



Abstract

This teaching module is designed to assist teachers in providing students with high-quality, rigorous instruction that correlates to the Common Core English Language Arts Standards. Its focus on the life and death of Abraham Lincoln is designed to engage younger students and allow them to learn about the impact our sixteenth president had on our nation.

The primary assignment within this module is a guided research paper which will allow students to access age-appropriate documents from which they can draw their own conclusions about Lincoln's impact on the lives of Americans across the nation. After a social studies unit overviewing the time during and surrounding the Civil War, students will work with their peers to read a novel about Lincoln and compile a set of notes about Lincoln's character and contributions to our nation. Following this study, we will study primary sources, such as paintings, newspaper clippings, and book excerpts as a whole group to analyze their meaning, while students take notes on how the sources highlight and solidify one of our country's most influential president's legacy. With the help of their notes, students will use these reference sources to construct a five-paragraph research paper defining their interpretations of Lincoln's impact on Americans, including the impression he continues to have on us today and the evidence we have of that impression. As an extra credit opportunity, students have the option of creating some sort of visual representation (e.g., a painting, poster, PowerPoint, etc.) to reflect their assessment of his legacy.

Although I plan to teach this unit after a study of slavery and the Civil War so that students can come into the project with background knowledge about Lincoln, it can be taught within a variety of academic contexts. Additionally, while this unit requires a significant amount of time, it can be conducted across the curriculum in reading, writing, and social studies. Throughout our study, students will work collaboratively with the teacher as well as with their peers in an effort to foster open dialogue and enhance each student's awareness of the subject matter. With built-in support for a wide range of ability levels, students will have an opportunity to see Abraham Lincoln through the eyes of those who were witness to his life and thus forever affected by his death. Through these firsthand accounts, students will benefit additionally from exposure to Lincoln's character and the example of morality he demonstrated throughout such a period of brutal conflict.

Overall, the topic for this teaching module is Lincoln's legacy during his lifetime and in the aftermath of his assassination. Through a compilation of nine primary sources plus



one novel for students to read in small literature circles, students will examine Lincoln's character from various perspectives and compile an essay espousing the qualities that defined him. All primary sources will be discussed with partners as well as with the whole group in order to ensure all learners are able to access the information necessary for deeply engaging with this material. Since many fifth-grade teachers teach five or more subjects per day and are required to teach everything from the earliest Americans through the Reconstruction period, I have tried to incorporate as many standards as possible in an effort to enable a more in-depth study of Lincoln.