



Healing Through The Arts®

Where those who are healing find strength,
hope and inspiration through the arts.

Social Studies, Lesson 1 – *The Melancholia of Abraham Lincoln*

Lesson goal – To develop critical thinking and analysis skills

Target students – History students in grades 8 and higher

Learning Objective – Students will investigate the life of Abraham Lincoln for possible evidence of clinical depression

Outcome – Students will present evidence in the form of primary or secondary sources to support their assertion with an essay, oral or multimedia presentation

Standards – The following educational standards are addressed in this lesson:

- PA History 8.1.9 A-D
- PA History 8.1.12 A-D
- PA History 8.3.9 A
- PA History 8.3.12 A
- CC RH 1, 2, 5, 7-10
- CC WHST 7-9

Materials / Resources – The following resources will be required for this lesson:

- Internet access
- Power point, photo story, or movie maker

Description of Lesson (recommended duration: two to three 90 - minute blocks or four to six 45 - minute classes)

1. Break students into groups to create definitions of depression, and then regroup to report to the class.
2. Using the ideas proposed by the class, build the class-wide definition of depression.
3. Discuss whether Lincoln had reasons to suffer from depression, based on the class definition.

4. Students can then create a script, letter, or other form of communication explaining the condition to Lincoln.
 - a. Students should use language Lincoln could understand.
 - b. Students should also seek to draw Lincoln's attention to the evidence they uncovered.

Resources:

- Lincoln's Melancholy: How Depression Challenged a President and Fueled His Greatness. Book. Joshua Wolf Shenk. http://www.amazon.com/Lincolns-Melancholy-Depression-Challenged-President/dp/0618773444/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1341095089&sr=1-1&keywords=lincoln's+melancholy
- Lincoln's Melancholy. Website. <http://www.lincolnmelancholy.com/index.html>
- The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln. Website. <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/l/lincoln/>
- Abraham Lincoln's Health. Website. <http://www.abrahamlincolnsclassroom.org/Library/newsletter.asp?ID=25&CRLI=105>
- The Alfred Whital Stern Collection of Lincolniana. Website. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/stern-lincoln/>