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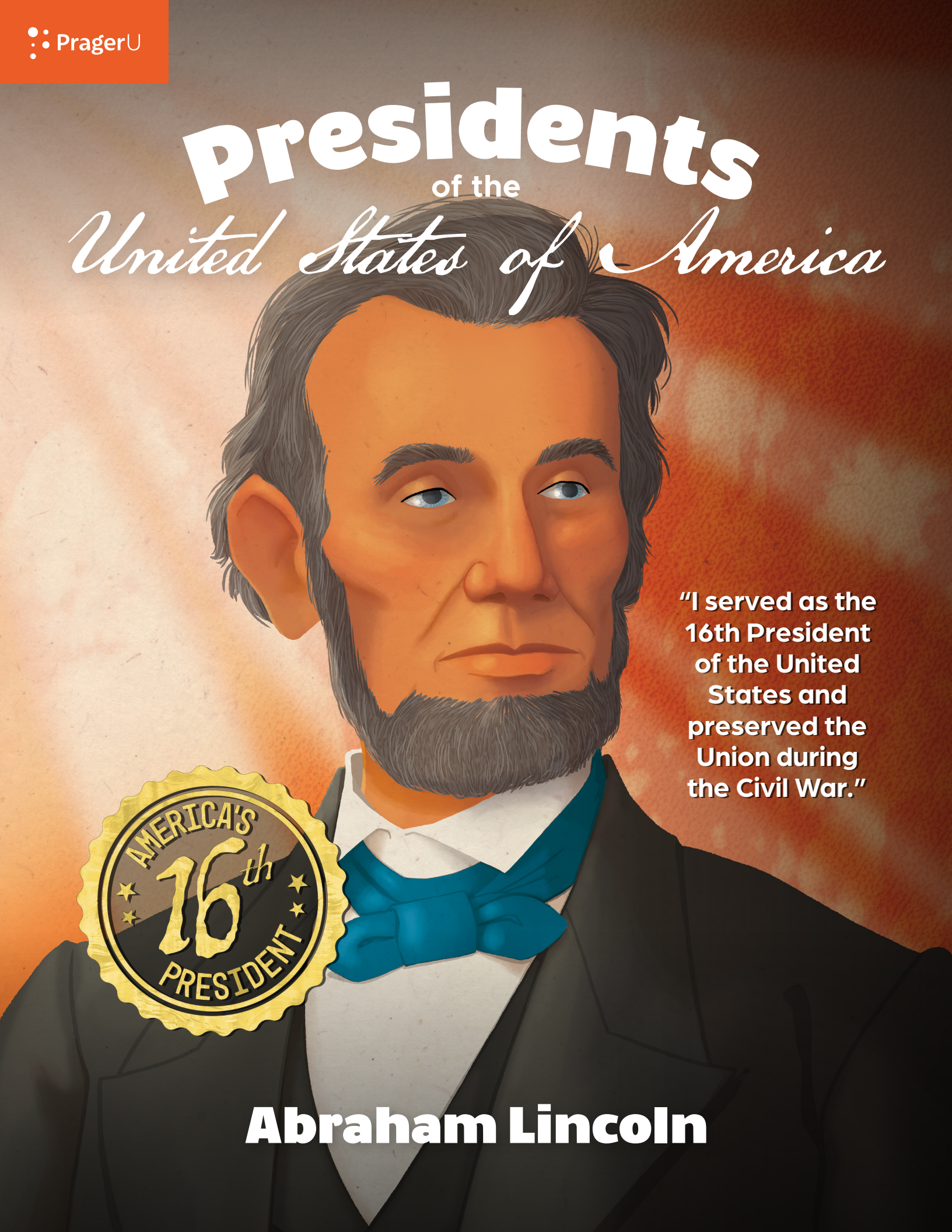
Presidents of the United States of America



Abraham Lincoln

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Become a Presidential Historian by Solving This Puzzle

In this book, you'll learn all sorts of facts about Abraham Lincoln's amazing life and accomplishments. But there's still one last thing we need to know about him.

He and his family owned a dog while they lived in the White House, and we need your help to find out what his name was. Your task is to help us uncover the answer! Hidden in the text are bolded letters. Read this book carefully to find them and fill the letters into the blanks below in the order they appear.

_ _ _ _

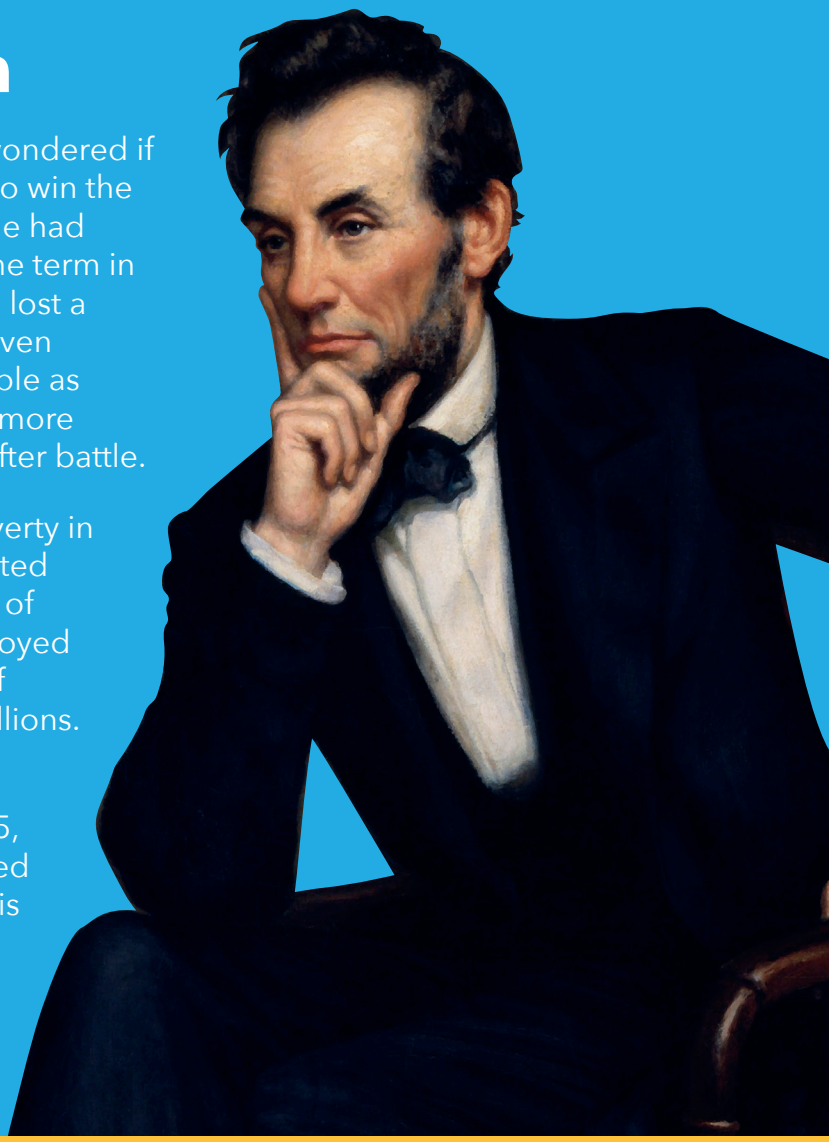
Once you've solved this puzzle, you'll be a true PragerU Kids presidential historian!

Meet Abraham Lincoln

When the Civil War broke out in 1861, Americans wondered if their president, Abraham Lincoln, had what it took to win the war. They had many reasons to doubt that he did. He had very little political experience, having served just one term in Congress. He had his share of failures in life, having lost a major Senate race a few years earlier. At times, he even struggled with depression and he struck many people as gangly and awkward-looking. Americans had even more reason to doubt him when his generals lost battle after battle.

Lincoln, however, was tough. He had risen from poverty in the western frontier to become President of the United States. With the same tenacity that brought him out of hardship, he steered the **Union** to victory and destroyed the institution of slavery. Along the way, his sense of humor and eloquent speeches endeared him to millions. His words have inspired generations of Americans.

By the time the war had ended in the spring of 1865, this inexperienced politician from Illinois had secured his place as one of America's greatest presidents. His assassination in April of that year was a profound tragedy that ended one of the most important lives in history.



Young Abraham

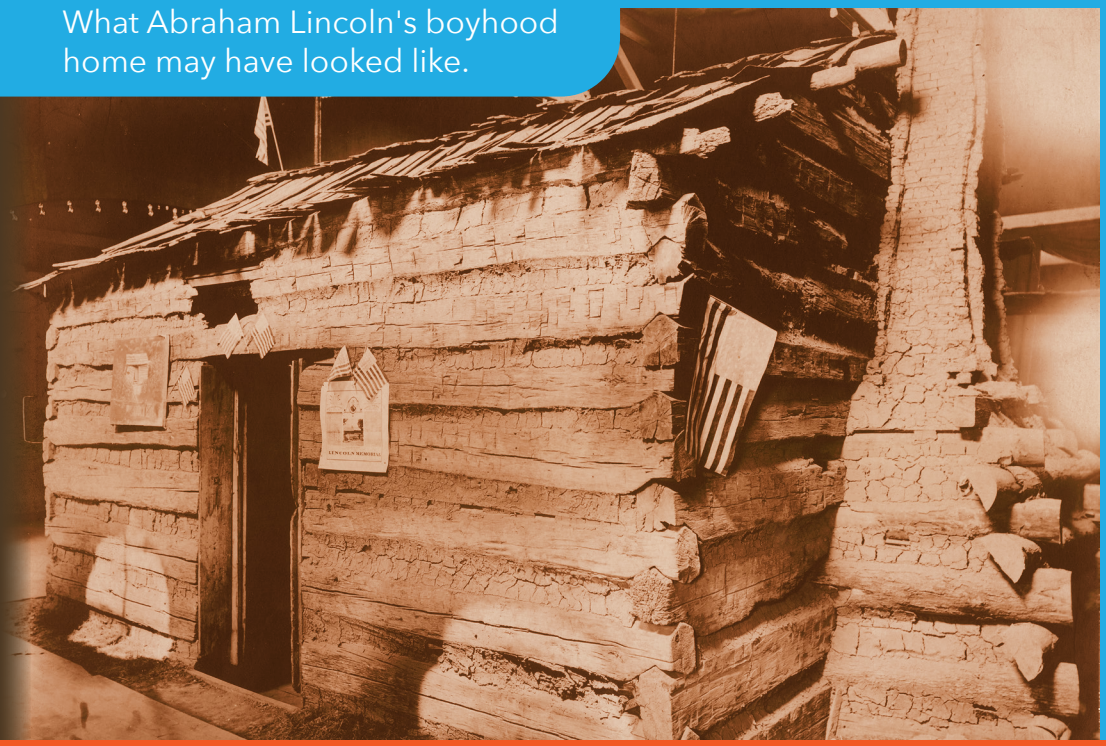
Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809 in a log cabin in Hardin County, Kentucky. He later described his childhood as "the short and simple **annals** of the poor." His parents were Thomas and Nancy Lincoln and he had an older sister named Sarah. His father Thomas was a carpenter and backwoods frontier farmer. When young Abraham, or "Abe," was seven years old, he and his family moved to the Indiana wilderness.

Tragedy struck the Lincoln family two years later when Abe's mother Nancy died of a stomach ailment called "milk sickness." Young Abe was heartbroken and later wrote, "All that I am, or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother."

Soon, however, his father remarried a woman named Sarah Bush Johnston. Abe and his new stepmother became very close and she encouraged him to study hard and get a good education.

Abe spent much of his youth working hard on his farm chores. He attended schools here and there but his family's poverty prevented him from going to college. Instead, Abe learned as much as he could reading by the light of his family's fireplace. He also got an exciting job taking goods up and down the Mississippi River on a **flatboat**. He loved being able to travel and see more of the country. On a stop at New Orleans, however, Lincoln saw African-Americans being sold as slaves, which instilled in him a hatred of **slavery**.

What Abraham Lincoln's boyhood home may have looked like.



Interesting Facts

- He is often referred to as the "Great Emancipator" and the "Savior of the Union." He was also known as "Honest Abe."
- He was a member of the Whig and Republican parties.
- He was the first president born in Kentucky.
- He was the first president born outside of the original 13 colonies.
- He was known to be a good wrestler and was inducted into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame in 1992.
- He was the first president from the Republican Party.
- At six-foot-four, he was the tallest president (as of 2023).
- He is the only president (as of 2023) with a patent to his name, for a device he designed to lift boats over shoals.
- He was the first president to be assassinated.

Early Career

In 1830, when Lincoln was 21, his family moved to Illinois near the banks of the Sangamon River. He eventually settled into a growing village named New Salem. He got a job working as a clerk at a general store. He made an impression on his new neighbors, especially since he was six-feet-four-inches tall, very intelligent, and had a great sense of humor. He was also strong—he was a good wrestler and could easily split **rails** and fell trees.

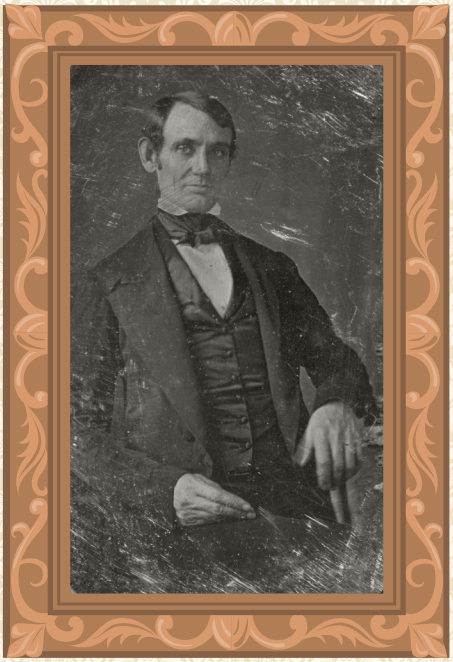
Lincoln wanted to do more than just work at a store—he was very ambitious. He studied to become a lawyer. His real passion, however, was politics. He loved debating about the great issues of the day and wanted to play an important role in the world.

In 1834, he ran for the Illinois House of Representatives and won, serving until 1842. Around this time, Lincoln became a strong supporter of the Whig Party and its leader Henry Clay. He also married a feisty young woman named Mary Todd. They would have four children, but only one would live to old age.

In 1846, Lincoln was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. During this time, he strongly criticized President James K. Polk for leading the country into the Mexican-American War. After one term in Congress, he lived in Springfield, Illinois and practiced law.

Quote

"What is conservatism? Is it not adherence to the old and tried, against the new and untried?"
- February 1860



Return to Politics

Lincoln was outraged when, in 1854, President Franklin Pierce signed the **Kansas-Nebraska Act.** The law, proposed by his Illinois rival, Democrat Senator Stephen A. Douglas, allowed people in America's Western territories to decide whether to have slavery. Lincoln believed that slavery should be restricted only to the states where it already existed.

The country became more divided on the issue, with Northerners hoping to prevent slavery from spreading and Southerners hoping for the opposite. Lincoln joined a new party, the Republican Party, which opposed the expansion of slavery. He and his fellow Republicans were even more upset in 1857 when the Supreme Court ruled in the case *Dred Scott v. Sandford* that African-Americans did not have the rights of U.S. citizens.

Lincoln hoped to get back into politics to do something about it. In 1858, he challenged Douglas for his Senate seat.

Top Left: Earliest Photo of Abraham Lincoln

Top Right: Mary Todd Lincoln

Middle: Lincoln Family

Bottom: The Lincoln Residence 1844-1861

Lincoln-Douglas Debates

Lincoln and Douglas faced off in seven **debates** across Illinois. They made for quite a contrast: Lincoln, at six-foot-four, was a whole foot taller than Douglas. Both men, however, were excellent debaters and the whole nation followed the race in the newspapers. During the election, Lincoln argued passionately that the nation could not be "permanently slave and half free" but had to choose between the two. Douglas believed that people in their states should be able to decide whether to have slavery—an idea he called **popular sovereignty**.

Douglas ended up winning the election. Although Lincoln was sad about the outcome, he had become famous throughout the country.

Tips for Winning Debates

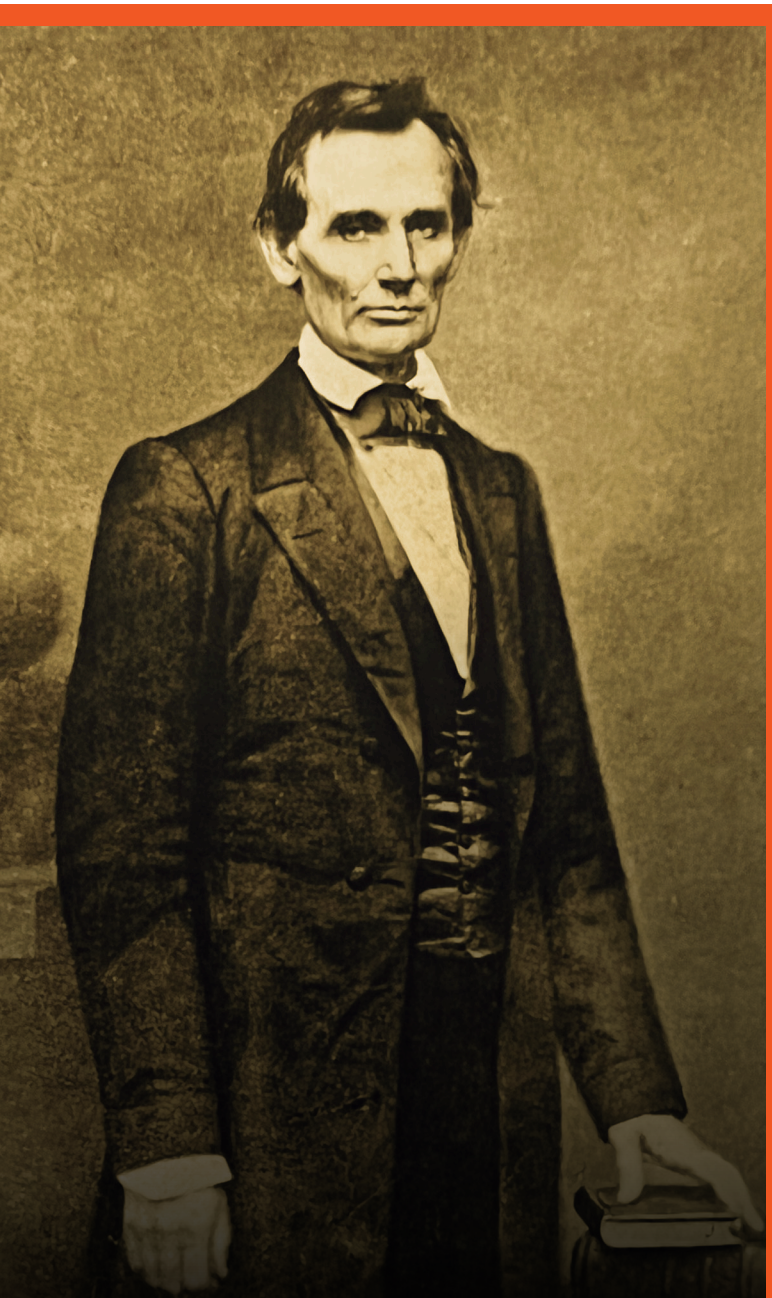
1. **Do your research.** Learn about both sides of the argument. That way, you are more prepared to reply to what people on the other side say.
2. **Be clear.** Writing your arguments and then reading what you wrote can help you communicate your ideas clearly.
3. **Stay calm.** Don't let your emotions get the best of you. Breathe deeply and focus on the rational argument you are making.
4. **Listen carefully.** As you listen, focus on what the other person is saying instead of on what you are going to say in response.

Antislavery, but Not an Abolitionist

Many Americans opposed slavery in the 19th century, but not everyone agreed on how to get rid of it. Some, like William Lloyd Garrison, believed that the United States was an evil country for having slavery in the first place and that the Founding Fathers were to blame. Garrison even burned a copy of the Constitution in public to express his views. His followers were often called **abolitionists** and wanted slavery to end immediately.

Lincoln and other antislavery activists, such as former enslaved servant and African-American Frederick Douglass, agreed that slavery was wrong but disagreed with abolitionists on how to get rid of it. They also believed that the Founding Fathers, even those who had enslaved servants, opposed slavery but didn't have the opportunity to end it because the country was still too dependent on it. Had the Founders tried to eliminate it too quickly, the country would have been destroyed right from the start, and no one—black or white—would have freedom.

In a speech in New York City in February 1860, Lincoln argued passionately that the Founders hoped slavery would die eventually and worked hard to restrict its growth. He believed that the best way to eliminate slavery without destroying the whole country was to confine it to the states where it existed so it could disappear over time.



Quote

"If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong."
- April 1864

1860 Presidential Election

Despite losing the 1858 Senate race, he set his sights on an even greater prize: the presidency. He did, however, have several formidable opponents, such as New York Senator William H. Seward. At the Republican National Convention in Chicago, Illinois, however, Lincoln outsmarted his rivals and won the nomination. Maine Senator Hannibal Hamlin was chosen as his vice presidential running mate.

The Democrats were divided over the issue of slavery and split into two groups. The Northern Democrats chose Stephen Douglas as their nominee while the Southern Democrats chose Vice President John C. Breckinridge.

Although the Democrats had won the previous two presidential elections, their split handed the election to Lincoln, who won in a landslide.

President

The South refused to accept Lincoln's election. In the weeks after the election, seven Southern states **seceded** from the Union and formed a new nation, the Confederate States of America. The Confederates then selected Mississippi Senator Jefferson Davis as its president.

Lincoln was inaugurated president on March 4, 1861. Five weeks later, on April 12, the South attacked Fort Sumter, a federal port, in South Carolina. The Civil War had begun.

Four more states joined the Confederacy, giving it 11 states. Lincoln believed that the South did not have a right to leave the Union and were, therefore, illegally rebelling. He fought the war to keep the Union together. Things didn't go well initially for the Union and Lincoln's generals lost many battles, such as the Battle of Bull Run, but he found two men who he could trust: Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman. They waged war effectively against Confederate General Robert E. Lee.

Lincoln took extraordinary measures to win the war. He suspended **habeas corpus** and even shut down newspapers that supported the Confederacy. These decisions were controversial then and now.

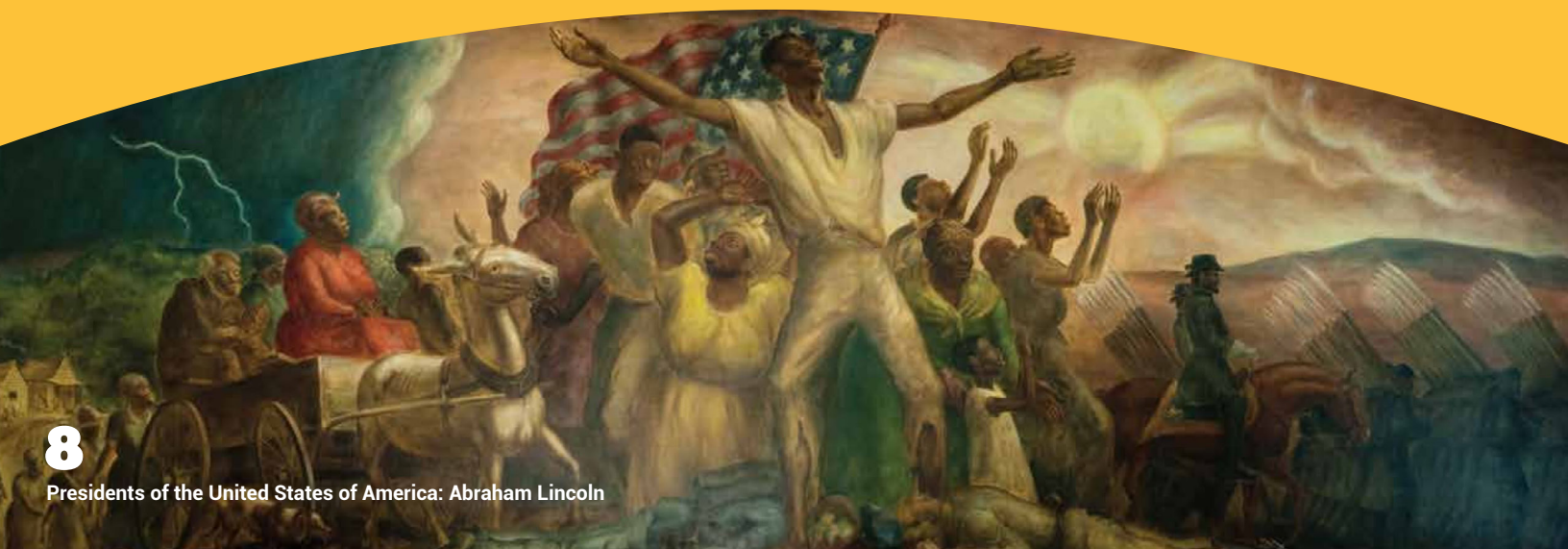
Early in the conflict, Lincoln was more focused on defeating the South rather than ending slavery. In January of 1863, however, he issued the **Emancipation Proclamation**, which declared all slaves in the rebelling states free. After the pivotal Battle of Gettysburg that July, Lincoln gave his famous **Gettysburg Address** on November 19 in which he eloquently declared that America had "a new birth of freedom"—which he hoped meant the end of slavery. By 1864, he strongly supported what would become the 13th Amendment, banning slavery forever.

That same year, Lincoln won re-election, this time with a new running mate, Tennessee Military Governor Andrew Johnson.

More Americans—620,000—died in the Civil War than any other war. It left Lincoln exhausted and depressed, but his hard work paid off when General Lee surrendered to General Grant on April 9, 1865. The South had lost and Lincoln had preserved the Union.

Quote

"I have never had a feeling politically that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence."
- February 1861



Gettysburg Address

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that "all men are created equal."

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of it, as a final resting place for those who died here, that the nation might live. This we may, in all propriety do. But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate—we can not consecrate—we can not hallow, this ground—The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have hallowed it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here; while it can never forget what they did here.

It is rather for us, the living, we here be dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that, from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here, gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve these dead shall not have died in vain; that the nation, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people by the people for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Assassination

On April 14, 1865, Lincoln and his wife Mary attended a play titled *Our American Cousin* in Ford's Theater, a few blocks from the White House. During the play, a famous actor named John Wilkes Booth entered the private box where Lincoln and his wife were sitting. Booth and several of his friends were upset that the Union had won the Civil War and plotted to kill Lincoln, Vice President Johnson, and other government leaders. Booth aimed a small gun at Lincoln's head and fired.

Lincoln fell over, unconscious, while Booth jumped out of the box and fled the theater. Mary screamed in horror and chaos ensued. Lincoln was taken to a house across the street and doctors attended to him, but there was nothing they could do.

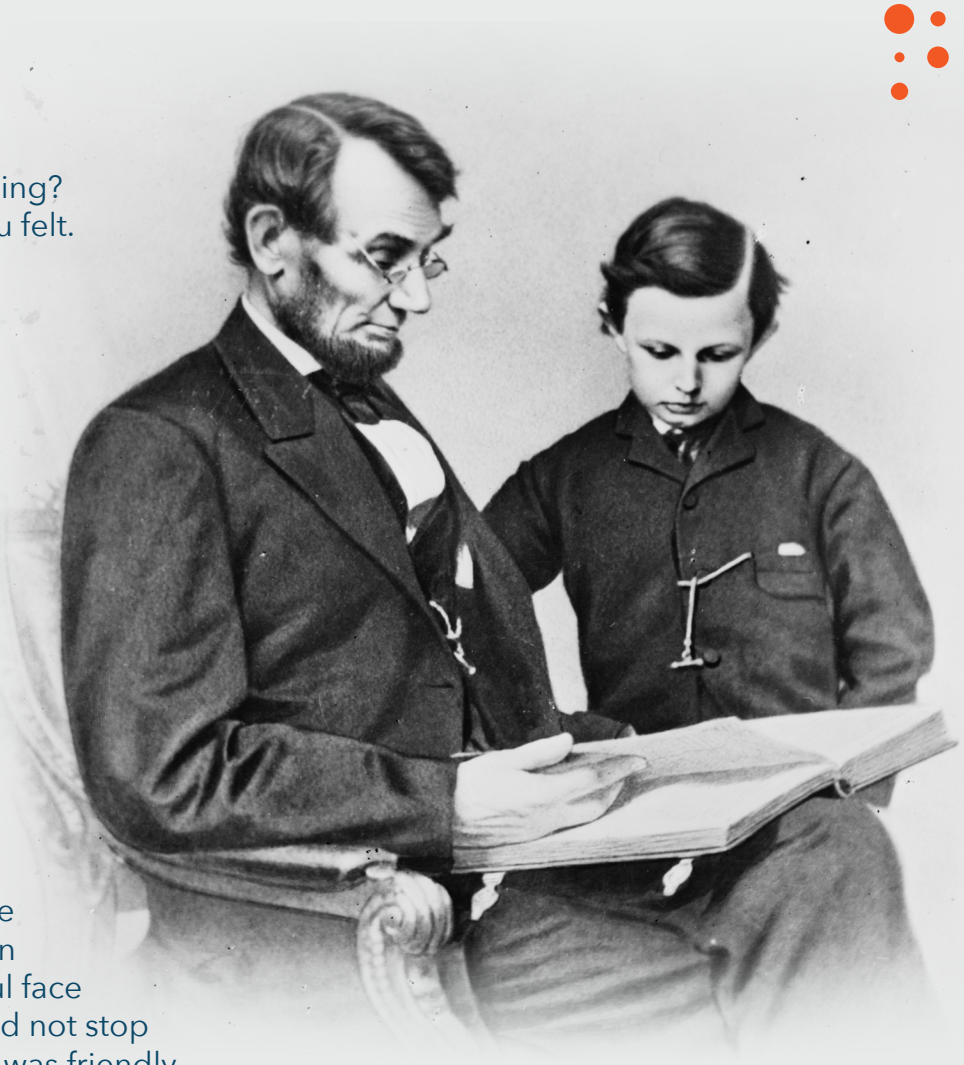
The next morning, Abraham Lincoln died at the age of 56. Although Booth and his friends weren't able to kill Johnson or anyone else, they had successfully carried out the first presidential assassination in American history.

Upon Lincoln's death, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton declared, "Now he belongs to the ages."

Quote

"We here highly resolve... that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."
- November 1863

A Life of Tragedy

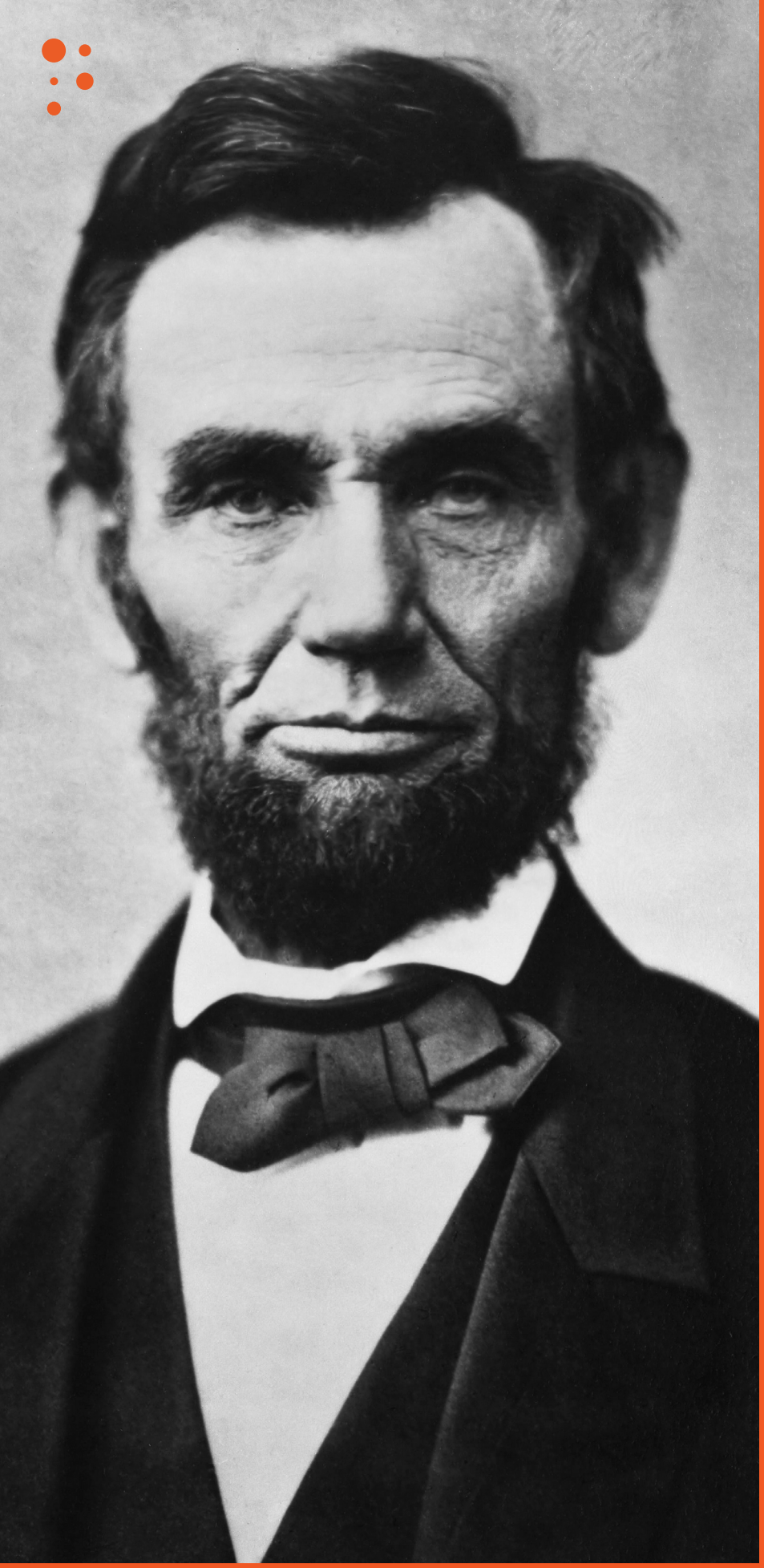


Have you ever been sad about something? Abraham Lincoln knew exactly how you felt. He experienced many tragedies in his life, losing his mother and sister at a young age, and his father. He and his wife Mary also lost their son Edward at the age of four in 1850. In 1862, during Lincoln's presidency, their son William, or "Willie," died in the White House at the age of 11. The Lincolns mourned their son's death, as well as the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Americans during the Civil War.

Lincoln himself suffered from depression throughout his life. In 1841, he wrote, "I am now the most miserable man living. If what I feel were equally distributed to the whole human family, there would not be one cheerful face on the earth." His sadness, however, did not stop him from having a sense of humor. He was friendly, folksy, and full of jokes and stories from the frontier. Some historians believe that his depression helped him empathize with other people and made him a better leader and president.

Write About It

What have you learned about Lincoln's life that could help you be a better person? You might write about his leadership or how he taught himself through hard work and study.



Legacy

When the Founding Fathers created the United States, they hoped that the evil institution of slavery would one day disappear from the country. By the 1850s, Southern slaveholders had rejected that vision and hoped to expand slavery into new territories. America divided into two sides, unable to come to an agreement. Several presidents during that time tried to find compromises to satisfy both sides, but nothing resolved the issue. Meanwhile, millions of African-Americans continued to suffer in their oppression.

It would take extraordinary leadership to unite the country and destroy the institution of slavery once and for all. Abraham Lincoln provided that leadership. He strongly believed that slavery was evil and knew that the country couldn't remain half slave and half free. He never wavered in his belief that the Union should be preserved and he had excellent political skills, allowing him to build support for ending slavery. Lincoln had many critics in his lifetime, but Americans, by and large, remember him as one of their greatest leaders.

Quote

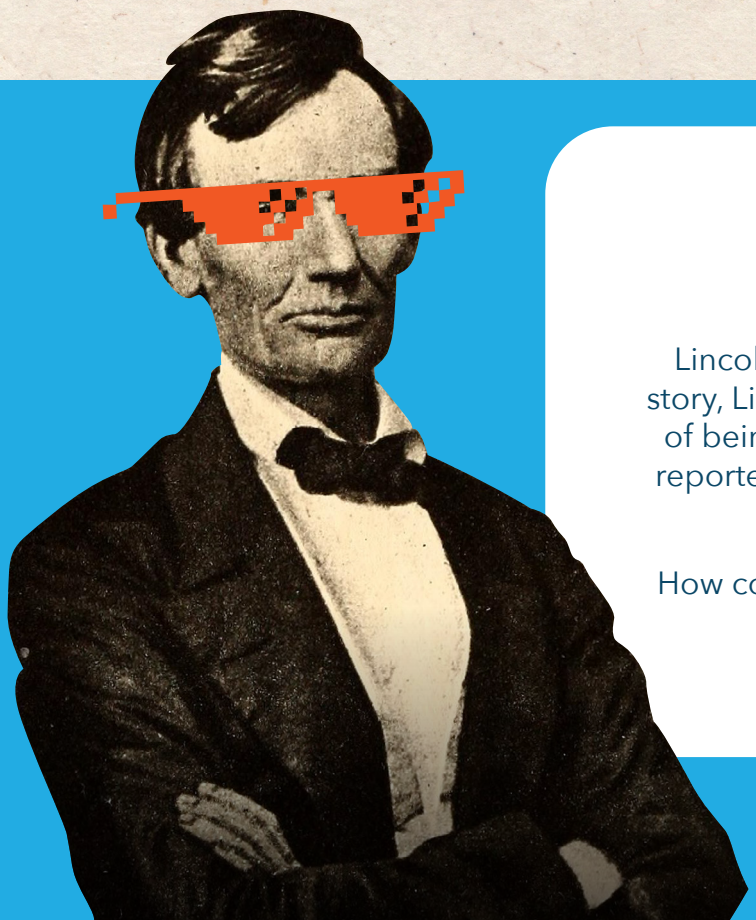
"With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in..."
- March 1865

Emancipation Proclamation

Fill in the missing words from the first paragraph of the Emancipation Proclamation with the given words below.

"That _____ the first day of _____, in the year of our _____ one thousand _____ hundred and sixty-_____, all persons held as _____ within any _____ or designated part of a State, the _____ whereof shall then be in _____ against the _____ States, shall be then, thenceforward, and _____ _____; and the Executive _____ of the United States, including the _____ and naval authority thereof, will _____ and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no _____ or acts to _____ such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual _____.

free	United	Lord	repress	three	rebellion
Government	act	recognize	State	January	forever
people	military	freedom	on	eight	slaves



Turn That Frown Upside Down

Lincoln had a great sense of humor. In one famous story, Lincoln was accused of being two-faced. Instead of being offended or angry, he made a joke. Lincoln reportedly said "If I had another face, do you think I'd wear this one?"

How could you turn a bad situation into a funny one?

Glossary

Union: The United States government during the Civil War that fought to prevent the Confederate states from seceding.

Annals: A record of events.

Flatboat: A cargo boat with a flat bottom used to transport freight and passengers in shallow water.

Slavery: A system in which people are allowed to own other people and make them work without paying them.

Rail: A steel bar laid on the ground to form a railroad track.

Kansas-Nebraska Act: A law in 1854 that allowed people living in the territories of Kansas and Nebraska to decide whether to have slavery there. It was based on the idea of popular sovereignty. The law angered people who were against slavery and contributed to the start of the Civil War.

Debate: A discussion of the issues in public between candidates for political office.

Popular sovereignty: The idea from the 1850s in the United States that people should have the choice to allow slavery in the territory in which they live.

Abolitionist: A person who wants to stop or abolish slavery.

Secede: To leave an organization or government.

Habeas corpus: Latin for "that you have the body." It forces the government to give a good reason for imprisoning someone. Without it, the government can hold a prisoner indefinitely. During the Civil War, Lincoln suspended this right, which meant prisoners could be held as long as he believed was necessary.

Emancipation Proclamation: A document President Lincoln issued on January 1, 1863 declaring that all enslaved servants living in the rebelling states were free. It is considered one of the most important documents in American history and a major milestone in expanding freedom in the United States.

Gettysburg Address: A short speech President Lincoln delivered on November 19, 1863, to dedicate a cemetery near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania – the site of a recent battle. The speech is one of the most famous in American history. In it, Lincoln declared that the Civil War had led to a "new birth of freedom" in the United States and resolved "that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

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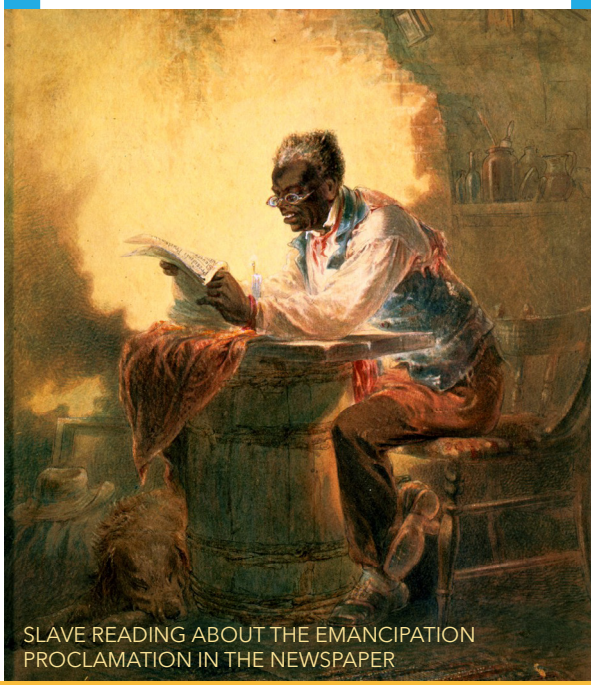
Answers:

NAME OF LINCOLN'S DOG: FIDO

EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION:
ON, JANUARY, LORD, EIGHT, THREE, SLAVES, STATE, PEOPLE, REBELLION, UNITED, FOREVER, FREE, GOVERNMENT, MILITARY, RECOGNIZE, ACT, REPRESS, FREEDOM.



SLAVE READING ABOUT THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION IN THE NEWSPAPER

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