

A HOME FOR BRAVE IDEAS™



Grade Level: Elementary/Middle

Many of President Abraham Lincoln's bravest ideas were developed, drafted, and debated during the time he and his family lived at the Cottage. On a recent visit to President Lincoln's Cottage, Oklahoma educator, David Burton, was overwhelmed by the power of Lincoln's brave ideas like unity, humanity, emancipation, and more. While reflecting on the power of these ideas, Burton thought about students' need for encouragement as they nurture their own brave ideas within the classroom. In reflection, Burton said, "Teaching critical thinking skills is a significant focus of education and developing brave ideas and working to implement them is, ultimately, at the heart of critical thinking." After visiting the Cottage, Burton was inspired to help other educators transform their classrooms into their very own "Home for Brave Ideas". What follows is a lesson David Burton developed as part of the Civil War Washington Teacher Fellows program. Please use this outline and the corresponding poster on the reverse of this brochure to create your "Home for Brave Ideas"!

Introduction:

Students will learn about the significant life events, characteristics, and brave ideas of Abraham Lincoln and other prominent people from history and learn how to apply those or similar characteristics and brave ideas within their own lives.

Learning Objectives:

Using Abraham Lincoln, and two other prominent people from history as selected by the teacher, to help students learn about brave ideas and to create a class culture that is a safe-place for the development and discussion of brave ideas throughout the year.

Guiding Questions:

- What is a brave idea?
- Identify significant life events and characteristics of Abraham Lincoln and two other prominent people from history assigned by your teacher. What were their significant brave ideas?
- What other brave ideas do we know about? What brave ideas do we have?
- How do we show respect to fellow students as they share their brave ideas?

Materials:

- Copy of book *What Do You Do with an Idea?*
By Kobi Yamada (Mae Besom, illustrator): www.lincolncottage.org/store
- Biography of Abraham Lincoln:
 - www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/ushistory/abrahamlincoln1.htm
 - www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/ushistory/abrahamlincoln2.htm
 - www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/ushistory/abrahamlincoln3.htm
 - www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/ushistory/abrahamlincoln4.htm
 - www.ducksters.com/biography/uspresidents/abrahamlincoln.php
- Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation
 - www.lincolncottage.org/education/resources/
- Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation for kids
 - www.historyforkids.net/emancipation-proclamation.html
 - www.ducksters.com/history/emancipation_proclamation.php
- Lists of other prominent people from history
 - www.ducksters.com/biography/
 - www.historyforkids.net/americanhistory.html
(click on US Leaders, Native Americans, or Civil Rights)



Procedures:

1. Brainstorm with students the meaning of the words "idea" and "brave". Ultimately, guide students into a class definition of "brave idea". Make sure they understand "I like candy" or "I like my dog" or "I want to go to Disneyland" are not necessarily brave ideas.
2. As a class, read the book *What Do You Do with an Idea?*
3. Discuss with students about how we come up with ideas. Relate the topic of the book back to the class definition of "brave idea"; edit the definition, if needed, based on what the students learned and discussed in the book.
4. Using resources provided, or those from the teacher's personal collection, have students read (or teacher read aloud) biography selections on Abraham Lincoln and two other prominent people from history. The selection of the two other people can be the same for all students or the teacher can give different people to small groups or individuals. While reading the biographies, make sure to focus/stress the brave ideas each person shared and how those ideas helped make the United States better.
5. Use a Venn Diagram to compare the lives and ideas of Abraham Lincoln with one of the other two people. This can be completed as a full class, in small groups, or as individuals. If time is available, complete another Venn Diagram comparing Lincoln with the other person (if completing both Venn Diagrams, perhaps do the first one as a full class as a modeling activity and then have small groups or individuals complete the second one).
6. As a full class, brainstorm what brave ideas they might have. As needed, refer to the class definition of "brave idea". Also discuss appropriate ways that we can react to the brave ideas shared by our classmates.