



## Ford's Theatre: Lessons from Lincoln's Leadership

Teachers! The information and resources provided by Ford's Theatre can be used in a variety of ways in your classroom. In addition preparing for a Ford's Theatre visit, you can use the resources in classroom activities that support your curriculum and are meaningful to students, whether or not they travel.

**Activity Applicable to:** English, Language Arts, Social Studies, Business (9<sup>th</sup> \_10<sup>th</sup> grade)

**Foundational Resources:** Students will consult a variety of resources, independently selected, for research. (Subject inspired by the December 2012 featured in Entrepreneur, by Stephanie Vozza: <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/225284>)

**Purpose/Rationale:** This lesson offers students the opportunity to explore, dissect, and reassemble their understanding of Abraham Lincoln and the influence of his leadership on the course of American history. It prompts students to ask themselves, "What made Abraham Lincoln a strong leader, and how can I learn from his legacy?" To formulate an answer, students must first examine the historical contexts surrounding several major characteristics of Lincoln's leadership, as well as consider how and why his legacy is important and useful to them as young citizens today and future leaders in a modern American democracy.

Which standard applies to the development of strong character? Such a question faces educators in a contemporary classroom, where the inclusion of such themes is often assumed, rather than addressed explicitly. Many students benefit from strong leaders and role models in various aspects of their lives, though many others encounter guidance toward self-actualization and leadership only from their teachers (DeRoche & Williams, 2001). This lesson draws upon critical and analytical thinking with the ultimate goal of positive personal growth for each student.

Student participants, like historians and literary theorists, will apply a personal angle to the development of their question as well as the ways in which they will deliver an answer. Through the selection and creation of a project attached to a clearly defined rhetorical purpose, students stand to experience a higher level of engagement and motivation throughout the experience (Graham & Perin, 2007). Personal ownership of the project's form might then be combined with motivation for revising by delivering the final to an audience outside the classroom (Lindemann, 2001; NWP & Nagin, 2003).



## Selected Common Core Standards for Grades 9-10:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.9 Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.10 By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.7 Conduct short, as well as more sustained, research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.8 Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

**NOTE: Other standards may apply in your state or district.**

## Lesson Instructions

- Students will explore **THE QUESTION:** What made Abraham Lincoln a strong leader, and how can I learn from his legacy?
- Students will select a piece of advice or leadership characteristic from a list of five items. (Please see attached "Student Instructions.") They will then perform research to discover the historical context and evidence from which the advice or characteristic developed.
- Schedule time for students to perform research, if at all possible, during their designated class periods. Employ the assistance of library staff and resources, if available. Have students show gathered resources for proof of reputable origin.
- Using resources gathered independently, students will demonstrate what they have learned in their research, and then apply the characteristic or principle to their own outlook and unique social context. For this product, students are offered a variety of project choices through which to demonstrate their research, thinking, and understanding.
- To assess student learning, arrange a class presentation and evaluate students with a rubric (such as the one attached). To further challenge students, consider potential options for organizing an audience for student projects outside the classroom, for which they may use their in-class presentation feedback to revise and refine their work. These opportunities will vary according to school context; for starter options, consider sharing with a class of younger students, inviting school administrators for a visit, or displaying work in the library could present.



**Student Instructions:** Research the history behind four major lessons from Abraham Lincoln on the subject of leadership.

**THE QUESTION:** What made Abraham Lincoln a strong leader, and how can I learn from his legacy?

**STEP 1:** Choose one of the following five pieces of advice to conduct your research:

**1) Seek out voices that challenge you.**

- Quick-start context clue: When the time came to make cabinet appointments, Lincoln filled his cabinet with rivals and strong thinkers who disagreed with him. Why did he take that approach?

**2) Have the courage to be decisive, but play by the rules.**

- Quick-start context clue: Lincoln had to make a lot of tough decisions and use his power in order to get things done during a time of war. The constitution however, was always the basis for his actions. What did he choose to do and why?

**3) Ends do not always justify means.**

- Quick-start context clue: Although he was criticized harshly, Lincoln pardoned many soldiers who deserted during the civil war. How did his philosophies steer him toward this approach?

**4) Connect with people on a personal level.**

- Quick-start context clue: "Honest Abe" was fair, but Lincoln was also known for jokes and storytelling. As President of the United States, he kept regular office hours and citizens were allowed to talk with him. How did this inform his leadership?

**5) Practice forbearance.**

- Quick-start context clue: Before Lincoln responded to important or heated issues, he took the time to cool down and think it over. He wrote out his initial thoughts, then waited a day or so, and delivered his response after careful thinking. How did that practice help him?

Each of these pieces of advice is derived from the life and influence of Abraham Lincoln. Your job is to figure out how and why Lincoln's leadership led to the formation of one of these pieces of advice. Select the one that most intrigues you.

**STEP 2:** Research! Trace your statement back to the historical evidence that supports it. You'll gather a few sources from which to draw ideas and information. You will seek out a total of **four** reputable sources. The Ford's Theatre website is a great place to begin:

<http://www.fords.org/index.php?q=home/explore-lincoln>

**STEP 3:** Determine how you will answer **THE QUESTION**. Select **one** of the following options as a medium for the delivery of your research and analysis on your piece advice:

- 1) A news or magazine feature article
  - 3-5 pages typed, double-spaced, with images and citations
- 2) A scene written for the stage or screen (with accompanying written analysis)
  - 3-4 pages standard script, double-spaced, with 1-2 page written analysis and citations
- 3) A 20 or 30 artistic representation (with accompanying written analysis)
  - Project accompanied by 2-3 pages of written analysis and citations
- 4) A Prezi that details a series of images and analytical captions
  - Contains at least 5 idea clusters, all containing a total of 25 images and the equivalent of 2-3 pages of written analysis in caption form with citations



**REMEMBER:** Your goal in the assignment is to answer **THE QUESTION** with regard to your chosen focus, which has two distinct parts: 1.) What made Abraham Lincoln a strong leader? **AND** 2.) How can I learn from his legacy? Both elements should be present in your work.

Give special attention and thought to how you can apply your chosen piece of advice to your daily life, your work as a student, as a member of the athletic team, as part of a family, etc.

TIP: Consider looking for inspiration from this year's (and previous years') Lincoln Legacy Project:  
<http://www.fords.org/lincoln-legacy-project>.

**STEP 4:** Use your **rubric** (attached) to help cultivate your research, your project, and your writing, and to ensure you have satisfied the assignment's parameters.

**Recommendation for Assessment:** In evaluating students' work, use a rubric that includes the elements of the aligned standards, such as the attached sample.



## Project Rubric

### **Max possible points for each category: 10**

- 10: Outstanding at fully meeting the requirements; well-above average quality
- 8: Good job at meeting the requirements given; all elements addressed
- 6: Some evidence is present, but concepts are not developed, linked, or clear
- 4: Requirements not met or a poor job done; much more evidence needed
- 0: No evidence that the assignment elements have been addressed or explored

### **Content Categories**

- 1) Your article, script, artwork, or Prezi is completed in a professional manner.
- 2) You have effectively demonstrated your theme or piece of advice. (This can be further clarified by your written analysis, depending on the project form, but it must be present and identifiable.)
- 3) You have incorporated an element of personal connection to Lincoln's leadership legacy. (This can be further clarified by your written analysis, depending on the project form, but it must be present and identifiable.)
- 4) Your project is completed to length and parameter specifications outlined in the instructions.

### **Rubric for Your Writing**

#### **Max possible points for each category: 10**

- 10: Outstanding at fully meeting the requirements; well-above average quality
- 8: Good job at meeting the requirements given; all elements addressed
- 6: Some evidence is present, but concepts are not developed, linked, or clear
- 4: Requirements not met or a poor job done; much more evidence needed
- 0: No evidence that the assignment elements have been addressed or explored

### **Content Categories**

- 1) Your written analysis, whether separate or included with your project clearly and thoroughly addresses **both** key parts of **THE QUESTION**: 1.) What made Abraham Lincoln a strong leader? **and** 2.) How can I learn from his legacy?
- 2) Your work uses specific supporting details to justify the reasoning for your ideas.
- 3) Your work exhibits limited grammatical and mechanical errors.
- 4) You have correctly used MLA in-text documentation for all research that is not considered common knowledge.
- 5) The research paper has a works cited page that identifies **at least four required** sources and that sheet adheres to the guidelines of MLA format.
- 6) All written work is typed, using Times New Roman 12-point font, and double-spaced (or clearly displayed as text in a Prezi).

Total: \_\_\_\_\_ / 100



## Resources and Contact Information

Gateway to all the rich resources Ford's Theatre has to offer  
[www.fords.org](http://www.fords.org)

Contact the Education Team at Ford's with questions  
[education@fords.org](mailto:education@fords.org)

Contact the Education Team at WorldStrides with questions  
[Discovery@worldstrides.org](mailto:Discovery@worldstrides.org)

Virtual tour of the newly renovated and restored Ford's Theatre  
<http://www.fords.org/sites/default/files/virtualTour/index.html>

To participate in the Remembering Lincoln Project  
[RememberingLincoln@fords.org](mailto:RememberingLincoln@fords.org)

For additional information on professional development opportunities from WorldStrides  
[professionaldevelopment@worldstrides.org](mailto:professionaldevelopment@worldstrides.org)

For additional information and to apply to attend Ford's summer professional development program, Civil War Washington Teacher Fellows  
<http://www.fords.org/home/education/teacher-programs/teacher-fellows>

Explore Lincoln's Presidency  
<http://www.fords.org/home/explore-lincoln>

My Lincoln Video: A Remix Project  
<http://www.fords.org/my-lincoln-video>

Ford's Theatre YouTube Channel  
<http://www.youtube.com/fordstheatre>

Printable Resources, including leveled gallery guides, theatre season guides, and more!  
<http://www.fords.org/printable-resources>

Explore exciting opportunities with WorldStrides!  
<http://ws.educationaltravel.com/>



## References

DeRoche, E., & Williams, M. (2001). *Educating hearts and minds: A comprehensive character education framework* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Graham, S., & Perrin, D. (2007). *Writing next: Effective strategies to improve writing of adolescents in middle and high schools*. Washington, D.C.: Alliance for Excellent Education.

Lindemann, E. (2001). *A rhetoric for writing teachers* (4th Ed.). In Villanueva, V. (Ed.). (2003). *Cross-talk in comp theory: A reader* (p. 129-139). Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English.

National Writing Project., & Nagin, C. (2003). *Because writing matters: Improving student writing in our schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.