An Illustrated Abraham Lincoln Autobiography
by Catherine Fassero

In groups, students will examine and summarize events of Lincoln’s life using sections of the Abraham Lincoln’s autobiographical notes to create an illustrated timeline in power point or Timeliner.

Overview

Objectives: After completing the activity, students will be able to:
• Examine an autobiography as a primary source.
• Apply vocabulary skills to comprehend Lincoln’s autobiography.
• Interpret the autobiography illustrating important events in Lincoln’s life.

Understanding Goal: (Student target in kid friendly language): I can read and summarize important events in Lincoln’s life using a primary source.

Investigative Question: How can using the primary source, Lincoln’s autobiography, help us interpret and summarize events in the life of our 16th president?

Time Required: 3-5 approximately 50 minute class periods

Grade Level: 4 - 8

Topic: Presidents/ Abraham Lincoln/ Social Studies

Era: National Expansion and Reform 1815-1860

Illinois Learning Standards: Language Arts: 1A, 2B
For information on specific Illinois Learning Standards go to www.isbe.state.il.us/ils/
**Background for Lesson:**

Students should have some basic knowledge of Abraham Lincoln before completing the illustrated timeline activity. Some suggested activities include: creating a KWL chart to activate any political/personal knowledge of Abraham Lincoln, reading biographies and completing 3-2-1 comprehension activities (3 important facts I would like to discuss relating Lincoln and his life 2 questions I would ask Lincoln if I could talk with him 1 way in which I think I might be like him), investigating and creating timelines, and calculating ages using known dates.

**Library of Congress Items:**

- **Title:** Abraham Lincoln, [May-June 1860] (Autobiographical Notes)
  - Collection or Exhibit: Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress
  - Media Type: Image
  - URL: [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mal&filename=mal1/032/0321400/malpage.db&recNum=0](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mal&filename=mal1/032/0321400/malpage.db&recNum=0)

**Additional Materials:**

- LCD projector showing Abraham Lincoln’s Original autobiography: [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mal&fileName=mal1/032/0321400/malpage.db&recNum=0](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mal&fileName=mal1/032/0321400/malpage.db&recNum=0)

- Transcribed copy of autobiography for each student.

- Pre-recorded tape of teacher reading autobiography.

- Divided sections of autobiography for each group with defined vocabulary words.

- Copy of vocabulary words or blank vocabulary sheet if having students define the words.

- Rubric of summary and timeline for each student.
Description of Teacher Actions:

Day 1
1. Open the LOC web site and display the original autobiography to students making sure to stress the importance of this being a primary source and autobiography written 148 years ago.
2. Pass out translated copies of autobiography and a list of defined vocabulary to each student. The vocabulary sheet is intended for younger students. (See Below)
3. Read the translated pages to students while scrolling through the original pages on the LOC website.
4. Stop to check for understanding and summarize what each section means. THINK PAIR, SHARE. Older and more advanced students could possibly read and summarize each section on their own. Using specific sections of this text would also be a great source to complete a lesson on the use of context clues.
5. Collect autobiography and vocabulary sheets for use on the next day.

Day 2-3
1. Pass out the autobiography and vocabulary sheets.
2. Finish reading the autobiography as a class and explain to students that they are going to work with partners to create an illustrated timeline using the format below. The teacher will then scan each group’s event in powerpoint or Timeliner.
3. Break students into groups and pass out their assigned section of the autobiography.
4. Explain that students are going to read the assigned section of the autobiography again with their partners. A Prentice Hall reading guide and possible reflection questions have been included to check for understanding during the partner read. (A taped recording of the teacher reading each section will be available, if needed.)
5. After students have read the assigned section again they must come up with a date and title that will describe an event that took place in Lincoln’s life. (Example: 1809 Abraham Lincoln was born)*** Some groups will use their math skills to figure out the approximate date using the age of Lincoln according to the autobiography.
6. Once the date has been established a few sentences are needed to clarify the event (Example: On February 12, 1809, Abraham Lincoln was born. His mom’s name was Nancy and his dad’s name was Thomas.)
7. A colored hand-drawn picture is also required to explain the event.

Day 4-5

1. After students finish with the hand drawn event, each group will work with the teacher to input their information into the class power point or Timeliner software. (For younger students, a class timeline is sufficient. However, for older students individual or group timelines would be more age appropriate)

**Extension Ideas:**

- Students can
  1. create a timeline of their own lives
  2. calculate dates from information given in autobiography
  3. write their own autobiography
  4. create an autobiography or biography in a bag using 10 significant events in the student’s life
  5. determine meaning of the nonfiction text by using context clues
  6. define and use vocabulary words in autobiography

**Evaluation**

Teacher monitoring of student responses during discussion and group work
Independent reading guide with reflection questions.
# Rubric

**Timeline: An Illustrated Abraham Lincoln Autobiography**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content/Facts/Dates</strong></td>
<td>Facts and dates were accurate for the event reported on the timeline. (4 sentences-facts)</td>
<td>Facts and dates were accurate for almost all events reported on the timeline (75%). (3 sentences-facts)</td>
<td>Facts and dates were accurate for the event reported on the timeline (25%). (1-2 sentences-facts)</td>
<td>Facts and dates were often inaccurate for the event reported on the timeline. (0 sentences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td>The event has a creative title that accurately describes the event.</td>
<td>The event has an effective title that accurately describes the material.</td>
<td>The timeline has a title that is easy to locate.</td>
<td>The title is missing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time Use</strong></td>
<td>Classroom time was used to work on the project. Conversations were not disruptive and focused on the work.</td>
<td>Classroom time was used to work on the project the majority of the time. Conversations were not disruptive and focused on the work.</td>
<td>Classroom time was used to work on the project the majority of the time, but conversations often were disruptive or did not focus on the work.</td>
<td>Student did not use classroom time to work on the project and/or was highly disruptive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning of Content</strong></td>
<td>The student can accurately describe 75% (or more) of the group’s event/date without referring to it.</td>
<td>The student can accurately describe 50% of the group’s event/date on the timeline without referring to it.</td>
<td>The student can describe the group’s event/date on the timeline if allowed to refer to it.</td>
<td>The student cannot describe the group’s event.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vocabulary in Autobiography: (www.dictionary.com)

- whiter-where
- lineage-family
- Quakers-religious society of friends
- descendents-deriving from an ancestor
- obtained-gained
- eldest-oldest
- bunglingly-clumsily
- A.-Abraham Lincoln
- conveyance-communicating
- sons-in-law-husband of someone’s daughter
- afflicted-to suffer
- aague-fever with chills, bone aches
- succeeding-those that follow
- Ills-Illinois
- impracticable-not passable
- obviate-prevent and anticipate
- Denton Offutt-person
- timber-woods
- ludicrous-ridiculous
- thereupon-following
- conceived-the idea
- whim-an odd idea
- enterprise-project
- acquaintance-someone you know: not a friend
- previously-before the idea as conceived
- contracted-agreed in writing
- clerk-job in an office
- mill-factory
- detained-to keep from going, delay
- engineers-manages
- mentioned-something said briefly
- pursuance-carries out a plan
- intention-purpose
- indefinitely-not clear
- mentioned-said briefly
- campaign-military
- expedition-journey
- warrant-justification/warrant authorization for payment
- popularity-being popular
- canvasses-to conduct a survey
- repeal-to withdraw
- represented-to serve as the official
- precinct-district of a city
- avowed-declared
- insignificant-not important
- portion-amount
- procured-to being about
- canvass-try to get votes to run for office
- earnest-important
- protest-not approved
- ratified-to confirm approve
- regard-show respect
- examination-inspection
- inhabited-lived in
- provoked-to anger
- Whigs-19th century British political party
- amendment-to change (constitution)
- hostility-act of war
- transferred-pass from one to another
- unnecessary-not necessary
- molesting-to interfere/annoy
- thereof-of that or it
- unconstitutional-doesn’t follow laws
- levying-starting
- vested-protected by law
- principal-main
- divert-district/tum aside from a path
- accordance-follow rules
- advocated-pleading for the cause of another
- opposition-not agreeing/opposing
- nomination-nominate to office (like a president)
eamestness-seriousness
- superseded-replaced
- aroused-to stir a strong reaction
- delegate (like for president)