Lincoln Lesson Plans for Elementary Students

Introduction:
These lesson plans were developed by Timothy Gallo, a 5th Grade teacher at Cider Mill School in Wilton, Connecticut. These lessons would be a great way to engage younger students in themes and ideas related to Abraham Lincoln’s life and legacy. Geared toward elementary students, these short and easy lessons can help spark new approaches to teaching Lincoln in the classroom. Visit www.history.com/lincoln regularly for updates and more information about the history of Lincoln.

The Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission also has many featured lesson plans and activities for students of all ages. Visit http://www.lincolnbicentennial.gov/ to explore more lesson plans and activities related to the Lincoln Bicentennial.

Table of Contents:
1. Lincoln Memorial Lesson Plan
2. Gettysburg Address Lesson Plan
3. Lincoln Penny Lesson Plan
4. Presidential Race of 1860 Lesson Plan
5. Lincoln Scavenger Hunt Activity
Lincoln Memorial Lesson Plan

Objectives:
- Students will learn about the Lincoln Memorial and what memorials stand for.
- Students will search for memorials in their town or state using the internet.
- Students will study encyclopedias, almanacs, and atlases to find places named after Abraham Lincoln.
- Students will design a memorial for an historical figure.
- Students will submit a proposal for a new memorial in their town.

Materials:
- Internet access, encyclopedias, almanacs, atlases, statistical information sheet on the Lincoln Memorial available in many trade books or internet sites.

Procedures:
1. At the computer lab or using classroom computers, ask students to research memorials on Abraham Lincoln in their own town or state.
2. Provide students with statistical information on the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. Ask them to read and discuss with partners interesting facts about this memorial.
3. After this initial research, ask students to study encyclopedias, atlases and almanacs in search of places or memorials named after Lincoln.
4. Have students design and draw an illustration of a memorial for a famous historical figure. Students will decide what important attributes that their memorial must have.
5. Working in pairs, ask students to label all important attributes that the memorial will feature.
6. Ask students to compose a two paragraph essay discussing first why their chosen historical figure should receive a memorial. In paragraph two, students should justify why their memorial should have its labeled attributes and why they are important. Students may use any info that they have learned about memorials in general or more specifically the Lincoln Memorial.
7. Partners will present their proposals to the class. Ask the class to act as a town council deciding whether or not this new memorial has merit and value to the town.
8. Students can display their “memorial of memorials” on the bulletin board!
Gettysburg Address Lesson Plan

Objectives:
- Students will become familiar with The Gettysburg Address
- Students will create a friendly letter that explains the famous address to a friend

Materials:
- Copy of the Gettysburg Address
- A friendly letter graphic organizer

Procedures:

1. Ask students will read and practice reciting the Gettysburg Address. This can be in small groups or each individual student can read and recite the address.
2. Lead students in a group discussion of the address. Ask students to write a paragraph about what they learned from reading the address and the most important points Lincoln made in the address.
3. The teacher can then model notes on chart or board and students can write down key points and explanations of important parts of the Address.
4. Then, give each student a friendly letter graphic organizer.
5. Instruct students to create a friendly letter to a friend explaining their understanding of the Address. They should include explanations of the Address in their letter.
6. Ask students to imagine that they were alive at the time the Address was delivered. Ask them to explain the speech in their letter, describing the effect the speech had on them when Lincoln gave it. They should not only include details of the speech but also the mood created in the crowd by it.
7. Students should display these finished letters for other classes to view.
Lincoln Penny

Objectives:
- Students will learn about important dates in American history using the Lincoln penny as a resource
- Students identify parts of the penny that are unique from other U.S. coins
- Students will brainstorm ways to honor Lincoln during this bicentennial year of his birth using the Lincoln penny

Materials:
One penny for every student, Magnifying glass for every student, Time line of Lincoln’s life, Note paper

Procedures:
1. Distribute a penny to each student.
2. Explain that the Lincoln penny was the first U.S. coin to feature a historic (real life) figure and that President Abraham Lincoln has been on the penny since 1909, the 100th anniversary of his birth. (Later the coin was redesigned to depict the Lincoln Memorial on the reverse).
3. Ask students which side of the coin Lincoln appears on—heads (called the obverse) or tails (also called the reverse).
4. Tell the students that Lincoln actually appears on both sides. Students should examine the penny closely with their magnifying glasses to locate Lincoln on the reverse. Tell the students that the Lincoln Memorial was added to the reverse of the one-cent coin in 1959 to mark Lincoln’s 150th birthday. If they inspect it carefully, they will see the statue of Lincoln inside the Memorial. With the release of the Illinois quarter, Lincoln is the first person to be pictured on two circulating coins at the same time: the penny and the quarter (with Illinois reverse). The teacher may want to show the Illinois quarter at this time.
5. As this information is being shared with the students, the teacher should write the dates and their corresponding events on a piece of chart paper divided into 2 columns titled “Date” and “Event.” Students should take their own notes on their note paper as a reference for later in the lesson.
6. On the reverse of the two column note paper students should write down any other interesting facts or attributes of the penny that they have discovered. Students should be encouraged to extend their knowledge by finding what other markings and mottos mean and what they might represent.
7. This year, 2009 is the bicentennial of Lincoln’s birth. Students should brainstorm another way to honor Lincoln using the penny. They should draw an illustration of a coin design that could honor Lincoln during this special year. Students may incorporate ideas and accomplishments achieved by Lincoln that they have learned about. A timeline of Lincoln’s life is helpful at this point in the lesson.
8. Students can display their illustrations of their pennies that honor Lincoln on the bulletin board!
Presidential Race 1860

Objectives
- Students will learn about the election race for president of the U.S. in 1860
- Students will search for information about the platforms of these candidates using the internet
- Students will compare platforms of these candidates with current candidates in this year’s election
- Students will design campaign posters with key points of platforms of the different candidates

Materials
Markers, poster board, internet access or resource section of library (research)

Procedures
9. Ask students to use the computer lab, classroom computers, or the resource section of school library to gather information on the different platforms of the candidates during the presidential election of 1860. Teachers can help to provide additional information and chart information students find.
10. Ask students to create Venn diagrams comparing information on the platforms of the candidates of 1860 with the 2008 candidate platforms, noting both differences and similarities of the two campaigns.
11. Assign each student a partner and a candidate from one of the elections.
12. Ask students to design and draw an illustration of their candidate to be used on a campaign poster.
13. Working in pairs, have students add the key platform issues for their candidate and a slogan that could be added to the campaign posters related to one or more of the key issues.
14. Teachers can group the finished posters in many interesting ways to create a bulletin board that ties these two elections together or the teacher may separate them to create two bulletin boards!
Lincoln Scavenger Hunt Activity

Organize a Lincoln themed Scavenger Hunt for your classroom. You can ask students to generate their own questions, or you can pick from the questions below. These questions below will take you through Abraham’s early life. He is 19 when he sees this auction and he is sickened by the sight. Many questions can easily be added to the hunt. These questions can also be mixed up so that students may put them in chronological order.

1. What was Abraham’s Father’s name?  
   *Thomas* (1778)

2. What was Abraham’s mother named?  
   *Nancy (married in 1806)*

3. When was Abraham born?  
   *Feb. 12, 1809*

4. Where was Abraham born?  
   *One room log cabin in Nolin Creek in Kentucky*

5. When does Abraham first attend school?  
   *Young Abraham attends a log school house in 1815*

6. In what year does Abraham get kicked by a horse and almost killed and his mother also dies of “milk sickness”?  *The year is 1818*

7. Abraham’s Father remarries. What is the date and what is his new wife’s name?  
   *The year is 1818 and her name is Nancy Hanks Lincoln.*

8. How did Abraham feel about his new step mother?  
   *Abraham likes her and grows much affection for her*

9. Abraham Lincoln had a sister who was married. What was her name and what year did she die?  *Her name was Sarah and she died in 1828 while giving birth*

10. Abraham observes a Slave Auction in New Orleans in this year.  *1828*