

## Pre-Visit Classroom Activities: 1st through 4<sup>rd</sup> grades

To the Teacher: Discuss with your students the following items:

### **The Early Years:**

1. Abraham Lincoln was born over 200 years ago in 1809. Your students may not have a good idea of what life was like in the early 1800's and how different things were then. Discuss what Lincoln's childhood would have been like and compare it to today's children's lives (suggestions: no electricity, no television, no telephones, needing to grow or make most of what was needed to survive on the frontier, transportation [walking, horseback, wagon, flatboats], housekeeping/cooking/making the family's clothing).
2. Lincoln and his sister, Sarah, occasionally attended "blab" schools. Since your students may not have heard about this kind of school, explain that all students (big and little) were in one classroom and all studied their lessons aloud at the same time. You may wish to experiment with a few minutes of "blab" school. Allow all the students to read aloud from a textbook of their choice for five or six minutes. After this experiment, encourage your students to discuss (A) could they learn in a "blab" school; (B) would they like attending a "blab" school; and (C) could they cover all their lessons or would they only have time for the basics: reading, writing, and math as happened often in Lincoln's time.
3. Thomas Lincoln (Abraham's father) moved his family from Kentucky to Indiana when Abraham was seven. They moved after the harvest time in Kentucky and knowing that they had no home ready for them in the wilderness of Indiana. When they arrived at the land Abraham's father had chosen, a half-faced camp was built. (A half-faced camp was a three-sided shelter with a roof. The fourth side of the shelter had no wall and was open to the winter weather. A fire was built and kept burning day and night.) Ask your students to draw a picture of what they think life might have been like in a half-faced camp in the middle of winter (mention the wild animals that would have been living in the forest also).
4. Abraham Lincoln said he only went to school "by littles." (During the time period when Lincoln was a young boy, everyone in the family had to work to make sure the family survived. He would have carried water and firewood and helped clear the land for planting the next season's crops. In addition, schools were not free and conducted classes only parts of the year) As a result) Ask your student to brainstorm about what he might have meant.
5. Explain frontier life to your students -- that everyone, even the very young children, had to help just to keep the family fed and clothed. Ask them to discuss what they think Abraham and his sister, Sarah, had to do to help their mother and father. (Examples: carrying water and firewood; chopping wood; cooking; feeding the farm animals [horses, cows, pigs, chickens]) Suggest that they draw a picture illustrating life on the frontier.

### **On-Site Activities:**

Remind your students that they should pay attention during their visit and observe carefully as you have planned some projects following the visit.

**Post-Visit Activities:**

## A. For young students:

1. Ask the younger students to think about one specific item/image they saw during their visit to the Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum.
2. Provide a large poster (or several) and ask each student to draw an item/image that they remember from their visit.

## B. For older students:

1. Provide paper/markers, crayons, or colored pencils and ask students to draw an item/image they remember and think everyone should remember from the museum and add a sentence telling why they think the item/image was important. Allow the students to display their drawings.