

# A TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR THE TIME TWISTERS SERIES

FOR  
USE WITH  
COMMON CORE  
STATE  
STANDARDS

## ABOUT THE SERIES

Steve Sheinkin, acclaimed author of nonfiction books for middle-grade and young adult readers, has launched a series for younger readers called Time Twisters. In the first book in the series, *Abraham Lincoln, Pro Wrestler*, Abe Lincoln overhears the students in Ms. Maybee's fourth grade class say, "History is boring." So he decides to teach them a lesson by quitting his place in history and pursuing his dream of becoming a professional wrestler. It's up to siblings Doc and Abby to straighten things out. They follow Lincoln back and forth through time trying to persuade him to return to 1860 and save the nation.

In *Abigail Adams, Pirate of the Caribbean*, Abigail Adams is bored with her chores at the White House and unhappy with a woman's role in 1800. She decides to follow Abe Lincoln's lead and goes AWOL to become a female pirate in the early 1700s. Doc and Abby must try to fix history again and get Abigail and her husband, John, safely back to their own time.

In both books, Sheinkin has created exciting and humorous adventures that include fun facts about these historical figures and will convince readers that history is not boring at all. Cartoon-like illustrations add to the humor and engage students in the action.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Steve Sheinkin is the acclaimed author of fast-paced, cinematic nonfiction histories for young readers, including *The Port Chicago 50: Disaster, Mutiny, and the Fight for Civil Rights*; *The Notorious Benedict Arnold: A True Story of Adventure, Heroism & Treachery*; *Bomb: The Race to Build—and Steal—the World's Most Dangerous Weapon*; *Most Dangerous: Daniel Ellsberg and the Secret History of the Vietnam War*; and *Undefeated: Jim Thorpe and the Carlisle Indian School Football Team*. His accolades include a Newbery Honor, three Boston Globe–Horn Book Awards, a Sibert Medal, and three National Book Award finalist honors. Sheinkin lives in Saratoga Springs, New York, with his wife and two children.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR



Neil Swaab is a New York City–based illustrator, designer, and author. His work has graced the covers and interiors of numerous books for children including the *New York Times* best-seller *Big Fat Liar* by James Patterson and Neil's own series *The Secrets to Ruling School*. He has also animated for TV and enjoys teaching at Parsons School of Design.

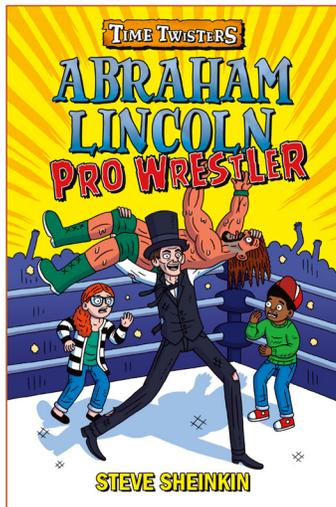
# USING THESE BOOKS IN YOUR CLASSROOM

This guide is designed to help you incorporate Steve Sheinkin's Time Twisters books into a standards-based curriculum. It provides discussion questions and pre-reading and post-reading activities for each book in the series. The "Extended Learning" section at the end of the guide contains activities for the series as a whole. Questions and activities are aligned with the four strands of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language. The standards listed throughout the guide reflect the standards for grade four, but questions and activities can be applied to grades two through five.

Reading aloud the first two chapters in *Abraham Lincoln, Pro Wrestler* to students is a great way to introduce this series. Students can complete the book independently, with a partner, or in book clubs. Encourage them to take notes about what they learn as they read.

We hope you and your class enjoy this new series. Please adapt the questions and activities in this guide to meet the needs of your students.

## PRE-READING ACTIVITIES



### K-W-L Chart

Create a K-W-L chart with students. Ask students to share what they know about Abraham Lincoln and what they want to know about him. Chart their responses and have students fill in their own charts. Tell students to complete the last column (what they learned) as they read. Explain that they will revisit their charts after they finish reading the book.

### Preview the Text

Explain to students that this book is the beginning of a new series called Time Twisters. Have them preview the book's cover, illustrations, and speech bubbles. Ask them to make predictions about what they think will happen in the story.

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## Discussion Questions

1. Why is Ms. Maybee surprised by what Abby reads in the history textbook about Abraham Lincoln? How does what Abby reads confirm what the students already feel about history?
2. How do Doc, Abby, and their classmates "break" history?
3. How do Abby and Doc's feelings about Abraham Lincoln change as they get to know him?
4. What does Abby and Doc's dad teach them about Lincoln's contributions to our country's history?
5. What is Doc and Abby's plan to fix history and get Lincoln back to work? What obstacles do they face?
6. How does Abe get the idea to become a pro wrestler? If he does become a wrestler, what effect will it have on history?
7. How do Abby and Doc think Mr. Biddle can help them fix history? Is this successful?
8. What hints are there at the end of the book that Doc and Abby will have other Time Twisters adventures?
9. What other facts did you learn about Abraham Lincoln from the author's historical note?
10. Why do you think Steve Sheinkin included fun facts about Abraham Lincoln in this book?

# POST-READING ACTIVITIES

## K-W-L Revisited

Have students complete their K-W-L charts, adding to what they learned as well as what they still want to learn or questions they have about Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War. Ask them to share what they learned and the questions they have with the class, and then circle the question they are most interested in answering. Explain that this question will guide their research projects.

## Research Projects

Have students conduct research to answer their questions using books, articles, primary sources, and appropriate websites. Provide them with graphic organizers to help them take notes and organize the information they gather. Ask students to write short research reports, and then share these reports orally with the class. Allow time for students to ask questions and make comments about these presentations.

## What If?

Have students reread the author's historical note and Chapter 8, where Abby and Doc's dad describes Lincoln's achievements. Ask students to respond in writing to the following prompt: What do you think would have happened to our country if Abraham Lincoln had abandoned his place in history? Use specific information from the book to support your response.

CCSS.RI.4.9 Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

CCSS.RL.4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.RL.4.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.

CCSS.SL.4.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

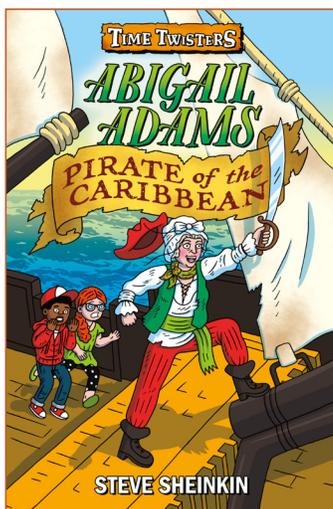
CCSS.SL.4.4 Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

CCSS.W.4.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

CCSS.W.4.7 Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

CCSS.W.4.8 Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; take notes and categorize information, and provide a list of sources.

# PRE-READING ACTIVITIES



## Who Is Abigail Adams?

Explain to students that this book focuses not on our second president, John Adams, but on his wife, Abigail. Ask students why they think the author chose to write about Abigail Adams. Tell them to think about this as they read.

## Twisted Timeline

Have students make a timeline with three dates on it: 1720, 1800, and 2018. Explain that in this book the characters Doc, Abby, Abigail Adams, and John Adams will move back and forth between these times. Ask students to write the characters' names under the year they first appear, writing a brief description of what they do at that time. Then follow each character throughout the story, drawing an arrow to the years they travel to next and where they finally end up, including what happened at that time. Students will use the timelines after reading to retell the story.

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is Abigail Adams frustrated by how she's remembered in history? Why does she want to become a pirate?
2. When do Doc and Abby realize that history is broken again? Who asks them for their help in fixing it?
3. How is the laundry basket in the White House similar to the cardboard box in the school storage room?
4. What advice does Anne Bonny give Abigail about getting a job on a pirate ship? Does it work?
5. What danger does Abigail face on the pirate ship?
6. How do Anne Bonny and the pirates capture the British Navy's ship?
7. Why do you think Abigail signs the pirate articles? When does she begin to regret her decision?
8. How does John Adams try to rescue Abigail? How are their roles reversed on the pirate ship?
9. What is Abigail's plan to get Doc, Abby, John, and herself off the pirate ship? Although it works, what danger do they still face?
10. What is the significance of the phrase, "Remember the ladies"?

## POST-READING ACTIVITIES

### Twisted Timeline Revisited

Have students use their timelines to retell the story to a partner, taking turns describing what happens to the different characters.

### Why Abigail?

Revisit the question posed before reading: Why do you think the author chose to write about Abigail Adams? Ask students to discuss her importance in history. Encourage them to use specific information they learned about her in their discussion.

### Vocabulary Development

Chapter 12 describes the confrontation between the pirates and a French merchant ship. Explain to students that the author has used many authentic technical words and phrases about ships and pirates and that the reader can use the context, the illustrations, and word parts to determine the meaning of these unknown words. Provide them with this list of words and phrases: *crow's nest, swabbie, spyglass, horizon, sloop, cannons, hatch, pistols, daggers, rigging, muskets, grappling hooks, and lashing.*

Have students reread the chapter with a partner and use the context and illustrations to figure out the meaning of these words and phrases. Then confirm or amend their definitions by consulting a dictionary.

### Compare and Contrast

Students respond to the following prompt: How were Abigail Adams and Anne Bonny similar? How were they different? Use their thoughts, words, and actions as well as the author's historical note to support your response.

CCSS.L.4.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 4 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

CCSS.RL.4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.RL.4.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.

CCSS.RL.4.3 Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

CCSS.SL.4.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.W.4.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

# EXTENDED LEARNING

## Author's Purpose

Have a discussion with students about what they think Steve Sheinkin's purpose was in writing these books. Then ask them to respond to the following prompt: Abraham Lincoln tells Abby and Doc, "We're not characters, we're *people*." What does he mean by this? How does this statement express the author's message about history?

## The Picture Says It All

Explain to students that the illustrations in the Time Twisters books add to the stories in many ways. They provide information, clarify the action, and entertain the reader. Have students work in small groups to review the illustrations and speech bubbles in the books. Then use sticky notes to mark illustrations that inform, clarify, or entertain.

## History Is Not Boring!

Provide students with a list of other important people in history. Have them choose a person to research and take notes about the person's accomplishments, importance in history, and fun facts they learn about him/her. Then ask students to create posters that include a brief report, fun facts, and illustrations about their historical figures. Provide time for them to share these with the class.

## Dear Mr. Sheinkin

Have students write letters to Steve Sheinkin to persuade him to write his next Time Twisters book about the person they researched. Ask them to explain why this person is important for children to know about and include some of the fun facts they learned.

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This guide was written by Barbara McLaughlin, M.Ed., M.A., Literacy Consultant and former Senior Program Director for Elementary ELA in the Boston Public Schools.