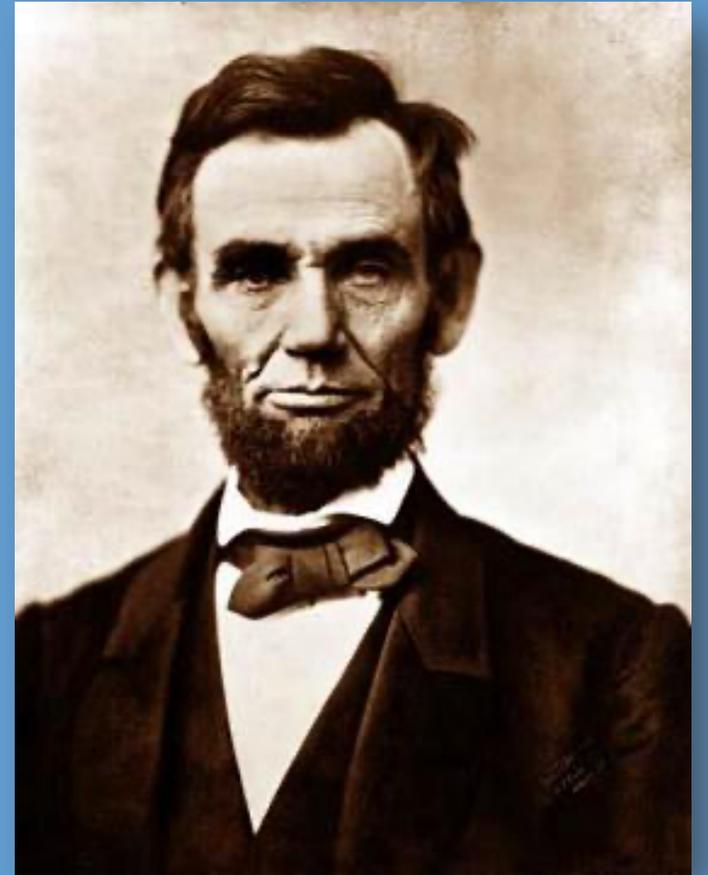


# WHO WAS ABRAHAM LINCOLN?

**Overview:** Students will participate in a kinesthetic activity in which they review various quotes by and about Abraham Lincoln, discussing the various ideas and attitudes exhibited by America's sixteenth president. Students will then read a letter from the mother of a black Union soldier and respond to her as President Lincoln.



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# LEADER

What comes to mind when  
considering this word?



**“If slavery isn’t wrong,  
then nothing is wrong.”**

*Abraham Lincoln, 1864*

**- 1**

**+ 10**

"That on the 1st day of January, A.D. 1863, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom."

*The Emancipation Proclamation*

- 1

+ 10

“Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation did not free a single slave. The stereotyped picture of the emancipator suddenly striking the shackles from millions of slaves by a stroke of the presidential pen is altogether inaccurate.”

*James Randall & David Donald, “The Civil War and Reconstruction”*

- 1

+ 10

“I have no purpose to introduce political and social equality between the white and black races. There is a physical difference between the two, which, in my judgment, will probably forever forbid their living together upon the footing of perfect equality...I am in favor of the race to which I belong, having the superior position. I have never said anything to the contrary.”

*Abraham Lincoln, 1858 debate in Illinois*

- 1

+ 10

“In life Abraham Lincoln wrestled with the race question more openly than any other president except perhaps Thomas Jefferson, and, unlike Jefferson, Lincoln’s actions sometimes matched his words. We must understand that speakers modify their ideas to appease and appeal to different audiences, so we cannot simply take their statements literally.”

*James Lowen, “Lies My Teacher Told Me”*

- 1

+ 10

“I should like to know if taking this old Declaration of Independence, which declares that all men are equal upon principal, and making exceptions to it-where will it stop? If one man says it does not mean a Negro, why does not another say it does not mean some other man? If that Declaration is not...true, let us tear it out! [cries of No! No!] Let us stick to it then, let us stand firmly by it then!”

*Abraham Lincoln, Chicago debate*

- 1

+ 10

“If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race I do because I believe it helps to save this Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union...I have here stated my purpose according to my view of official duty, and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men, everywhere could be free”.

- 1

Abraham Lincoln, 1862 + 10

“Why didn’t Lincoln do what much of the rest of the world did in the nineteenth century and end slavery peacefully through compensated emancipation? Between 1800 and 1860, dozens of countries, including the entire British Empire, ended slavery peacefully; only in the United States was a war involved...It was not to end slavery that Lincoln initiated an invasion of the South. He stated over and over again that his main purpose was to ‘save the Union’, which is another way of saying he wanted to abolish states’ rights once and for all. He could have ended slavery just as dozens of other countries in the world did during the first sixty years of the nineteenth century, through compensated emancipation, but he never seriously attempted to do so.”

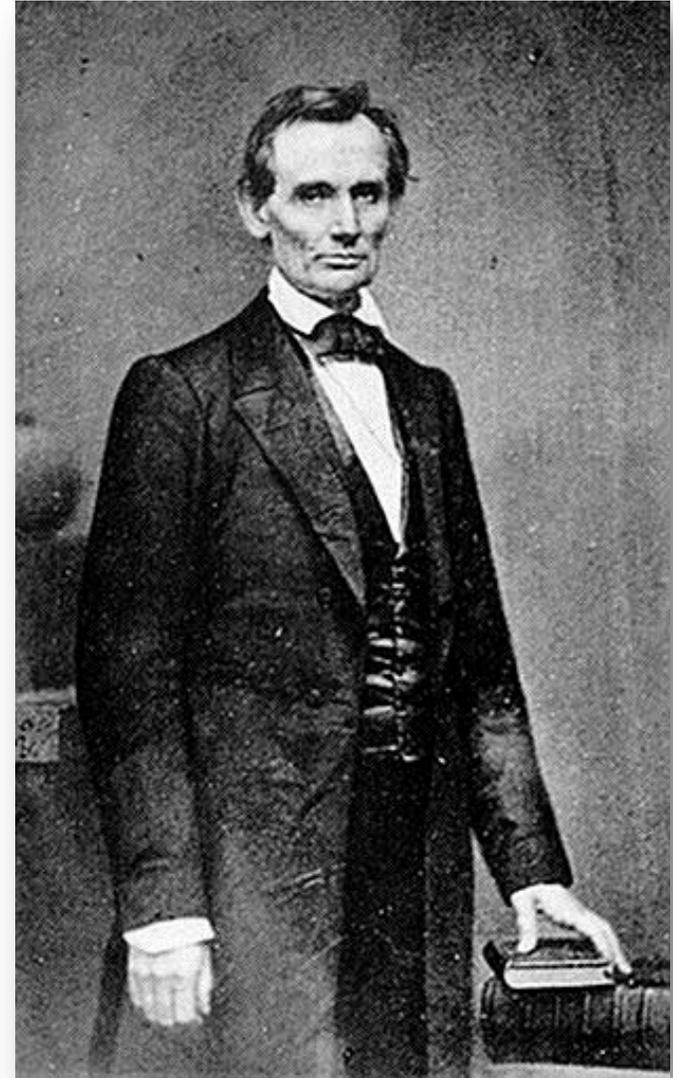
*Thomas DiLorenzo, “The Real Lincoln”*

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+ 10

# Who was Abraham Lincoln?

- Did Lincoln exhibit the attributes we listed during our warm-up of an effective leader? In what ways? Did he represent those that we voted to be most important?
- Based on all of the information we have discussed regarding Abraham Lincoln, characterize his leadership. What is your final, overall opinion of our nation's sixteenth president?



# A MOTHER'S LETTER TO LINCOLN

- What strikes you about this letter? What do you find interesting, moving, or curious?

Buffalo July 31 1863

Excellent Sir

My good friend says I must write to you and she will send it. My son went in the 54th Regiment, I am a colored woman and my son was strong and able as any to fight for his country and the colored people have as much to fight for as any, My father was a Slave and escaped from Louisiana before I was born more forty years ago. I have but poor education but I never went to school, but I know just as well as any what is right between man and man. Now I know it is right that a colored <sup>man</sup> should go and fight for his country, and so ought to a white man, I know that a colored man ought to run no greater risks than a white, his pay is no greater his obligation to fight is the same. So why should <sup>not</sup> our enemies be compelled to treat him the same, We do to do it.

My son fought at Fort Wagner but thank God he was not taken prisoner, as many were