



## A Lesson on His First Dollar by Audra Fleming

**Grade Level:** Grade 6

**Subject Area:** English Language Arts

**Lesson Length:** 2 hours

**Lesson Keywords:** reading, writing, A Lesson on His First Dollar

**Lesson Description:** The goal of this lesson is to give students the opportunity to use the reading and writing habits they've been practicing on a regular basis to absorb deep lessons from President Lincoln's story. By reading and rereading the passage closely and focusing their reading through a series of questions and discussion about the text, students will learn something new about a former president and what it means to earn things through honest work.

### Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.1: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.2: Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.6: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 6 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

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## Lesson Content: Book/Story/Reading Passage

**Instructions:** Please read the following reading passage as many times as needed (aloud and silent) before starting to go through other lesson pages. Understanding the content of this passage is very important since the lesson activities will be all about this content. Feel free to print the passage if needed.

### His First Dollar

by

**Content:** After he became President, Lincoln told his Secretary of State the following story of the first dollar he ever had for his own:

Seward, he said, did you ever hear how I earned my first dollar? No, replied Seward. Well, I was about eighteen years of age... and had constructed a flatboat... A steamer was going down the river. We have, you know, no wharves on the western streams, and the custom was, if passengers were at any of the landings they had to go out in a boat, the steamer stopping and taking them on board. I was contemplating my new boat, and wondering whether I could make it stronger or improve it in any part, when two men with trunks came down to the shore in carriages, and looking at the different boats, singled out mine, and asked: 'Who owns this?'

I answered modestly, I do.

Will you. said one of them, take us and our trunks out to the steamer?

Certainly, said I. I was very glad to have a chance of earning something, and supposed that they would give me a couple of bits. The trunks were put in my boat, the passengers seated themselves on them, and I sculled them out to the steamer. They got on board, and I lifted the trunks and put them on deck. The steamer was moving away when I called out:

You have forgotten to pay me!

Each of them took from his pocket a silver half - dollar and threw it on the bottom of my boat. I could scarcely believe my eyes as I picked up the money. You may think it was a very little thing, and in these days it seems to me like a trifle, but it was a most important incident in my life at that time. I could scarcely credit that I, a poor boy, had earned a dollar in less than a day - that by honest work I had earned a dollar. I was a more hopeful and thoughtful boy from that time.

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## Task 1: Vocabulary

**Instructions:** Please complete the following vocabulary activity by choosing the correct meaning of each word selected from the passage and use of each word correctly in a sentence.

**Q: 1 WordPhrase:** wharves **WordPhraseTier:** 3

**Question:** President Lincoln didn't have any "wharves on the western streams, and the custom was, if passengers were at any of the landings they had to go out in a boat, the steamer stopping and taking them on board." What could the wharves possibly be?

- A: sails
- B: piers
- C: type of whale
- D: wading boots

**Question:** Which one of the sentence below uses the word "wharves" in the same meaning as provided in the passage?

- A: We mustn't get too close to the wharves; we don't want to scare them off.
- B: Don't forget to pack the wharves away underneath the deck!
- C: I need to dry out my wharves before I can put them back on.
- D: I hope we can make it to the wharves before the storm so we can tie up our boat.

**Q: 2 WordPhrase:** bits **WordPhraseTier:** 2

**Question:** President Lincoln said, "I was very glad to have a chance of earning something, and supposed that they would give me a couple of ?bits.?" What did he mean by bits?

- A: coins
- B: snacks
- C: firewood
- D: socks

**Question:** Which one of the sentence below uses the word "bits" correctly?

- A: There are tiny bits of lint stuck all over my new sweater.
- B: A few more bits a pieces and I will have everything I need to make a necklace for my mother.
- C: I was disappointed that by the end of the day I had earned only a couple of bits for my work.
- D: My dad is going to the hardware store to buy some new drill bits for his drill.

**Q: 3 WordPhrase:** sculled **WordPhraseTier:** 3

**Question:** President Lincoln said, "The trunks were put in my boat, the passengers seated themselves on them, and I sculled them out to the steamer." What does the word sculled mean in this sentence?

- A: To store things in the boat.
- B: To hit someone on the head.
- C: To propel the boat forward in the water.
- D: To turn around.

**Question:** Which one of the sentence below uses the word "sculled" correctly?

- A: I was very sculled because I had never been on a boat before.
- B: I went to the back of the boat and sculled us out onto the lake.
- C: After our boat ride, my mother served fresh sculled fish from our trip.
- D: I told my mother about how you sculled me earlier today!

**Q: 4 WordPhrase:** trifle **WordPhraseTier:** 2

**Question:** President Lincoln said, "You may think it was a very little thing, and in these days it seems to me like a trifle, but it was a most important incident in my life at that time." What does the word "trifle" mean in this sentence?

- A: something that is very important
- B: a type of chocolate
- C: something that is annoying
- D: something that is unimportant or small

**Question:** Which one of the sentences below uses the word "trifle" correctly?

- A: I don't have time for such trifle things in life; I have much more important things to do.
- B: I was so trifle after my morning run that I could barely concentrate on my classwork.
- C: I really hope that my mother loves the trifle I made for her as a Valentine's Day gift.
- D: If I trifle enough, I'm sure I'll make it to the party on time.

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## Task 2: Forum Discussion

**Instructions:** This discussion forum will have questions for students to respond. Read the posted questions, and respond to each. Students are responsible for posting one initial and two peer responses for each topic.

### 1 - President Lincoln's Passion

President Lincoln seemed extremely excited to tell his Secretary of State the story of how he earned his first dollar. What do you think made it so special for him?

### 2 - What would have happened?

As the passengers were leaving President Lincoln's boat, he calls out to the passengers saying, You forgot to pay me! If he hadn't done so, and he wasn't paid, do you think this experience would be as significant to him as it was? Why?

### 3 - What is honest work?

At the end of his story, President Lincoln said that he earned his first dollar through honest work. What do you think he meant by that?

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Task 3: Writing Activity

**Instructions:** For the writing assignment, in 2 - 3 paragraphs (minimum 250 words), recall a moment in your life where you did something that seemed trifle to you at the moment, but impacted you in a big way like it did for President Lincoln.

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