



A Lesson on Honest Abe by Tori Hicks

Grade Level: Grade 8

Subject Area: English Language Arts

Lesson Length: 1 hour 30 minutes

Lesson Keywords: Reading, writing, Abraham Lincoln, Honest Abe, character, personality, honesty

Lesson Description: The objective of this lesson is to allow students to use their reading and writing skills to draw conclusions and make connections regarding the character and personality of Abraham Lincoln. By reading and re-reading the text, the students will recognize how and why Abe Lincoln acquired the name "Honest Abe" and how these early onset attributes which he demonstrated aided him throughout his presidency. Students will use their reading and writing skills to analyze the character of Abe Lincoln and make inferences concerning how this benefited and effected his life.

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.

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.

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: frontier community **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: The author says "It was a frontier community. People did not have any extra money to spare". What does the phrase "frontier community" mean in the sentence?

- A: A place on the outskirts of a settled region where few people live
- B: A place that is close to the ocean
- C: A place that is high in elevation
- D: A place where many people live in poverty

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

- A: The frontier of the school was made of brick.
 - B: The frontier was my favorite part of the ballgame.
 - C: This is the frontier which is now visible and visited by the curious.
 - D: As the man went to the frontier he noticed a familiar face.
-
-

Q: 2 WordPhrase: sixpence **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: In the story the narrator said, "...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: An article of clothing
- B: A coin having the value of approximately six pennies.
- C: A piece of luggage
- D: A tool used to groom horses

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

- A: The dress was the most beautiful sixpence she had ever seen.
 - B: The sixpence of the candles provided a delightful smell.
 - C: A piece of bubble gum costs one sixpence in London.
 - D: The tools were stored in a sixpence.
-
-

Q: 3 WordPhrase: inferred **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: When the narrator of the story writes, "But early the 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", what does the word "inferred" mean?

- A: To draw a conclusion based on facts
- B: To cause conflict
- C: To declare
- D: To come between

Question: Which sentence uses the word "inferred" in a sentence correctly?

- A: The priest inferred the couple as husband and wife.
 - B: The boys were in trouble because they inferred with each other.
 - C: Since there were so many people outside of the restaurant, she inferred that their food was good.
 - D: The milk inferred over a period of time.
-
-

Q: 4 WordPhrase: acquaintances **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: In the sentence, "He had made new and valuable acquaintances, read many books, won multitudes of friends, and became ready for a step further in advance", what does the word "acquaintances" mean?

- A: Large aquariums
- B: Thrift goods
- C: A person who one may know, but is not necessarily friends with
- D: Tools

Question: Which sentence uses the word "acquaintances" correctly?

- A: My acquaintances were stolen while I was working out of town.
 - B: The job was to clean the algae out of the acquaintances.
 - C: I bought some new acquaintances at the thrift store.
 - D: I ran across some old acquaintances at the high school football game.
-
-

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 why Lincoln acquired the name "Honest Abe"

Explain and give examples of why Lincoln acquired the name Honest Abe.

2 - What can we conclude about the character and personality of Abe Lincoln?

What can we conclude about the character and personality of Abe Lincoln? Give examples and reasons for your conclusions.

3 - How can we take the character traits of Abe Lincoln and apply them to our daily lives?

How can we take the character traits of Abe Lincoln and apply them to our daily lives?

=====
Task 3: Writing Activity

Instructions: Write 3 to 4 paragraphs about how you believe this job helped to prepare Abe Lincoln to become President of the United States. What attributes does he possess and did he acquire which helped him be successful as President? Please include specific examples.

=====