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## Abraham Lincoln: The Young Lawyer at the Bar

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## Teacher's Guide to the Curriculum

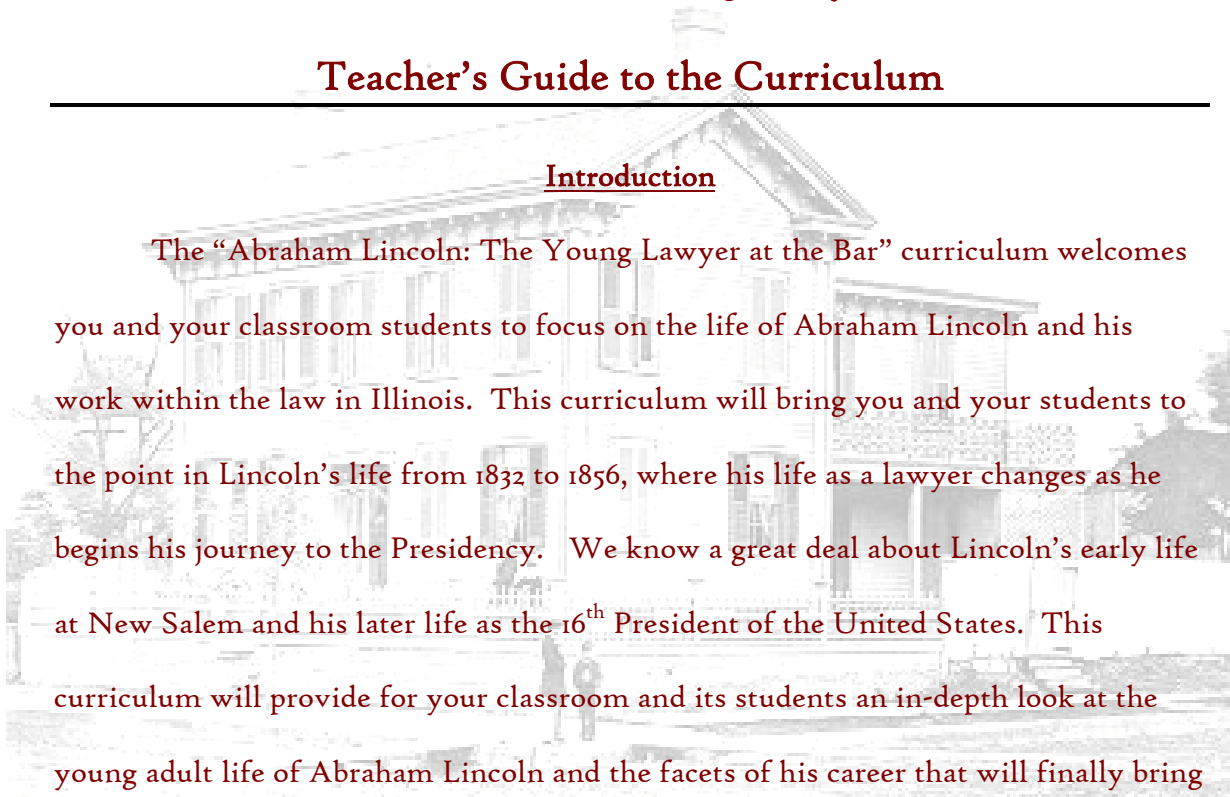
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# Abraham Lincoln: The Young Lawyer at the Bar

## Teacher's Guide to the Curriculum

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### Introduction



The “Abraham Lincoln: The Young Lawyer at the Bar” curriculum welcomes you and your classroom students to focus on the life of Abraham Lincoln and his work within the law in Illinois. This curriculum will bring you and your students to the point in Lincoln’s life from 1832 to 1856, where his life as a lawyer changes as he begins his journey to the Presidency. We know a great deal about Lincoln’s early life at New Salem and his later life as the 16<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. This curriculum will provide for your classroom and its students an in-depth look at the young adult life of Abraham Lincoln and the facets of his career that will finally bring him to the Presidency. Hands-on activities using primary and secondary documents are found throughout the subject areas in this thematic unit on his life that will engage students in the process of learning and interacting with history.


The ILEARN - Illinois Law-related Education and Resource Network, within the Illinois State Bar Association is responsible for funding the development of the CD which you have received. This organization is devoted to bringing educational curriculum to Illinois teachers that help foster knowledge about the law and the legal system in Illinois. We thank them for their generous support of the education of Illinois students.

This is a theme-based curriculum on the legal life of Abraham Lincoln which incorporates other aspects that will be of interest to Illinois students. The subject areas covered by this curriculum include: History/Social Studies, English/Language

Arts, Reading and Literature, Science and Mathematics, Character Education, Geography, Civics/Government, Art and Music plus other Resources.

The manner in which this curriculum has been developed will allow you to use all or any part of this curriculum as each section holds its own materials, the classroom background information, and worksheets. Each piece of this curriculum can be used separately or can be combined in any way that meets the needs of the classroom students. Individual teacher decision making will determine the final project or activity which will best fit the needs of the students in their classroom to display their knowledge to meet the assessment objectives.

Please find some introductory information about each chapter as a part of this teacher's guide to the "Abraham Lincoln: The Young Lawyer at the Bar" Curriculum. This curriculum has been field tested in Illinois schools and meets the Illinois Learning Standards for Late Elementary and Middle School learning goals in each of the subject matter areas provided.

There are some sections in the curriculum that are For Teachers  Eyes Only. You will find the eyeglasses at those spots as they are answer keys for the student worksheets. This will assist you in sorting the information you provide to the students.



## Goals and Objectives

1. Develop background information for each of the subject areas and how they relate to Lincoln's young legal career
2. Research subject area content for all subject areas and develop initial lesson plans that meet the Illinois Learning Standards for those subjects
3. Develop integrated lessons that encompass the subject areas and the factual information associated with the early legal career of Lincoln
4. Provide a thematic based integrated curriculum of lesson plans that use both video and text materials on a CD ROM for use by middle school teachers in the classroom

## The Curriculum

**H**istory – “I don't know much of history and all I know of it I have learned from law books.”

The history lessons focus on the historical perspective of the time period in the life of Abraham Lincoln and the growth of the state of Illinois and the United States in the 1820s – 1850s. The background knowledge development for the students begins in this chapter as it covers the Early Political Career, Frontier Lawyer, The Lawyers, Stand – in Judge, Legislator, Father, Friend, and Abraham Lincoln – The Law and the Courts. Each of these phases of his career provide information in depth about Abraham Lincoln's life to assist students in development of the background knowledge to build the remainder of the curriculum. Lincoln is seen as a young lawyer through his roles as politician, family man, and friend that will finally propel him to the role of 16<sup>th</sup> President of the United States.

The activities included with this chapter allow the students to peer into the legal career, work on a legal case, create a timeline, engage in mapping activities,

develop a technology scavenger hunt, work crosswords and build vocabulary and create a booklet project which is developed by the whole class.

**English/Language Arts** – “Books serve to show a man that those original thoughts of his aren’t very new at all.”

The lessons will encourage writing and language arts activities that may also include debates, creating classroom newspapers, reading Lincoln documents from the time period, writing letters and developing writing activities that will increase the students ability to communicate both orally and in writing.

The instructions for the poetry lessons are included and vocabulary building is engaged with the crosswords and a cyberspace scavenger hunt related to one of the renowned poets of the period. Students will also read Lincoln’s own poetry and analyze the background information to gain a greater understanding of the writing and then become writers themselves.

**Reading** – “A capacity, and taste, for reading, gives access to whatever has already been discovered by others. It is the key, or one of the keys, to the already solved problems. And not only so, it gives a relish, and facility, for successfully pursuing the [yet] unsolved ones.”–September 30, 1859.

Reading is developed with its own focus on Abraham Lincoln, the storyteller, and the development of student approaches to writing that incorporate that genre. A middle school booklist related to the topic areas along with other curricular materials focused on building reading and writing skills are included. Students will have the opportunity to engage in historic fiction writing, storytelling, and reading.

Fiction story diagrams, story maps, and a connection between social studies, reading, and writing are explored with the students which can provide them opportunities to engage in writing and reading with vigor because of the high interest storytelling takes for students in this age group and the freedom with which they may approach the challenges enmeshed in the storytelling genre.



**Science/Mathematics** – “...The most valuable of all arts will be the art of deriving a comfortable living from the land and agriculture...”

Lessons in science are integrated into the time period and focus on inventions and Abraham Lincoln’s patented invention. The mathematics section will focus on the census and economics and budgeting using information from Abraham Lincoln’s family.

The science lessons focus on Abraham Lincoln’s own invention and those of others in the time period. The thinking that is engendered with inventing challenges young students to develop their own creative designs to solve problems they perceive within their own environment. Working together cooperatively allows student options for more expansion of the topic area. The New Inventors Worksheet will help keep the students engaged in being inventors and making the connection between the science of invention and the scientific method. Students will work with primary documents from the U. S. Patent Office related to Abraham Lincoln’s invention to analyze the document and make some informed decisions.

The mathematics portion is driven by economics of the time period and Abraham Lincoln’s own family budget. There is room for personal expansion of this topic area to cover consumerism today and economics extended from these lessons. Students will be using Census Data from the time period, Lincoln’s home income and will have to work together to earn “Free Land” with a combined science/math activity.

**Character and Leadership** – “Character is like a tree and reputation like its shadow. The shadow is what we think of it – the real thing is the tree.”

Using the career of Abraham Lincoln lessons that allow students to increase their personal character and to build leadership skills will be the focus of this aspect through the use of genealogy.

The students will build a higher level of understanding about their own family history as they learn about Abraham Lincoln’s family history. Students will create



their own family tree and complete a writing assignment about their family history along with imaginative drawing activities. Resources on genealogy, definitions, writing resources and rubrics are included. Students will have the opportunity to build, what we hope, is a stronger connection to the history of their family and how it is impacting on the development of their lives as they write and reflect on this history.

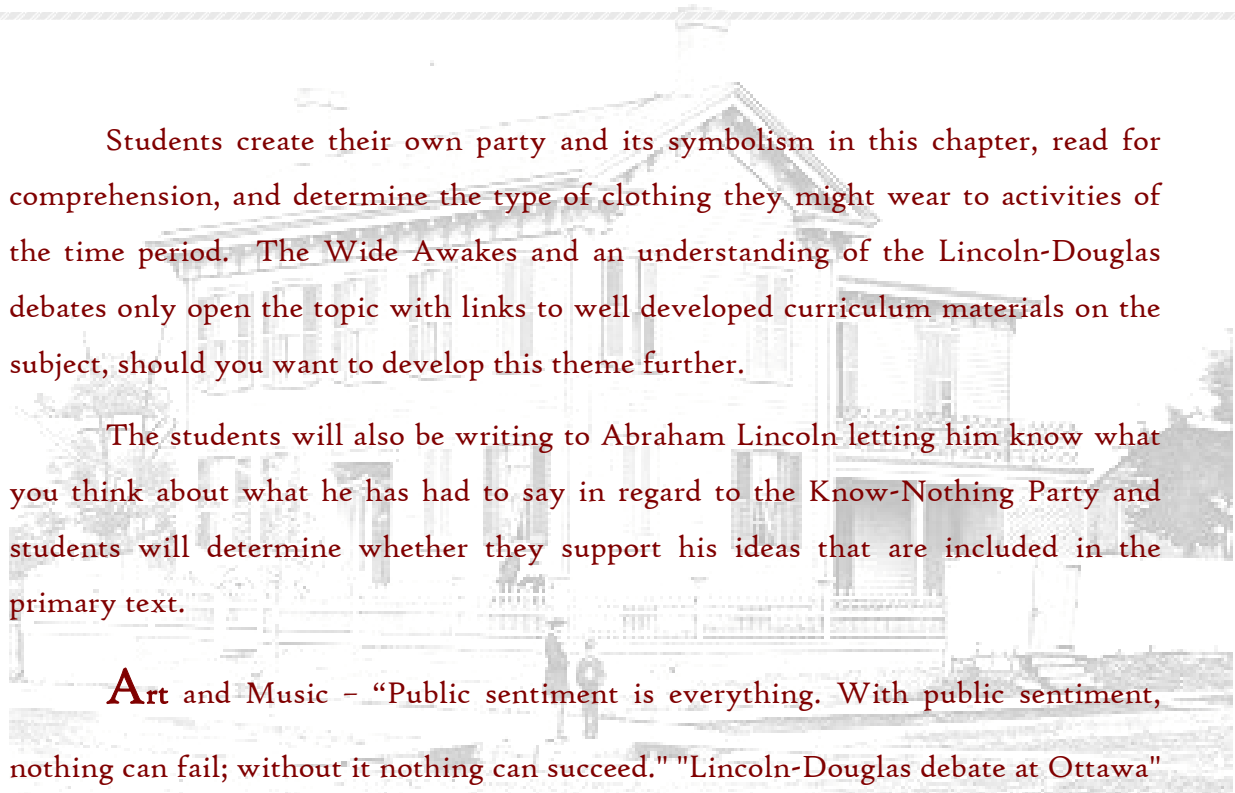
**Geography** – "Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it nothing can succeed." -- August 21, 1858 - Lincoln-Douglas debate at Ottawa, Illinois.

Using the maps from the Eighth Judicial Circuit, geography lessons will be developed to assist students in identifying the communities that were included in the lawyers circuit ride. A focus on population mapping, transportation in the state during the time period and the National Road will allow some exciting opportunities to engage in geographic classroom extensions.

The Geography Journals will allow the strong connection between Geography and writing to occur. Students will have the opportunity to work with period maps and gain a deeper understanding of the mapping process when engaging in writing about the period and about the circuit riders who brought the legal system to the distant communities in Illinois in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

**Civics/Government** – "The ballot is stronger than the bullet."

The lessons allow students to gain perspective and knowledge on the government and development of Illinois government, policy making, and Abraham Lincoln's Illinois links in his early legal career to the development of the state and its citizenry. These subject areas are not in-depth in this curriculum; but add background information about the portion of Abraham Lincoln's life that engaged him as a legislator and congressman. The activities will bring the students to an understanding of the party system at the time period and involve them in the Know-Nothing Party with activities geared to build knowledge of how our current government has developed over time.



Students create their own party and its symbolism in this chapter, read for comprehension, and determine the type of clothing they might wear to activities of the time period. The Wide Awakes and an understanding of the Lincoln-Douglas debates only open the topic with links to well developed curriculum materials on the subject, should you want to develop this theme further.

The students will also be writing to Abraham Lincoln letting him know what you think about what he has had to say in regard to the Know-Nothing Party and students will determine whether they support his ideas that are included in the primary text.

**Art and Music** – “Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it nothing can succeed.” “Lincoln-Douglas debate at Ottawa” (August 21, 1858).

The sculpture, paintings, and drawings of Abraham Lincoln and the artists will be developed into interconnected lessons on art, reading, writing, and critical thinking. Research projects on the lives of the artists creating the Lincoln art will be developed to enlarge the student knowledge of art mediums and the artists’ background.

The chapter on Art includes a much broader view of the topic by including Lincoln’s Tomb as a center of sculpture focused on Abraham Lincoln and then the photographers, the calendar art, the artists and painters, the political cartoonists, the newspapermen, and music all combine together to present a diverse look at how the creative persons of the era developed their views of Abraham Lincoln.

We suspect that for most students and teachers their awareness of the depth and breadth of this topic will be surprising with over 70 pages devoted to this topic area because of the love of Lincoln art by Donna E. Schechter, Assistant to Counsel, Illinois State Bar Association.

**Law & the Courts** – “Discourage litigation. Persuade your neighbors to compromise whenever you can. Point out to them how the nominal winner is often a real loser – in



fees, expenses, and waste of time. As a peacemaker the lawyer has a superior opportunity of being a good man. There will still be business enough." A. Lincoln.

Using the courthouses and state capitols of the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit students will have the opportunity to take both real and virtual field trips to these buildings. They will be able to view the courts of the past either as part of virtual field trips developed for the classroom or in person. As part of the lessons teachers may wish to create to extend this section, students may have the opportunity to learn about court procedures of the past, the history of the courts in Illinois, and using Readers Theater act out one of Lincoln's legal cases dealing with character and fairness to portray the members of the case and learn about how the law was practiced in the time of young Abraham Lincoln, the lawyer. Classroom teachers will determine the types of extension activities they need to use in their own classrooms.

Lessons address the subject areas with an integrated thematic unit approach and include extended lessons in the areas of significant low performance: social sciences, reading, and writing.

**Thoughts on Slavery** "You know I dislike slavery; and you fully admit the abstract wrong of it." --From the August 24, 1855 Letter to Joshua Speed

Students can just be given the opportunity to read this section and discuss their own thoughts and feelings about slavery and how they now perceive this condition of life from the early 1600s through the late 1800s in the United States. Each teacher will choose whether to use these materials and how they might wish to incorporate the information, at their discretion. The "Thoughts on Slavery" activity is found at the conclusion of the written material to assist in development of discussion in the classroom and collection of other documents related to the issue of slavery. It is with clear understanding that sometimes students at this age will have difficulty with this topic area and it is left to the teacher to determine if this material is used as part of the curriculum.

## Appendix

I always consider this the ‘treasure chest’ of the curriculum as it holds the resources for both the teacher and the students, a list of videos, bibliographic and web resources, web connections to the materials presented in the curriculum and more.

For teachers who would like more resources on storyboarding, a background piece and forms are included to help build student skills in creating new materials based on the background knowledge developed as part of the projects included in the curriculum. This also provides a spot for students who love to write and draw as they create new connections to history with their skills.

The links to the National Council on Social Studies, the vital themes and narratives, and the habits of mind are here to assist you in explaining the use of this curriculum or for encouraging your students to have a deeper understanding about why social studies are important for us all. The National and Illinois Learning standards are also linked from the appendix.

The guidelines for the trivia game referred to in several of the chapters is enclosed and an exciting map of the election of 1856 to share with your students, if you wish. The student activity pack of documents and worksheets are at the end of the appendix.

Finally, I thought you might like to have some centuries old fun with children’s games from the mid 1800’s so nineteen activities that Abraham Lincoln’s children might have played during their childhood are explained in detail enough for the classroom students to become fully engaged in them. Some of these games survived into the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries and helping students see the connection to the past in forms of fun and games can be helpful in the development of a stronger engagement in history. The resultant physical activities related to the games can also be incorporated in the physical education and health from the Illinois Learning Standards.

Thank you for engaging your classroom in this curriculum and sharing our love and enthusiasm for Abraham Lincoln – The Young Lawyer at the Bar.



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