



A Close Read on Honest Abe by Thomas Smallwood

Grade Level: Grade 8

Subject Area: English Language Arts

Lesson Length: 2 hours 30 minutes

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

Lesson Description: The objective of this lesson is to give students the prospect of using their reading and writing skills in a lesson that is connected to history about Abraham Lincoln. Through reading and rereading the passage closely, the students will focus their skills in a sequence of questions and discussions about the reading, students will identify how and why he earned the nickname "Honest Abe". Additionally, the students will apply this information and learn why this lesson is relevant to them, and hat can be taken away from this passage.

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: 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 plant
- B: A car
- C: a coin worth six old pence
- D: A speech

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

- A: A sixpence stole the first edition book from the store.
- B: The first issues sold for sixpence and were filled with news of the latest gold rush and shipping arrivals.
- C: Henry told the story of how he ate a sixpence at lunch one day at school.
- D: The baseball player did not see the sixpence coming closer to him.

Q: 2 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 throw
- B: to eat
- C: to pay
- D: to deal with or accept

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

- A: Yet, for whatever reason, Mary had been willing to endure her fear alone.
- B: The endure drove through the road block with no problem.
- C: I threw two endure and Steve caught it.
- D: Georgia Power sent me an endure to pay.

Q: 3 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: to be said
- B: taken out of context
- C: concluded from evidence and reasoning rather than from explicit statements
- D: to deal with or accept

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

- A: The insurance company wanted me to infer my bill.
- B: Scott and Tim infer tacos quickly.
- C: From these facts we can infer that crime has been increasing in the Tampa area.
- D: Baseball players take the infer to their games.

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 place where sports are popular
- B: the closet located in the rear of a house
- C: a distant area where few people live
- D: a dog with no home

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

A: I sent the frontier a letter of recommendation.

B: The frontier passed me in the hallway.

C: With the exception of the frontier, I ate everything at dinner.

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

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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 - Explain how Lincoln received the nickname "Honest Abe".

Explain how Lincoln received the nickname Honest Abe.?

2 - The Tea

Why do you believe it is important for the author to tell the reader about Lincoln giving the woman the rest of her tea?

What is the author's purpose here?

3 - Lincoln's personality

What kind of person does this story lead you to believe Lincoln was? What evidence does the author provide to lead you to this conclusion??

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Task 3: Writing Activity

Instructions: Write 2-3 paragraphs (300-400 words) explaining what can be learned from Honest Abe. Why is honesty and integrity such important qualities to have as an individual? Give specific examples from the reading.?

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