



A Lesson on Honest Abe by Shayna Sasse

Grade Level: Grade 8

Subject Area: English Language Arts

Lesson Length: 2 hours

Lesson Keywords: Reading, Writing, History, Abraham Lincoln, Honest Abe

Lesson Description: The goal of this lesson is to give students the opportunity to use their reading and writing skills connected to a history lesson about Abraham Lincoln. By reading and rereading the passage closely, and focusing their reading through a series of questions and discussion about the text, students will identify how and why he earned the nickname "Honest Abe". When combined with writing about the passage, students will apply what lesson they learned from the text and why it is important.

Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1b: Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.4a: Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

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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.

Honest Abe

by

Content: This history tells about what happened while Abe Lincoln had a job working in a store in a small town. Every day people came and bought things they needed there. It was a frontier community. People did not have any extra money to spare. This story tells you about his character. As you read, think about the traits he shows by what he does.

Abe Lincoln could not endure the thought of cheating any one, even though it had been done unintentionally. He took great care of the money at the store. But some days there were mistakes. He always made sure to correct them.

One day a woman bought goods in Offutt's store amounting to something over two dollars. She paid Abe the money and went away satisfied. That night, on going over the sales of the day, Abe found that he had charged the woman six and one - fourth cents too much. After closing the store, though it was late, he could not go home to supper or to bed till he had restored that sixpence to its proper owner. She lived more than two miles away, but that did not matter to Abe Lincoln. He walked all the way there - and back.

Another evening, as he was closing the store, a woman came in for a half-pound of tea. He weighed it out for her and took the pay. But early next morning, when he came to open up, he found the four - ounce weight instead of the eight - ounce on the scales, and inferred that he had given that woman only half as much tea as he had taken the money for. Of course, the woman would never know the difference, and it meant walking several miles and back, but the honest clerk weighed out another quarter pound of tea, locked the store and took that long walk before breakfast.

J. G. Holland wrote, in his Life of Abraham Lincoln, of the young man's progress during his first year in New Salem:

The year that Lincoln was in Denton Offutt's store was one of great advance. He had made new and valuable acquaintances, read many books, won multitudes of friends, and become ready for a step further in advance. Those who could appreciate brains respected him, and those whose ideas of a man related to his muscles were devoted to him. It was while he was performing the work of the store that he acquired the nickname, 'Honest Abe' - a characterization that he never dishonored, that he never outgrew.

He was everybody's friend, the best - natured, the most sensible, the best - informed, the most modest and unassuming, the kindest, gentlest, roughest, strongest, best fellow in all New Salem and the region round about.

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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: Endure **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: The author in the story says "Abe Lincoln could not endure the thought of cheating any one". What does the word endure mean in this sentence?

A: to free from a constraint

B: to deal with or accept

C: to hold down

D: to analyze

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

A: The endure dog did not like the food his owner served him.

B: One turned all the way around to endure no one was watching.

C: Yet, for whatever reason, Mary had been willing to endure her fear alone.

D: She hid the phone as Matt glanced over his shoulder again to endure she followed.

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Q: 2 WordPhrase: Inferred **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: The authors states that Lincoln "...inferred that he had given that woman only half as much tea as he had taken the money for." What does the word inferred mean in this sentence?

A: concluded from evidence and reasoning rather than from explicit statements

B: guessed

C: concluded from explicit statements

D: analyzed

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

A: He used his infer to keep warm.

B: His suffering was necessary to infer his survival.

C: She went to the infer to get her groceries.

D: From these facts we can infer that crime has been increasing in the Tampa area.

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Q: 3 WordPhrase: Sixpence **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: The author in our story says "...he could not go home to supper or to bed till he had restored that sixpence to its proper owner." What does the word "sixpence" mean?

A: a cell phone

B: a pet

C: a purse

D: a coin worth six old pence

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

A: Finally Rachel could stand the sixpence no longer.

B: Howie kept us in sixpence until we assumed our seats around the table.

C: The first issues sold for sixpence and were filled with news of the latest gold rush and shipping arrivals.

D: The sixpence birds flew away to their nest.

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Q: 4 WordPhrase: Frontier **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: The author states that "It was a frontier community. People did not have any extra money to spare." What does the word "frontier" mean?

A: a distant area where few people live

B: the suburbs

C: a big city

D: a place where people don't get a long

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

A: She said to go to the frontier door, not the back.

B: There weren't any cabs or buses like in the frontier; she didn't even see a town nearby.

C: They were sent on an expedition to explore the western frontier.

D: She didn't like the frontier because their were always so many people wherever she went.

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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 - How did he earn the title "Honest Abe"?

How do you think Abraham Lincoln earned the nickname Honest Abe and became such a respected person by the town of Salem?

2 - Why was giving the woman the rest of her tea so important?

Why do you think it was so important to Lincoln to give the woman the rest of her tea, even though, according to the author, she would never know the difference?

3 - Lincoln's character

What does this story imply about Lincoln's character? Why was this important to the people later on?

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Task 3: Writing Activity

Instructions: Write 2-3 paragraphs (approximately 350-400 words) describing the lesson that can be learned from Honest Abe. Why is honesty such an important quality to have? Include specific examples from the text.

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