

A Common Core State-Standards Aligned
Discussion/Activity Guide for Grades K-5

THE SUPERLATIVE A. LINCOLN: POEMS ABOUT OUR 16TH PRESIDENT

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Written by Eileen R. Meyer

Illustrated by Dave Szalay

Published by Charlesbridge

Tallest, wisest, most studious—Lincoln was simply superlative!

Abraham Lincoln is famous for many extremes: he was the TALLEST president, who gave the GREATEST SPEECH and had the STRONGEST conviction. But did you know that he was also the MOST DISTRACTED farmer, the BEST wrestler, and the CRAFTIEST storyteller? Nineteen poems share fascinating stories about events in Lincoln's life, while history notes go even deeper into how he excelled.

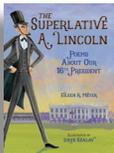
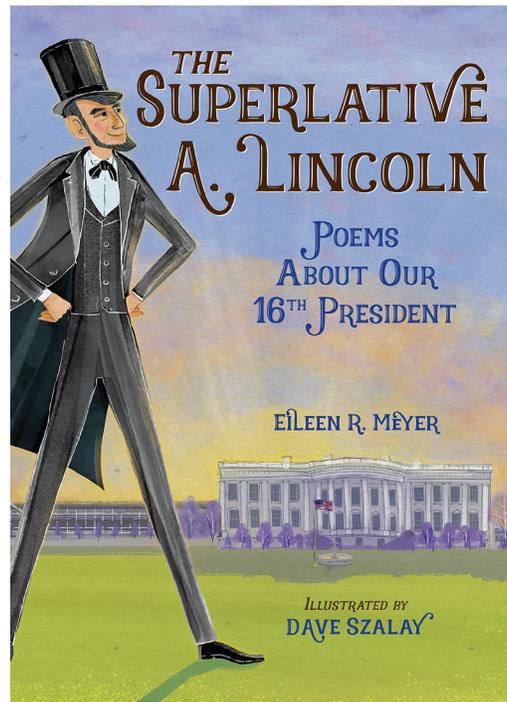
Don't forget to think of all the ways in which you, too, are superlative!

Guide crafted by
Debbie Gonzales, MFA



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www.eileenmeyerbooks.com
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Pre-Reading Discussion

Consider the cover of the book:

- Identify the tall man standing with his hands on his hips. Do you know who he is? If so, do you know what he is famous for doing? Explain your answer.
- Do you recognize the white building featured on the lower right of the illustration? Tell why the flag of the United States is flying in front the the white building. Predict the connection between the tall man and the white building.
- Read the title of the book. The word *superlative* means excellent, best, and the greatest. Discuss how the word superlative might describe the man featured in the illustration.
- Predict what this story is going to be about.



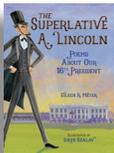
Meet the author - Eileen Meyer:

- Ms. Meyer has loved poetry since she was a very young child. On her website, Ms. Meyer describes an essay contest her teacher, Mr. Ozee, encouraged her to enter. Ms. Meyer took his suggestion and wrote a poem about the beauty of the forest, a piece inspired by a famous poem her father read aloud to her many times. To Ms. Meyer's surprise, she won the contest! Consider how winning the poetry contest as a child may have prepared her to become a poet today.
- Both poets and authors tell stories with words, yet they use words in different ways. Determine the difference between being a poet and an author. Which type of writer do you consider yourself to be?
- Learn more about the experiences that have inspired Ms. Meyer's poems and stories, access her website at www.eileenmeyerbooks.com.



Meet the illustrator - Dave Szalay:

- Dave Szalay's illustrations have been described as being *whimsical*, which means playful, fanciful, and unusual. Study the illustration on the cover of the book. Does the appearance of Lincoln's frock coat remind you of anything? Identify details in the illustration that are whimsical.
- Illustrators use artistic techniques, such as size and color, to tell stories with their pictures. Determine why Dave decided to feature President Lincoln as being the tallest image in the illustration. What message is Dave attempting to convey by arranging the illustration in this way?
- The quote "Imagination is more important than knowledge" is featured on Dave's website. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
- Dave has won a number of awards for his illustrations. Take a moment to have a look at his whimsical work by accessing his website at www.daveszalay.com.



Post-Reading Discussion

The Lincoln Memorial is a superlative American National monument built to honor the 16th President of the United States – Abraham Lincoln.

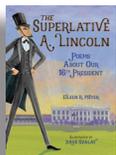


Lincoln became one of the prime figures in history of the world and the memorial was just a means of re-stating the belief of how a simple man can hold an office of power and show the world the right way to lead.

~ www.lincoln-memorial.org

*Come read about a legend –
the greatest of the greats;
from a poor boy in the backwoods
to a president, first-rate.*

- The word *legend* means well-known, celebrated, and famous. Abe Lincoln became a legendary president, one of the most well-known, celebrated, and famous leaders in history. Yet, he grew up in very poor and humble surroundings. Do you think that, as a child, he had any idea of the influential man he would grow to become? Explain your answer.
- How can it be that a poor child who taught himself to read could ultimately become the president of the United States? Describe the qualities of character required to earn such an important role in history.
- The word *enshrined* means blessed, treasured, and sacred. Over 6 million people visit the Lincoln Memorial every year. It has been the site for many famous speeches, including Dr. Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech. Discuss how the memorial serves to enshrine the 16th president’s memory today.



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*No private school.
No framed degree.
Self-learning was Abe's pedigree!*

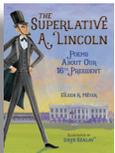
- Young Abraham was determined to learn how to read and write. He taught himself the skills required to do so. Examine his self-motivation. Where did this inner desire for knowledge come from?
- Study the illustration featuring young Abraham Lincoln sitting by the fire writing letters on a slate of wood. Discuss the similarities and differences of the way he learned to read and the way you have learned to do so.
- Later, Abe Lincoln's desire to read was much stronger than his interest in farming. What types of books do you think fascinated him? Why?
- Consider how Abraham Lincoln's childhood love of learning prepared him to become a superlative leader and president.

*He gathered his advisors, said,
No man is property.
He would proclaim in rebel states,
Those held as slaves are FREE.*

- The word *emancipate* means to liberate, set free, and unchain. Examine Abraham Lincoln's determination to free, or emancipate, enslaved people. Why do you think it was important to him to assure that all people are free?
- Abraham Lincoln welcomed Fredrick Douglass, a famous speaker and former slave, into the White House. Lincoln treated Douglass with courtesy and respect, though they held different positions on matters of the day. Explain why extending consideration to Douglass in this way demonstrated Lincoln's superlative abilities as a leader.
- Observe the illustration featuring Douglass and Lincoln shaking hands. Predict the feelings each man must've felt when meeting in this way.
- Discuss how Lincoln's respectful, considerate, and caring nature served to demonstrate strength and power as the president of the United States.

*Because he is SUPERLATIVE,
we praise his legacy.
Our Lincoln is a symbol of
the best that we can be.*

- A *legacy* is created by the way a person lives their lives. It is developed by the consistency of doing small, yet important things over and over again. Over time, such simple actions reveal strength of character. Identify the small, simple actions Abraham Lincoln repeated throughout his life, actions that were transformed into a legacy of fairness, kindness, strength, and great leadership.
- A *symbol* is a representation of the character of a person, place, or thing. Consider the illustration featuring people observing the Lincoln Memorial. Predict what the memorial symbolizes to the people in the illustration. Tell what the memorial means to you.



The Superlative A. Lincoln Vertical Puzzle

"I never, in my life, felt more certain that I was doing right, than I do in signing this paper."

~A. Lincoln, 1862

Objective: To enhance comprehension and vocabulary skills by making a connection between a series of historical events presented in the text and illustrations.

Materials:

- *The Superlative A. Lincoln: Poems About Our 16th President*, the book
- The Superlative A. Lincoln Vertical Puzzle Template (Guide, pg. 7)
- The Superlative A. Lincoln Vertical Puzzle Answers (Guide, pg. 8)
- Pencil

Procedure:

- Reread *The Superlative A. Lincoln: Poems About Our 16th President*, paying close attention to the sidebars featured on each page of the story.
- Review to clues listed to solve the **The Superlative A. Lincoln Vertical Puzzle**. Instruct students to refer to the sidebars when solving the puzzle.
- Students may use the **The Superlative A. Lincoln Vertical Puzzle Answers** to check their work.
- Students may solve the puzzle by working alone or in groups.

1. _____ **S** _____

2. _____ **U** _____

3. _____ **P** _____

4. _____ **E** _____

5. _____ **R** _____

6. _____ **L** _____

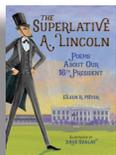
7. _____ **A** _____

8. _____ **T** _____

9. _____ **I** _____

10. _____ **V** _____

11. _____ **-E** _____



The Superlative A. Lincoln Vertical Puzzle Template

1. _____ **S** _____

2. _____ **U** _____

3. _____ **P** _____

4. _____ **E** _____

5. _____ **R** _____

6. _____ **L** _____

7. _____ **A** _____

8. _____ **T** _____

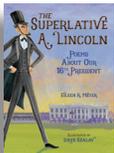
9. _____ **I** _____

10. _____ **V** _____

11. _____ **-E** _____

Clues:

1. Abraham Lincoln was relaxed and _____ in his approach to parenting.
2. Abraham Lincoln was the roughest and _____ wrestling president.
3. The Gettysburg Address was a famous _____ that lasted for only two minutes.
4. Abraham Lincoln learned to use an ax when he was eight years old. As a man, he was a good _____.
5. As a young man, Abe's father hired him out as a _____, though he would have preferred to spend his time in study.
6. At 6' 4", Abraham Lincoln was the _____ president of them all.
7. When Abraham Lincoln was paid a dollar to give two businessmen a ride in his flatboat, his _____ to leave the family farm and make a living in another way seemed possible.
8. Abraham Lincoln was an _____, holding a patent for a floatation device he designed.
9. Abraham Lincoln is most _____ for being a plainspoken man who led the nation in a time of crisis.
10. Abraham Lincoln held a strong _____ that slaves should become freed.
11. Abraham Lincoln only had one year of schooling, he was a _____ man.

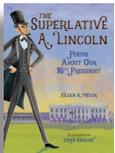


The Superlative A. Lincoln Vertical Puzzle Answers

1. p e r m i **S** s i v e
2. t o **U** g h e s t
3. s **P** e e c h
4. l u m b **E** r j a c k
5. f a **R** m h a n d
6. t a **L** l e s t
7. d r e **A** m
8. i n v e n **T** o r
9. a d m **I** r e d
10. c o n **V** i c t i o n
11. s e l f - **E** d u c a t e d

Clues:

1. Abraham Lincoln was relaxed and _____ in his approach to parenting.
2. Abraham Lincoln was the roughest and _____ wrestling president.
3. The Gettysburg Address was a famous _____ that lasted for only two minutes.
4. Abraham Lincoln learned to use an ax when he was eight years old. As a man, he was a good _____.
5. As a young man, Abe's father hired him out as a _____, though he would have preferred to spend his time in study.
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8. Abraham Lincoln was an _____, holding a patent for a floatation device he designed.
9. Abraham Lincoln is most _____ for being a plainspoken man who led the nation in a time of crisis.
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11. Abraham Lincoln only had one year of schooling, he was a _____ man.



Historical Time Line

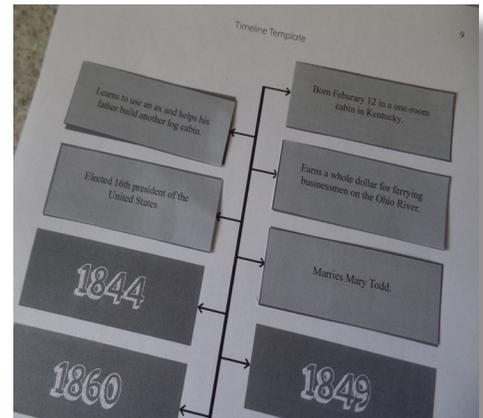
“You may think it was a very little thing, but it was the most important incident of my life.
I could scarcely credit that I, a poor boy, had earned a dollar in less than a day . . .
The world seemed wider and fairer before me.”

~A. Lincoln

Objective: To determine the central ideas of the text by analyzing the sequence of historical events.

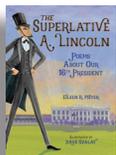
Materials:

- *The Superlative A. Lincoln: Poems About Our 16th President*, the book
- Time Line Template (Guide, pg. 10)
- Time Line Cards (Guide, pg. 11)
- Time Line Answer Cards (Guide, pg. 12)
- Cardstock
- Scissors
- Markers & Paper
- Pencil

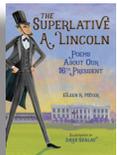
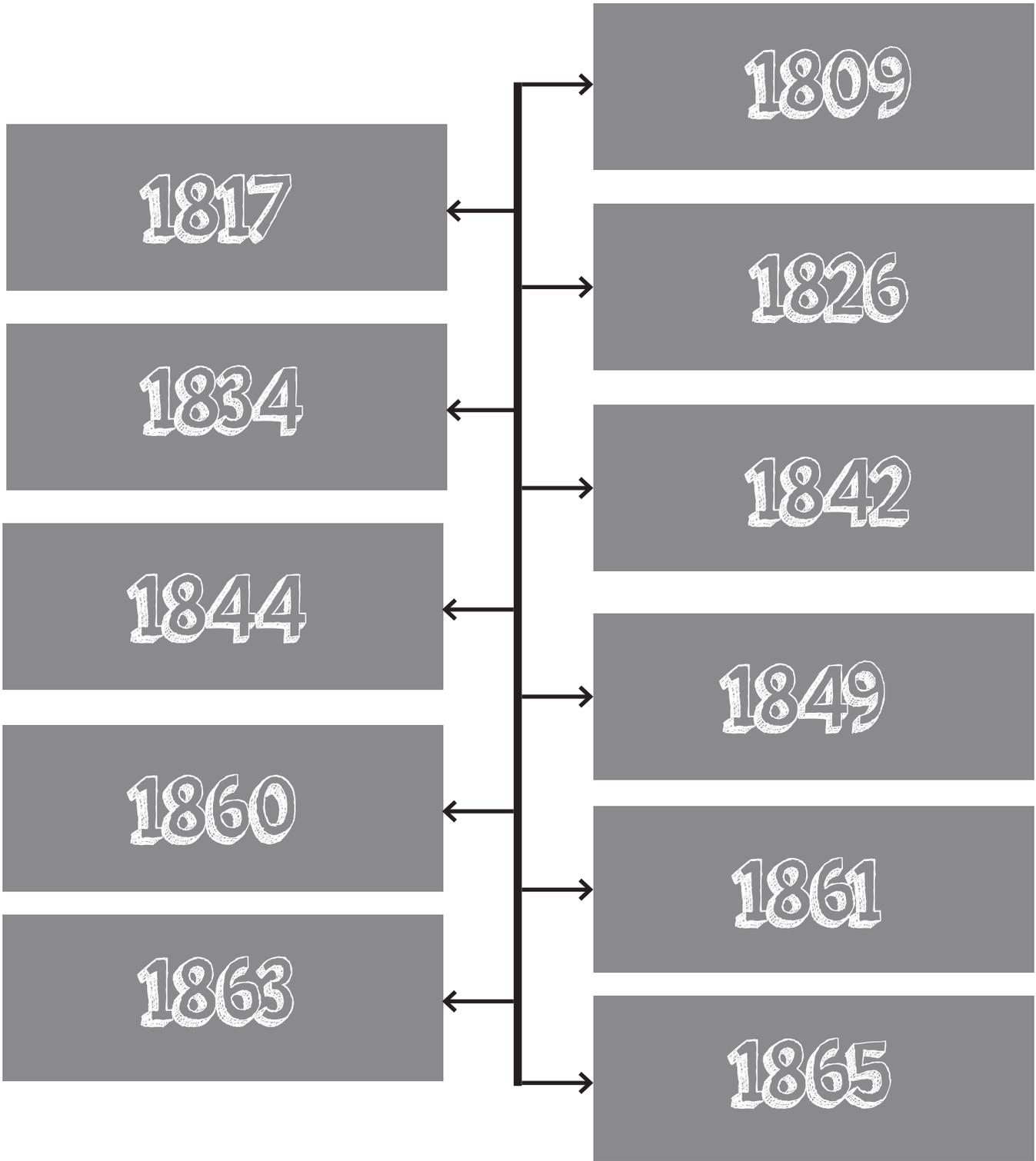


Procedure:

- Print the **Time Line Template** and the **Time Line Cards** on cardstock.
- Use scissors to trim around the borders of the Time Line Cards.
- Using the Time Line of Abraham Lincoln’s Life featured in the book’s back matter as guide, instruct students to match the content of each Time Line Card with the appropriate date printed on the Time Line Template.
- Students may use the **Time Line Answer Cards** to check their work. (Note: Depending on the student’s reading level, students may match the self-correcting Time Line Answer cards to the Time Line Template.)
- Students may work on the Time Line by working alone or in groups.
- Encourage students to illustrate an event that they most connect with. Instruct them to write a short essay describing the event and what it means to them.
- Have students share their work with the class.



Time Line Template



Time Line Cards

The 13th Amendment abolishing slavery is passed.
Lincoln is assassinated by John Wilkes Booth.

Elected 16th president of the United States.

Marries Mary Todd.

Elected to the Illinois legislature, where he serves four terms.

The Civil War begins.

Learns to use an ax.

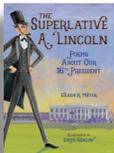
Awarded patent for a device he invented to help boats float over shallow river spots.

Issues Emancipation Proclamation on New Year's Day. Meets with abolitionist Fredrick Douglass at the White House. Delivers Gettysburg Address in November.

Born February 12 in a one-room log cabin in Kentucky.

Earns a whole dollar for ferrying businessmen on the Ohio River.

Known as "Honest Abe" for his work ethic and honesty as a lawyer.



Time Line Answer Guide

The 13th Amendment abolishing slavery is passed.
Lincoln is assassinated by John Wilkes Booth.

1865

Elected 16th president of the United States.

1860

Marries Mary Todd.

1842

Elected to the Illinois legislature, where he serves four terms.

1834

The Civil War begins.

1861

Learns to use an ax.

1817

Awarded patent for a device he invented to help boats float over shallow river spots.

1849

Issues Emancipation Proclamation on New Year's Day. Meets with abolitionist Fredrick Douglass at the White House.
Delivers Gettysburg Address in November.

1863

Born February 12 in a one-room log cabin in Kentucky.

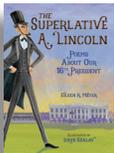
1809

Earns a whole dollar for ferrying businessmen on the Ohio River.

1826

Known as "Honest Abe" for his work ethic and honesty as a lawyer.

1844



A Biography Story Map

*Call him Mr. President,
the leader of our states.
Call him a great orator,
well-known for his debates.*

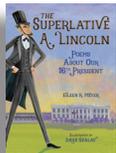
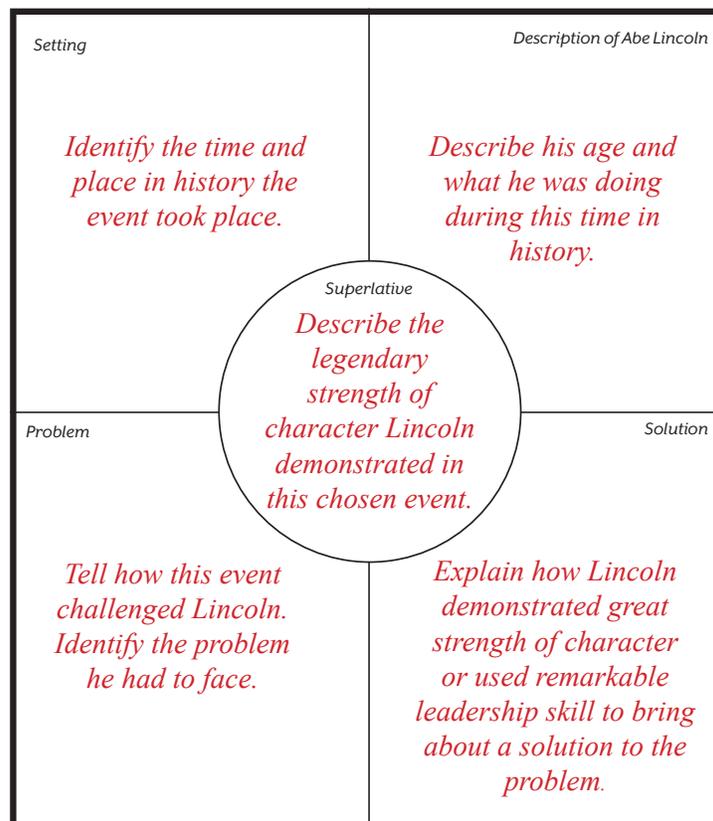
Objective: To write an informative/explanatory text examining ideas, analyzing content and information clearly.

Materials:

- *The Superlative A. Lincoln: Poems About Our 16th President*, the book
- The Legendary Abraham A. Lincoln Biography Story Map (Guide, pg. 14)
- Pen and paper

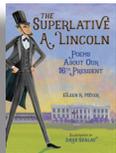
Procedure:

- Using **The Legendary Abraham A. Lincoln Biography Story Map** as a guide, instruct students to analyze a poem from the book that they feel best demonstrates Lincoln's superlative nature.
- Have students use their analysis to write and illustrate an essay or a poem expressing their interpretation of Lincoln's ability to excel or to solve troublesome problems. Encourage students to make a personal connection with Lincoln's superlative nature by identify ways that his inspirational life affected them.



The Legendary Abraham A. Lincoln Biography Story Map

<i>Setting</i>	<i>Description of Abe Lincoln</i>	
<i>Problem</i>	<i>Superlative</i>	<i>Solution</i>



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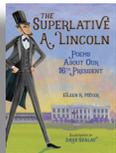
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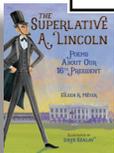


Common Core State Standards

English Language Arts Standards » Reading: Informational Text		Discussion	Vertical Puzzle	Timeline	Story Map
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.1	With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.2	With prompting and support, identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.	•		•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.4	With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text.	•	•		•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.6	Name the author and illustrator of a text and define the role of each in presenting the ideas or information in a text.	•			•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.7	With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear.	•			•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.10	Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.1	Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.2	Identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.	•		•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.4	Ask and answer questions to help determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases in a text	•	•		•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.6	Distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words in a text.	•			•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.7	Use the illustrations and details in a text to describe its key ideas.	•			•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.10	With prompting and support, read informational texts appropriately complex for grade 1.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.1	Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases in a text relevant to a <i>grade 2 topic or subject area</i> .	•	•		•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.5	Know and use various text features (e.g., captions, bold print, subheadings, glossaries, indexes, electronic menus, icons) to locate key facts or information in a text efficiently.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.6	Identify the main purpose of a text, including what the author wants to answer, explain, or describe.	•			•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.8	Describe how reasons support specific points the author makes in a text.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.10	By the end of year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, in the grades 2-3 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.1	Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.2	Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.5	Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently.	•		•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.7	Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).	•		•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.10	By the end of the year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, at the high end of the grades 2-3 text complexity band independently and proficiently.	•	•	•	•



		Discussion	Vertical Puzzle	Timeline	Story Map
English Language Arts Standards » Reading: Informational Text (cont.)					
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.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.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2	Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.3	Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.7	Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.10	By the end of year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, in the grades 4-5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.1	Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.2	Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.	•	•	•	•
English Language Arts Standards » Writing					
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.K.2	Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.			•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.K.5	With guidance and support from adults, respond to questions and suggestions from peers and add details to strengthen writing as needed.			•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.K.8	With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.			•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.2	Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.			•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.5	With guidance and support from adults, focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and add details to strengthen writing as needed.			•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.8	With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.			•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.2	Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.			•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.5	With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.			•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.			•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.			•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.			•	•
English Language Arts Standards » Speaking & Listening					
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.1	Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about <i>kindergarten topics and texts</i> with peers and adults in small and larger groups.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.2	Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.	•	•	•	•



English Language Arts Standards » Speaking & Listening (cont.)		Discussion	Vertical Puzzle	Timeline	Story Map
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.3	Ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.4	Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.5	Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional detail.			•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.6	Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.1	Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about <i>grade 1 topics and texts</i> with peers and adults in small and larger groups.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.2	Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.4	Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.5	Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.			•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.6	Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.1	Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about <i>grade 2 topics and texts</i> with peers and adults in small and larger groups.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.2	Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.5	Create audio recordings of stories or poems; add drawings or other visual displays to stories or recounts of experiences when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.			•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.3.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grade 3 topics and texts</i> , building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.3.2	Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grade 4 topics and texts</i> , building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.2	Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.5	Add audio recordings and visual displays to presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes.			•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grade 5 topics and texts</i> , building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.2	Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.	•	•	•	•

