



# Lincoln Lesson Plans

## The Boyhood of Abraham Lincoln: 200 Years of Change

Grade Level:  
K-3

### Materials

- Student Handout: A Boy in Kentucky
- Student Handout: Abraham Lincoln Didn't
- Play-Acting Abraham Lincoln Didn't Teacher Guide
- Student Handout: ASL Abraham Lincoln
- Optional Student Handout: ASL Abraham Lincoln Didn't
- Note to Parents

### Technology

- DVD player or computer
- computer with Internet access

### Vocabulary

American Sign Language  
bartering  
education  
goods  
needs  
past  
present  
services  
technology  
trading  
transportation  
wants

### Length

4 class periods

### Concepts/Objectives

- Students will understand the differences and similarities in the boyhood of Abraham Lincoln and childhood today.
- By comparing similarities and differences, students will gain historical perspective on cultural and historical changes in the last 200 years.

### Activities

- Students will read and illustrate a story about the early life of Abraham Lincoln.
- Students will watch a video showing the territory and home where Abraham Lincoln spent his early childhood.
- Students will draw pictures to compare Abraham Lincoln's childhood to childhood today.
- Students will learn some words in American Sign Language and tell a story about Lincoln in American Sign Language.
- Students will present a "Show and Tell" with items from their own lives that are similar and different from items used long ago.

### Lincoln Resources

From *Lincoln: I, too, am a Kentuckian*

- Video segments 1-8

OR

*Lincoln: The Kentucky Years*

Teachers may find viewing other segments from *Lincoln, I, too, am a Kentuckian* personally enriching and helpful in developing perspective on Lincoln.

## Instructional Strategies and Activities

Note to teacher: The grade levels for this lesson are broad because of the ease in adapting the materials for your individual classroom. Some primary classrooms may choose to only color in the book. A third grade class may color and add illustrations to give or read to a younger audience. The open response and performance assessment could require more written detail for older students.

Send home the Note to Parents about the items students are to bring in before you begin this lesson or on Day One.

### Day One

Ask students what they know about Abraham Lincoln. What did he do? When did he live? Why do we still remember and honor him today? Where was Lincoln born?

Read the handout A Boy in Kentucky.

Discuss what Abraham Lincoln did that was the same as boys and girls do today. In summary of the discussion, write on the board the following: “As a boy, Abraham Lincoln...”

Show students some or all of the video segments about Lincoln’s early life from *I, too, am a Kentuckian* or *Lincoln: The Kentucky Years*.

Have students illustrate the A Boy in Kentucky text. A kindergarten or first grade class may best complete the book by illustrating one page every day. Second- and third-graders can use their notes to add details to the book.

## Day 2

Remind students that yesterday, they discussed what things Abraham Lincoln did as a boy that boys and girls still do today. Now we’re going to discuss things we do today that Abraham Lincoln Didn’t as a boy.

Read Abraham Lincoln Didn’t from the materials section.

For K-1 students: Read a second time with the play-acting sections for students as described in the materials section.

For older students: Distribute this as a handout. Students could take turns reading to the class with one student reading the Abraham Lincoln didn’t parts and the other explaining life long ago. Adding dramatic expression and motions could make the reading more interesting.

Direct upper grade primary students to add their own comparisons as to what Abraham Lincoln did and didn’t do. These changes could be categorized using the lesson vocabulary.

Discuss how life has changed in the 200 years since Abraham Lincoln’s birth.

Look at a picture of the statue of the boy Lincoln in Hodgenville to gather clues as to how Abraham Lincoln’s life was different. You can see images in the Gallery section of the Hodgenville, Kentucky, web site [www.hodgenvillekentucky.org](http://www.hodgenvillekentucky.org).

Make two big overlapping circles on the board and discuss how students could create a Venn diagram to organize a comparison of Lincoln’s life with the life of children today. Label one circle “Abraham Lincoln’s Childhood.” Label another circle “Today’s Childhood.” As students compare and reflect on similarities and differences introduce terms such as trading, barter, goods, services, wants, needs, technology, transportation, and education.

To reflect more on similarities between Abraham Lincoln’s childhood and childhood today, work on the American Sign Language for the basic terms as described in the materials section.

If students are very motivated by ASL or if you have an expert, expand the ASL activity to include a simplified Abraham Lincoln Didn’t comparison as described in the Optional Handout: Abraham Lincoln Didn’t.

## Kentucky Academic Content

### Academic Expectations

2.16  
2.18  
2.20

### Program of Studies

SS-P-CS-U-1  
SS-P-CS-S-1  
SS-P-E-S-3  
SS-P-E-U-5  
SS-P-HP-U-1  
SS-P-HP-S-1

### Core Content

SS-EP-2.1.1  
SS-EP-3.3.1  
SS-EP-3.3.2  
SS-EP-5.1.1  
SS-EP-5.2.3

## Writing for the Lesson

Using a large writing pad, as a class write a journal entry from the perspective of a friend playing with young Abraham Lincoln in the creek. As you write, discuss how children would have played together at the time. Students could then write as an individual activity.

## Day 3

Students complete the Open Response Assessment.

## Day 4

Students share the “Show and Tell” past and present items.

## Support/Connections/Resources

### Web sites:

[www.nps.gov/abli/planyourvisit/boyhood-home.htm](http://www.nps.gov/abli/planyourvisit/boyhood-home.htm)

National Park Service description of Knob Creek farm where Lincoln’s family lived

[www.aslpro.com/cgi-bin/aslpro/aslpro.cgi](http://www.aslpro.com/cgi-bin/aslpro/aslpro.cgi)

ASL signing dictionary

[www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/abli/hrs/hrs1.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/abli/hrs/hrs1.htm)

Historic resource on Abraham Lincoln from the National Park Service

## Applications Across the Curriculum

### Visual Art

Guide students to illustrate the words to “A Boy in Kentucky” focusing primarily on the artistic principle of shape. Provide basic shapes like rectangles, squares, ovals, etc., that students can trace and combine to make their drawings.

### Drama

Older students could divide the Abraham Lincoln Didn’t handout to take turns reading and acting out the ideas. Groups of four will work well. Students should evenly divide the text and practice acting out the ideas while the others read. The text could be altered and short dialogue could be added.

### Music

Sing “Yankee Doodle.” This likely would have been a popular song Abraham Lincoln and other children would have sung in the early 1800s. This song, popular in Colonial America, would have been carried to the frontier by the descendents of the colonies.

### Language Arts

Discuss verbs using the text from “A Boy in Kentucky” and the ASL activity. Each word you pick could complete the sentence “As a boy Abraham Lincoln...” A few examples: played, learned, loved, wrote, read, listened, worked, ate, slept, lived.

Older students should take the verbs and write them on a piece of paper to use them as a note-taking device during the video.

### Science

Classify the “Show and Tell” objects by their properties.

# Adaptations for Diverse Learners/Lesson Extensions

This lesson offers an opportunity for anyone with experience in ASL to be an expert. Some children, even typically developing children, may have learned some signs as babies for early communication. Introducing the finger spelling alphabet in ASL is great enrichment for all students. It can be a good way to practice spelling words and develop appreciation for people who communicate differently.

There's an interesting legend that Lincoln's statue at the Lincoln Memorial has ASL in the hands of Lincoln ("A" for Abraham and "L" for Lincoln). People say the A in his closed fist and the left hand looks like an L in ASL. The sculptor, Daniel French, had previously sculpted a leader in deaf education signing with a child. Abraham Lincoln approved legislation for the Columbia Institution for the Deaf and Dumb and the Blind to grant college degrees in 1864. Research will show the story to be an interesting myth.

[www.start-american-sign-language.com/history-of-american-sign-language.html](http://www.start-american-sign-language.com/history-of-american-sign-language.html)  
History of American Sign Language

[http://library.gallaudet.edu/Library/Deaf\\_Research\\_Help/Frequently\\_Asked\\_Questions\\_\(FAQs\)/OtherMiscellaneous/Lincoln\\_Memorial\\_Statue.html](http://library.gallaudet.edu/Library/Deaf_Research_Help/Frequently_Asked_Questions_(FAQs)/OtherMiscellaneous/Lincoln_Memorial_Statue.html)  
Discussion of the legend of Lincoln's hands, Daniel French, and ASL

[www.nps.gov/linc/historyculture/lincoln-memorial-myths.htm](http://www.nps.gov/linc/historyculture/lincoln-memorial-myths.htm)  
Myths about the Lincoln Memorial

Researching the legend could be an interesting kind of treasure hunt for advanced students as they look into the facts of the case and drawing a conclusion and/or belief based on their research. It would be interesting to extend this discussion to look at the 1963 Civil Rights March on Washington and the Lincoln Memorial's role. For gifted students, this could inspire a thought-provoking discussion of how Abraham Lincoln embodies principles of freedom and inclusion to many Americans.

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# Abraham Lincoln Didn't Student Handout

**Abraham Lincoln didn't go to the mall.**

Where did he go? What kinds of stores were on the Kentucky frontier?

**Abraham Lincoln didn't pick dinner up at a drive-through restaurant.**

How did he get his food?

**Abraham Lincoln didn't watch television or listen to the radio.**

What did he do for entertainment?

**Abraham Lincoln didn't play on a soccer team.**

What did he do for fun?

**Abraham Lincoln didn't ride in a car, a bus, or an airplane.**

How did he get from place to place?

**Abraham Lincoln didn't have electricity.**

How was his home heated and lit?

**Abraham Lincoln didn't go to a big elementary school.**

What kind of school did he go to?

**Times were very different two hundred years ago. Changes in education, technology, and transportation have changed the way we live. Abraham Lincoln's childhood was very different than childhood is today. But, some things haven't changed at all.**

We remember Abraham Lincoln for what he DID do.

People say he was honest and hard working. He always loved to learn. When he grew up, he became President of the United States.

# Abraham Lincoln Didn't Play-Acting Teacher Guide

**Teacher: Did Abraham Lincoln go to the mall? Oh, no, he didn't. He didn't go to the mall, but he probably went to the mill.** (Stress the vowel sounds in mall and mill)

Lincoln's family lived on the frontier near Hodgenville, Kentucky. There was a mill. A mill is a place where corn and wheat are ground to be used for flour. Who wants to be a farmer? Bring a sack of corn. Farmers would take their corn to the mill. Now, let's make a rolling motion with our arms. The heavy mill stone would turn around and grind up the corn and farmers would take home the milled corn to make corn bread. Add a little baking soda, milk and egg to your mix. Bake the cornbread over the fire. Now eat it up. Thank you, farmers.

**Did Abraham Lincoln pick dinner up at a drive-through restaurant? Oh, no, he didn't. This is what he did.**

In Lincoln's time, most people raised their own food and traded or bartered to get what they didn't have. Who wants to trade? Okay, hold up two pumpkins. Okay, someone else hold up a bag of cornmeal. Would you like to trade or barter those? Look over the item you want. Trade those. Great, you have traded or bartered to get what you needed. Thank you, traders.

**Did Abraham Lincoln watch television? Oh, no, he didn't. This is what he did.**

Abraham Lincoln's father was a great storyteller. Storytellers were popular on the frontier. Maybe he used funny expressions on his face or used his arms to show how big the deer was or how fat the turkey was. Abraham Lincoln listened very carefully. Now let's imagine Abraham Lincoln going out the next day and retelling the stories he heard from his father and maybe making up his own stories, too.

**Did Abraham Lincoln play on a soccer team? Oh, no, he didn't. This is what he did.**

Children on the frontier worked to help their families. Who wants to be a frontier child? Okay, Abraham Lincoln planted corn and pumpkin in the field of their Knob Creek farm. Frontier children would help feed the chickens, gather the eggs, and milk the cows. (Pause to give children a chance to act out.)

**Did Abraham Lincoln ride a school bus? Oh, no, he didn't. This is what he did.**

Let's all make a sound of galloping horses by patting our hands on our laps. When Abraham Lincoln was born, the fastest way to travel was by horse. (Pat very quickly.) For a much slower way to travel, people walked. (Pat very slowly.)

**Did Abraham Lincoln have electricity? Oh, no, he didn't. This is what he did.**

Let's cut some wood for the fire. Abraham Lincoln was a strong boy. He probably could do this very well when he was a young man. Let's gather the wood. Look all around. Bend down low and stretch. Let's carry the wood. It's really heavy. Now let's build the fire with the big logs in the middle and the sticks around it and the pine needles on top and below. Now the mother or father would light the fire and warm up by it. Hold one finger out. This is the candle. It's not very bright, but the light would be good enough to read by each night.

**Did Abraham Lincoln go to a big elementary school? Oh, no, he didn't. This is what he did.**

He went to a very small "blab" school with his sister. Children would recite out loud or "blab" to learn their lessons. There were not enough books. Let's practice A is for Apple, B is for boy. Now you say it. (Class repeats)

**Times were very different two hundred years ago. There are many changes in education—the way we learn—technology—inventions and conveniences—and transportation—the way we travel.**

Now everybody stand or sit up big and tall. Abraham Lincoln was a tall man, but he was also once a child. He grew up and learned just like you are. So when you do your best you are like Abraham Lincoln.

# American Sign Language: Abraham Lincoln

## Student Handout

Let's learn some letters and words in American Sign Language:

**A-for Abraham—**

is made by making a fist.

**L-for Lincoln—**

is made by extending the thumb and forefinger to make an L shape while bending the other fingers.

**would**

is signed by holding the right palm near the face and then moving the hand down to make a 90-degree angle.

**play**

Bend middle three fingers on each hand, extend pinkie and thumbs out, shake hands.

**eat**

Hold fingers on one hand together as if holding bread, bring to mouth.

**sleep**

Hold hand with palm toward the face and fingers spread. Bring the fingers out and together to a closed position.

**read**

Hold one hand sideways and use two fingers on the other hand to move up and down like reading a book.

**help**

Make a fist with the thumb up, place on other hand with palm up, and lift both hands together in that position.

# American Sign Language: Abraham Lincoln

## Student Handout

Search the [www.aslpro.com/cgi-bin/aslpro/aslpro.cgi](http://www.aslpro.com/cgi-bin/aslpro/aslpro.cgi) to find the ASL signs to tell the following story in ASL.

### **Abraham Lincoln Never**

Abraham Lincoln never went to the mall.

The stores were small.

Abraham Lincoln didn't watch television.

He listened to his father's stories.

Abraham Lincoln never played soccer.

He played in the fields with his friends.

Abraham Lincoln never rode in a car.

He rode a horse. Later in life, he rode a train.

Abraham Lincoln never went to a big school.

He went to a one-room school.

Abraham Lincoln was honest and hard working. He loved to read. He was strong. When he grew up, he became President of the United States.



# Lincoln

Dear Parents,

As part of our focus on Abraham Lincoln, we'll be doing a "Show and Tell" comparing our lives today to Lincoln's childhood in the early 1800s.

Your child should bring in two items. One item should be something Lincoln might have used as a boy, including food items and nature items. The other item would be something Lincoln would not have used.

Please help your child find two appropriate items that reflect historic and cultural changes and similarities since that time.

When your child shows the item in class, your child should be prepared to name and briefly discuss each item.

“A Boy in Kentucky”  
Student Handout

Page One: Abraham Lincoln was born in a log cabin in Kentucky.

Page Two: As a boy, he helped with the chickens.

Page Three: He planted corn and pumpkins with his family.

Page Four: He played outside with his friends.

Page Five: He learned to read.

Page Six: He loved to tell stories.

Page Seven: Abraham Lincoln was a boy in Kentucky.

Page Eight: He grew up to be President of the United States.