

## U.S. Presidents – Abraham Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln was America's 16th president. He is considered to be one of the greatest leaders in the nation's history. He helped guide the United States through the U.S. Civil War. Lincoln also helped to end slavery in the country. Sadly, Lincoln was assassinated near the end of the Civil War in 1865. He became the first U.S. president to be killed in office.

Lincoln was elected president in 1860. Before the election, most people did not know much about Lincoln or his humble background. He was born on February 12, 1809, in a Kentucky log cabin. In 1816, his family moved to the wild Indiana frontier. Lincoln helped his father farm and work the fields. He barely had time for school. He spent no more than one year in a classroom. In 1818, Lincoln's mother died.

Even though Lincoln had very little schooling, he learned how to read and write. Books were scarce on the frontier, but he closely read the books he got his hands on. Lincoln pored over the family Bible. He would walk for miles to borrow books. Some books he read were *Aesop's Fables* and *Pilgrim's Progress*.

As a young man, Lincoln worked many jobs to earn a living. He was tall and strong. He split logs and fence rails for farmers. He helped take a flatboat down a river to New Orleans. Eventually, he started a general store with a friend. When the store went into debt, he paid those debts off working other jobs. By 1834, a friend encouraged Lincoln to become a lawyer. Instead of learning at a law school, Lincoln taught himself law. "Your own **resolution**<sup>1</sup> to succeed is more important than any one thing," he would later say.

Among Lincoln's many skills, he was a great writer and speaker. In one of his most famous speeches, known as the Gettysburg Address, Lincoln's words reassured a suffering people at war that democracy would survive.

As president, Abraham Lincoln was most proud of the Emancipation Proclamation, which was issued during the Civil War. It declared that the slaves in the southern states rebelling against the U.S. government were free. The **proclamation**<sup>2</sup> paved the way for the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which ended slavery in the U.S.

Lincoln's stand against slavery caused him to make many enemies. Even so, his assassination was felt all over the nation from the North to the South. Millions of people admired his spirit and service to his country. A train carried Lincoln's body to Springfield, Illinois, making stops at some major cities. Mourners crowded near the tracks to try and see the train. To this day, people visit Lincoln's tomb to pay their respects.

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<sup>1</sup> **resolution** – determination

<sup>2</sup> **proclamation** – an official announcement

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What did Abraham Lincoln help to end in the United States?

- A slavery
- B war
- C democracy
- D discrimination

2. Which of the following lists the correct sequence of events in Lincoln's life?

- A He became a lawyer; he started a general store; his mother died.
- B He became president; he issued the Emancipation Proclamation; he moved to Indiana.
- C He issued the Emancipation Proclamation; his mother died; he moved to Indiana.
- D He moved to Indiana; he became president; he issued the Emancipation Proclamation.

3. Abraham Lincoln was a man of integrity. What evidence from the passage best supports this statement?

- A "A friend encouraged Lincoln to become a lawyer."
- B "As a young man, Lincoln worked many jobs to earn a living."
- C "When the store went into debt, he paid those debts off working other jobs."
- D "He split logs and fence rails for farmers. He helped take a flatboat down a river to New Orleans."

4. Which of the following was probably *least* important in Lincoln being a successful president?

- A He was persuasive.
- B He was tall and strong.
- C He had political skill.
- D He was a great writer.

5. What is the main idea of this passage?

- A Lincoln was the first U.S. president to be killed in office.
- B Lincoln's most famous speech, the Gettysburg Address, reassured people.
- C Millions of people admired Lincoln's spirit and service to his country.
- D Lincoln was one of America's greatest leaders.

6. Read the following sentences: "Before the election, most people did not know much about Lincoln or his **humble** background. He was born on February 12, 1809, in a Kentucky log cabin. In 1816, his family moved to the wild Indiana frontier. Lincoln helped his father farm and work the fields. He barely had time for school. He spent no more than one year in a classroom."

What does the word "**humble**" most nearly mean based on the text?

- A not proud
- B simple and modest
- C humiliating
- D unknown

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

\_\_\_\_\_ Lincoln had many enemies, he was mourned by millions of people across the country.

- A Ultimately
- B Therefore
- C Although
- D Meanwhile

8. What did the Emancipation Proclamation declare?

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9. How did Lincoln learn law?

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10. Lincoln believed that “your own resolution to succeed is more important than any one thing.” How did Lincoln apply this belief to his own life?

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