

# Idea Portraits

This exercise was adapted from a lesson developed by 2014 Civil War Washington Teacher Fellow Beverly Blackmon.

Artist John Williams created *Lincoln* (portrait at right) “to show how Lincoln might have been feeling with the weight of the world on his shoulders — tired and sad, but also determined to achieve his goal of a united nation *with freedom and justice for all.*” The ideas that President Lincoln worked on while living at the Cottage, and the action he took in support of these ideas, are among the many reasons we remember him today. President Lincoln serves as a model to all of us as we develop our own powerful ideas and problem-solving skills.

## Materials:

- ◆ Book: *What Do You Do With an Idea?* By Kobi Yamada (you can use your own copy, or read along with this [video](#))
- ◆ Construction paper
- ◆ Crayons or markers
- ◆ Glue or glue stick
- ◆ Scissors

## Time:

About 60 minutes



## Age Group:

ages 6-10

## Essential Questions:

- ◆ What are ideas?
- ◆ Why are ideas important?

## INTRODUCTION

**Start a conversation. Ask your student(s):**

- ◆ What is an idea?
- ◆ Where do ideas come from?
- ◆ Why do we have ideas?
- ◆ What do you do with an idea?

## PROCEDURE

**Read page 1-2. Analyze the illustration with your student(s).**

- ◆ How does the illustrator represent the idea?
- ◆ How is the idea different from the rest of the illustration?

**Read remainder of *What Do You Do With an Idea?* Discuss questions about the book:**

- ◆ Why would someone act like an idea didn't belong to him or her?
- ◆ What does an idea need?
- ◆ How does the illustrator represent attention?

**List synonyms for the word idea. (Use a thesaurus if necessary)**

**Ask your student(s) to list ideas floating around in their head. You can do this too!**

**Have your student(s) pair up with someone nearby and share ideas.**

**Discuss:**

- ◆ Did you and your partner have different ideas? Why is it important that we have different ideas?
- ◆ Did you and your partner have similar ideas? Why is it important that we have similar ideas?

**Student(s) create a self-portrait (see [Art Smudge](#) for tips on creating proportional self-portraits with kids).**

- ◆ Students cut head,
- ◆ Glue onto a piece of colored construction paper, and
- ◆ Illustrate the ideas they have in their heads. (See pages 3–4 for student work samples)

## CLOSURE/REFLECTION

**How will you give one of your ideas attention so it can grow?**

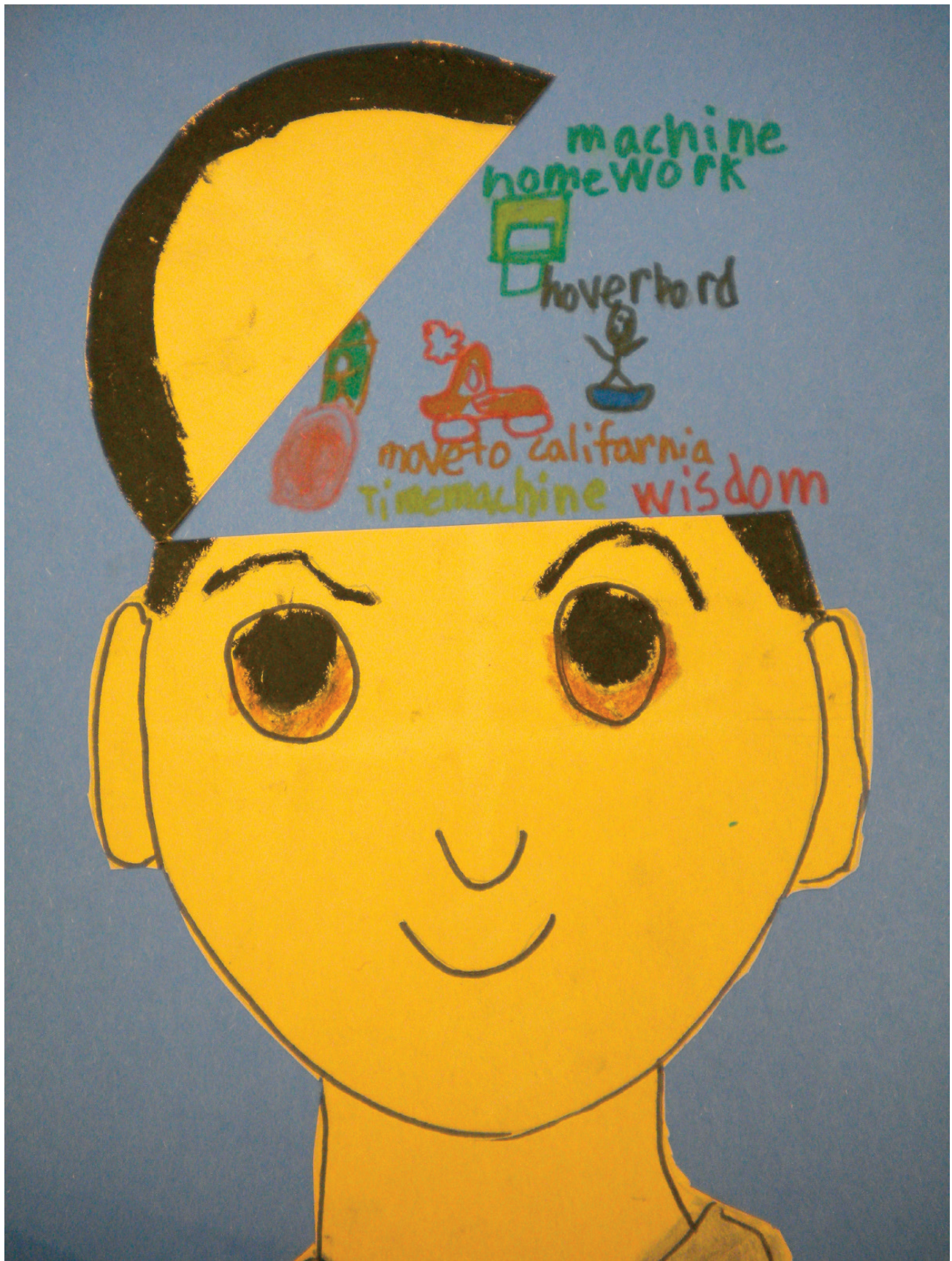
### Extension:

- ◆ In the book, the boy built a house without a roof for his idea so that the idea could grow. During Abraham Lincoln's presidency, he spent time in the Cottage on the grounds of Old Soldiers' Home as a retreat to give his ideas time and space to grow.
- ◆ View images of President Lincoln's Cottage at the Soldiers' Home and discuss the role the Cottage played as a retreat for Lincoln (see pages 5–7 for images of President Lincoln's Cottage).
  - ◆ **Soldiers' Home, Washington, D.C.,** ©Library of Congress (page 5)
  - ◆ **Photo from Mary Lincoln's family photo album,** Lincoln Collection, ©Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne, Indiana (page 6)
  - ◆ **Modern view of President Lincoln's Cottage,** ©President Lincoln's Cottage (page 7)
- ◆ Additional lesson plan: "[President Lincoln's Cottage: A Retreat](#)" from the National Park Service Teaching with Historic Places.
- ◆ Ask students to write a descriptive paragraph about where they would go as a retreat to grow their ideas.

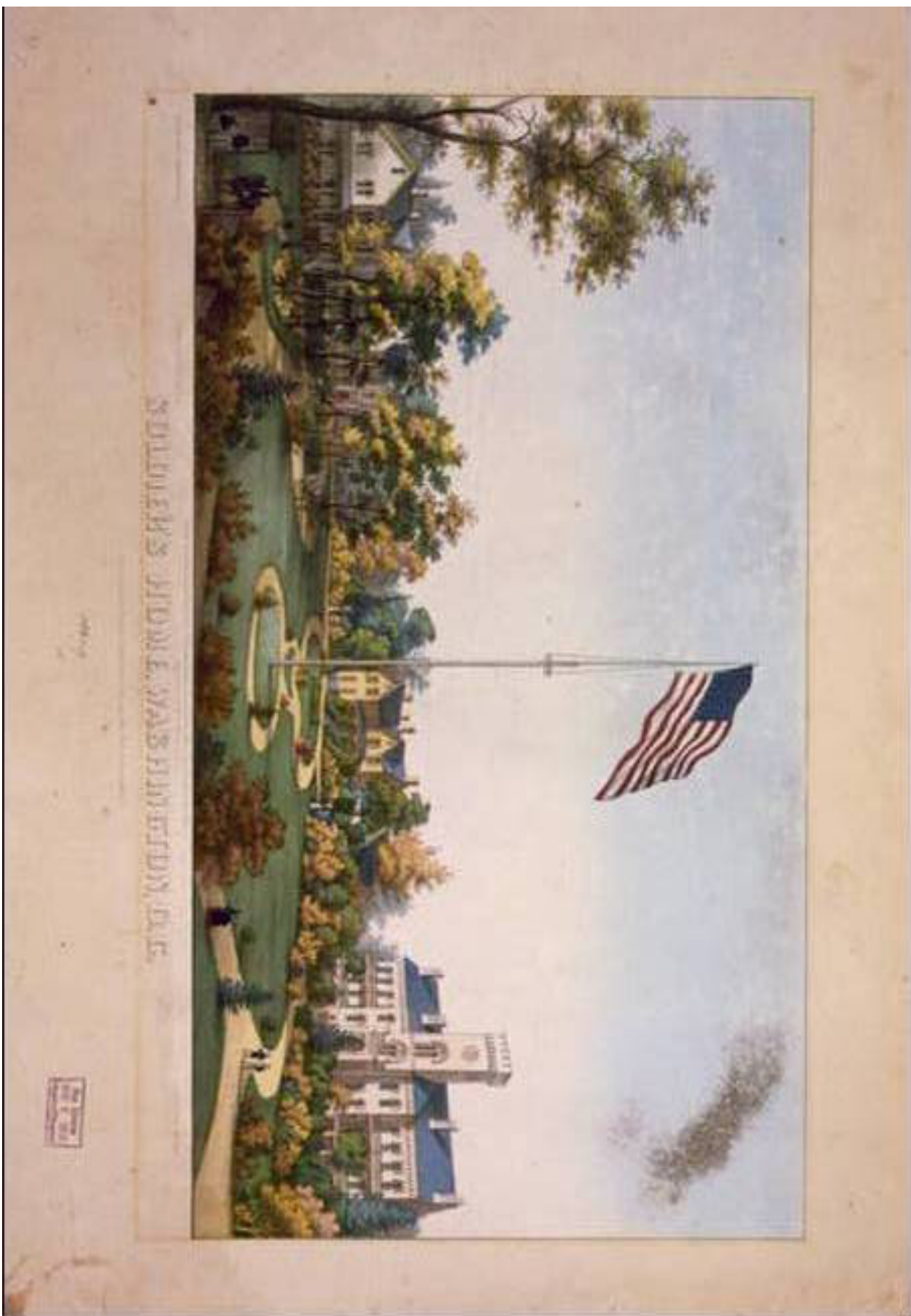












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Photo from Mary Lincoln's family photo album, Lincoln Collection, ©Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne, Indiana





Modern view of President Lincoln's Cottage, ©President Lincoln's Cottage