th century costume, each carrying all kinds of bundles and baskets. They walk across the stage, one after the other. Their bodies show how tired they are. They sing (or just listen to) “Amazing Grace,” repeating the chorus as they cross.*

*Feel free to substitute another Appalachian song, e.g. “Poor Wayfaring Stranger.” Both of these can be downloaded off iTunes. These songs are difficult to sing, so you might consider using one voice.*

**Travelers**

*Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me  
I once was lost, but now I’m found, was blind, but now I see.  
Through many dangers, toils and snares, we have already come.  
T’was Grace that brought us safe thus far and Grace will lead us home.*

**Father**

Those people are walking into Kentucky from Carolina through the Cumberland Gap. The guide says Kentucky was the place for people on the make to go. It was the land of opportunity, the land of plenty, the Eden of promise.

**Mother**

Look at that little baby girl, in the bonnet. I think she’s Abraham Lincoln’s mother, Nancy Hanks. And that tall boy there is his father, Thomas Lincoln.

**Girl**

They’re just kids, like us.

*The walkers continue to walk, exiting on the opposite side of the stage. The music dies away. The last traveler to leave stops, looks off at the audience, speaks, and then exits.*

**Kentucky Pioneer**

So this is Kentucky. It sure is beautiful.

**Boy**

Let’s go to the place Abraham was born.

**Girl**

I think you should call him Mr. Lincoln.

**Boy**

All right. Mr. Lincoln. Where was he born?

**Father**

*(checking the brochure)*

Just outside of Hodgenville, Kentucky. In a log cabin on Sinking Spring Farm.

*(A stagehand puts a new placard up: "Stop 2: Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site, Hodgenville.")*

Right over there.

*Nancy Hanks Lincoln and Thomas Lincoln enter. Nancy is holding the baby.*

**Thomas**

A son. We have a son. Let's name him Abraham, after my father.

**Nancy**

A little brother for Sarah.

**Thomas**

Look at all that black hair.

**Nancy**

Isn't he beautiful?

**Thomas**

He sure is. Why, with your looks and my brains, he could do anything he wants to do.

**Nancy**

And if he has my brains and your looks, he could still grow up to be the president of the United States!

**Thomas**

Now, Nancy, let's not go talking nonsense!

*She laughs and walks off; Thomas follows. The stagehand enters and adds a new placard to the easel: "Stop 3: Lincoln's Boyhood Home, Hodgenville."*

**Mother**

*(taking the brochure from Girl and reading from it)*

But he didn't stay at Sinking Spring Farm. When he was two years old, the family moves three miles away to the Knob Creek Farm. He had a typical frontier childhood.

**Father**

*(peering over Mother's shoulder at the brochure)*

The house was right on the main road between Nashville and Louisville. Mr. Lincoln went to school when he lived there.

**Boy**

I bet he had a lot of friends.

Enter young Abraham, his sister Sarah, and several friends. They begin to play “Skip To My Lou.”

“Skip To My Lou” is a play-party game typical of the Kentucky frontier. It begins with any number of couples hand in hand, skipping around in a ring, singing the chorus. Then a lone boy in the center of the moving circle of couple sings, “Lost my partner what’ll I do?” as the girls whirl past him. Then he grabs the hand of one of the girls and begins to sing, “I’ll get another one prettier than you.” When he grasps the hand of his chosen one, her partner then takes his place in the center of the ring and the game continues with the chorus.

### Young Abraham Lincoln and Friends

*Skip, skip, skip to my lou  
Skip, skip, skip to my lou  
Skip, skip, skip to my lou  
Skip to my lou, my darling*

*Lost my partner, what’ll I do?  
Lost my partner, what’ll I do?  
Lost my partner, what’ll I do?  
Skip to my lou, my darling*

*I’ll find another one, better than you*

*I’ll find another one, better than you  
I’ll find another one, better than you  
Skip to my lou, my darling*

*The family joins in the last verse, having a good time. The dancers suddenly leave and the stage is bare. There is a pause.*

### Mother

Well, I guess that’s it then. Mr. Lincoln moved to Indiana when he was seven. But you know, a child really has his basic personality in place by the time he’s seven years old. Look at the two of you.

### Father

And you learn those first important lessons about honesty and fairness when you’re little.

### Girl

*(takes back the brochure and turns the page)*

But this isn’t the end of Mr. Lincoln’s association with Kentucky. He kept coming back. A lot of his friends lived here. Besides, Kentucky was a pretty important place back then.

*The stagehand brings out four placards and three new easels. The placards are labeled “Stop 4: Ashland: The Henry Clay Estate, Lexington,” “Stop 5: White Hall State Historic Site, Richmond,” “Stop 6: The Mary Todd Lincoln House, Lexington,” and “Stop 7: Farmington Historic Plantation, Louisville.” Students costumed as Henry Clay, Marcellus Cassius Clay, Mary Todd Lincoln, and Joshua Speed enter with the stagehands and watch approvingly as the appropriate placard is set in place. Mrs. Lincoln holds a framed portrait of her husband.*

**Father**

So, I suppose those are the people he knew.

**Boy**

You mean we can go inside the houses they used to live in?

**Girl**

Uh huh. And they look just like they used to look back then, like time stopped.

**Father**

Hmm. That tall man is probably Henry Clay, the senator from Kentucky. He was called the most famous man never to be president.

**Henry Clay**

*(stepping forward)*

I would rather be right than be President.

**Boy**

*(taking the brochure)*

I don't know if he was right all the time, but this says he was Mr. Lincoln's hero, that Mr. Lincoln learned about politics from Senator Clay. Senator Clay was called the "Great Compromiser." What does that mean?

**Mother**

That means that you have to give a little to get a little – like sometimes you have to give in to your sister, maybe by letting her choose what TV show to watch, to get her to do what you want.

**Girl**

Who's that other guy? He looks angry.

**Boy**

*(checking the brochure)*

Cassius Marcellus Clay. He was angry – about slavery. Even though his family owned slaves and he lived in a slave-owning state, he hated it.

**Cassius Marcellus Clay**

*(stepping forward)*

Slavery is morally, economically, physically, intellectually, socially, religiously, politically -- evil in its inception, in its duration, and in its catastrophe."

**Father**

So he's another of Mr. Lincoln's friends. I know that Mr. Lincoln had pretty strong feelings about slavery too. He despised it.

**Mother**

Now that woman has to be Mary Todd, Mr. Lincoln's wife. I've heard she was very ambitious, even though women weren't even allowed to vote back then.

**Girl**

They weren't? That's crazy.

**Mother**

She thought Mr. Lincoln was destined for great things.

**Mary Todd Lincoln**

*(admiring the photo in the frame)*

Mr. Lincoln is to be President of the United States some day. Look at him: Doesn't he look as if he would make a magnificent President?

**Girl**

Lincoln certainly looks serious...but he had a lot of difficult things to deal with as a President.

**Mother**

*(takes the brochure)*

That last one, the man over there, he's Joshua Speed, Lincoln's best friend. He lived in Kentucky and Mr. Lincoln moved to Washington, they kept in touch by letters.

**Joshua Speed**

*(stepping forward)*

You can hardly imagine, and I am sure I can not describe my feelings, when I saw by the papers this morning that you were a Candidate for the Presidency. Allow a warm personal friend, though, as you are perhaps aware, a political opponent, to congratulate you.

*Joshua Speed shakes hands with the other three. They all pick up their placards, and three of the easels, and exit. This leaves only one easel on stage.*

**Boy**

So these people were all from Kentucky. Even though Mr. Lincoln left Kentucky when he was seven, I guess Kentucky still had a lot of influence on what he said and did.

**Father**

Yep. There's the next stop – the statue and the museum in Hodgenville.

*The stagehand enters, with a new placard ("Stop 8: Lincoln Statue and Museum, Hodgenville") and a chair, followed by Mr. Lincoln. Mr. Lincoln sits in the chair and assumes the same pose as the statue.*

**Girl**

He looks deep in thought.

**Boy**

He has a lot to think about.

**Mother**

He had to make the decision to go to war. It must have been so hard for him.

**Mr. Lincoln**

I hope to have God on my side, but I must have Kentucky. To lose Kentucky is nearly the same as to lose the whole game

*Mr. Lincoln exits, abruptly.*

**Girl**

So Kentucky was an important place in the war?

**Mother**

*(still looking at the brochure)*

According to this it is. Kentucky was on the Ohio River, and the Ohio River was important for transportation and commerce. It was also a wealthy place, with a large population.

*(The stagehand enters during Mother's speech and puts up a new placard: "Stop 9: Jefferson Davis Memorial, Fairview.")*

**Mother**

And the president of the Confederacy was born here in Kentucky too.

**Father**

That's odd, isn't it? The president of both North and the president of the South during the Civil War were both born in Kentucky.

**Boy**

I wonder if there were any battles in Kentucky.

*The stagehand enters, with a new placard. It reads: "Stop 10: Perryville Battlefield State Historic Site."*

**Girl**

*(taking the brochure)*

Well ... Kentucky stayed in the Union. There were a lot of little battles, this says, and one big one —The Battle of Perryville. There's a visitor's center there, and every year the battle is re-enacted.

**Mother**

This place looks peaceful now, but it must have been awful when the battle was going on.

*Several students enter, all wearing blue. They sit stage right and sing.*

**Northern troops**

*We'll rally 'round the flag, boys, we'll rally 'round again.*

*Shouting the battle cry of freedom*

*We will rally from the hillside, we'll gather from the plain*

*Shouting the battle cry of freedom*

*Enter several more students, all wearing gray. They sit stage left and sing.*

### **Southern troops**

*Hurrah, hurrah, for Southern rights, hurrah!  
Hurray for the bonnie blue flag that bears a single star.*

### **Northern troops**

*Glory, glory, hallelujah! Glory, glory, hallelujah!\_  
Glory, glory, hallelujah! His truth is marching on.*

### **Southern troops**

*O, I wish I was in Dixie! Hooray! Hooray!  
In Dixie Land I'll take my stand to live and die in Dixie  
Away, away, away down south in Dixie!*

*During the songs, some of the students get up and “die” – that is, they leave the stage. After “Dixie” finishes, both the remaining blue and gray come together and intermix, blue standing beside gray. They sing:*

### **All troops**

*When Johnny comes marching home again, hurrah, hurrah,  
When Johnny comes marching home again, hurrah, hurrah,  
The men will cheer and the boys will shout  
The ladies they will all turn out  
And we'll all be glad when Johnny comes marching home.*

*Music for all these songs can be found on iTunes. Find the lyrics by entering the song name plus the word “lyrics” in Google. Feel free to change up the songs; the five listed here are relatively well known.*

### **Boy**

They don't look all that happy.

### **Mother**

I think that even if you win a battle, or a war, it's still a very sad thing.

### **Father**

*(taking the brochure)*

Now here's something interesting.

*(The stagehand enters with another placard: “Stop 11: Camp Nelson, Nicholasville”)*

Apparently there was an army recruitment camp near Nicholasville called Camp Nelson. African-Americans came from all over Kentucky and the whole South to enlist in the Union army. They wanted to do their part in stopping slavery. Their families came, too, in hopes of gaining their freedom.

*Enter several students, most of them dressed in ragged clothing. They sing:*

**Fort Nelson soldiers and families**

*Oh, give us a flag, all free without a slave  
We'll fight to defend it as our fathers did so brave;  
The Gallant Company A will make the rebels dance  
And we'll stand by the Union if we only have a chance*

*So rally, boys ,rally, let us never mind the past;  
W had a hard road to travel, but our day is coming fast;  
For God is for the right, and we have no need to fear,  
The Union must be saved by the colored volunteer*

*“Give Us a Flag” was written by one of the soldiers in Robert Gould Shaw’s regiment; the regiment was featured in the movie Glory. You can download a version of it by Richie Havens off iTunes; the song is also featured in the 1991 Sony CD Songs of the Civil War. (Note that some of the lyrics are not suitable for a children’s performance.) Another possibility here is “The Valiant Soldiers.” This was the marching song of the First Arkansas Colored Regiment and is sung to the tune of “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.” Lyrics, as well as a fascinating history, are available on Wikipedia under “Marching Song of the First Arkansas.”*

*The family applauds; the group bows and leaves.  
The stagehand enters with another placard: “Stop 12: The Lincoln Statue, Kentucky State Capital Rotunda, Frankfort.” Mr. Lincoln enters behind the stagehand and assumes the same post as the statue.*

**Girl**

Look! There’s another statue.

*(taking the brochure)*

This one’s in the capital building in Frankfort. That’s the capital of Kentucky.

**Boy**

Huh. I wonder what he’s thinking.

**Mr. Lincoln**

*(stepping forward)*

Fourscore and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation--or any nation, so conceived and so dedicated--can long endure.

**Girl**

That’s a very famous speech. I’ve heard it before. Did he give that speech in Kentucky?

**Father**

No. It’s from the Gettysburg Address. It was given at the site of the Battle of Gettysburg, and that was in Pennsylvania. But it’s one of the most famous speeches in the world.

**Boy**

What happened there?

**Father**

There was a horrible battle. And Mr. Lincoln wanted to tell the people why the war was important and why they had to continue fighting it.

**Girl**

Why did they?

**Father**

For freedom. Some of the people in America weren't free, even though the Declaration of Independence said that all men were created equal.

**Mr. Lincoln**

We here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom— and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

*Mr. Lincoln bows his head, waits a moment, then exits. The family watches him walk off-stage.*

**Boy**

He means democracy, doesn't he? That's the kind of government he's talking about.

**Father**

That's right. It was the only democracy that existed back then.

**Girl**

So he went to war for an idea.

**Mother**

Yes, I think that's true. A pretty powerful idea.

**Girl**

You got to think that we he learned here in Kentucky when he was young, and all the advice he got from his friend and people he knew in Kentucky, helped him figure out what he thought about things and what to do.

**Father**

It made him who he was.

*The stagehand enters with one last placard: "Stop 13: The Thomas C. Clark Center for Kentucky History."*

**Father**

Well, kids, there's our last stop.

*(checking the brochure)*

This says there's a special exhibit about Mr. Lincoln called "Beyond the Log Cabin: Kentucky's Abraham Lincoln." It's traveling around the state in 2009.

**Boy**

It sounds like they're pretty proud of Mr. Lincoln in Kentucky.

**Mother**

Well, he was born here, in a log cabin with a dirt floor ...

*Thomas and Nancy Lincoln enter and take their positions stage right.*

**Girl**

And he grew up in Kentucky and learned to read in Kentucky.

*The children enter and stand next to Thomas and Nancy Lincoln.*

**Father**

His wife, his friends, and the people he admired were from Kentucky.

*Joshua Speed, Henry Clay, Cassius Marcellus Clay, and Mary Todd enter and take their positions stage left.*

**Mother**

And he ended up with the most important job in the entire nation. He held the nation together, and he made sure that freedom meant everyone was free.

*Mr. Lincoln enters and strikes a pose.*

**Girl**

And he earned the admiration of people all over the world – and of people right here in Kentucky!

*Girl gestures to include all actors on stage as the remaining actors enter.*

**Mr. Lincoln**

*(stepping to centerstage)*

I, too, am a Kentuckian.

*The stagehand brings out one last placard. It reads: "Applause." Mr. Lincoln bows, and all other actors do the same.*

End of play