

Example of abraham lincoln essay

[Sociology](#), [Slavery](#)



Abraham Lincoln

As the United States' 16th president, Abraham Lincoln is considered the greatest American of all time, because of his ability to hold the United States together through what historians regard as the worst crisis in the nation's history. Born on February 12, 1809 in Hardin County, Kentucky, Abraham Lincoln rose from humble beginnings to become the nation's 16th president. He had a unique appeal and has an enduring legacy for his humane personality and role in history as an emancipator of slaves as well as for ensuring the Union's stability. He met his tragic death on a Good Friday in 1865, marking the first assassination of a president of the US.

Lincoln's birth took place in a log cabin to an obscure backwoods family. He had two other siblings; his younger brother who died at infancy and an elder sister. In 1817, his family moved from Kentucky to Indiana where they lived as squatters on a public land. Here, the family engaged in farming and game hunting to scrap out a living. Lincoln's father eventually managed to purchase the land. Two years after they had moved, Lincoln's mother passed on. Sarah Bush Johnston, a widow, got married to Lincoln's father¹.

Lincoln had scant formal education, and most of the education he acquired was through self education. He attended a one-teacher school for a few months while the rest of the time he avidly read books. Growing up, he took up manual labor to support himself and at age 21 he moved to New Salem and settled there. He began serving as a storekeeper, and then got involved in the Black Hawk War as a militia captain. He also served as postmaster, all the while continuing his self education.

He contested for the seat of state legislature in the year 1832 and lost. Fortunately for him, two years later he contested as a Whig and won, thereby serving for four terms. Due to his integrity and wit while serving in this position, he gained popularity across the state². He began studying law privately and in 1836 he obtained a license to practice. Socially, Lincoln was a circuit rider and due to his increasing success in it, he decided to move to Springfield.

In 1842, he married Mary Todd, a young lady from Lexington with aristocratic pretensions. He then partnered with William H. Herndon to become one of the best lawyers in the whole of Illinois. He got elected to the House of Representatives in 1847 where he championed for the abolition of slavery and opposed the Mexican War. In 1856, he defected to the new Republican Party and ran for senate but lost the race. Despite the loss, the race received a lot of attention because of the heated debates the candidates had concerning slavery in the territories. This, in addition to his 1860 Cooper Union speech about the power of Federal governments to control slavery in the territories made him a popular figure in the US to a point where the Republicans decided to nominate him for presidency.

With the split of the Democratic Party into two factions; the Southern and Northern factions, Lincoln won the November elections with 40% of all the votes, defeating three other contestants. According to Southern politicians this was unacceptable and was used as pretext for secession from the Union by South Carolina and ten other states. At the time Lincoln was being sworn in as the US' 16th president in March 1861, the Southern politicians had already formed the Confederate States of America. Therefore, in Lincoln's

first inaugural address to the nation he tried to convince the seceded states back to the Union.

However, the Fort Sumter bombardment made him take action. He vowed that he would preserve the Union by all means possible. He gathered 75, 000 volunteers to provide manpower for the suppression of this secession.

Habeas Corpus was suspended in places that faced threats from pro-secessionist elements and the Southern ports blockaded at the president's authorization. On July 4, 1861, Lincoln called Congress to meet; at this time he had a firm grip on the presidential reins. This was to be a special session already enacted by him via an executive decree.

Despite lots of political opposition and numerous casualties due to the battle, Lincoln's will to triumph never waned. It did not challenge him that most of the opposing forces were from among members of his own cabinet and a certain section of his Republican Party; the Radical Republicans. He had a gentle spirit and was convinced that only through a well-fought war would the Union be restored. He therefore employed his calculated military strategy as Commander in Chief and maintained the ordinary Union soldiers' affection in the quest for victory³.

Even in his involvement in the war, he took caution not to alienate his constituents, the Western and Northern states of the Union. Being the prolific politician that he was, Lincoln carefully framed the Emancipation Proclamation so as to avoid offending the loyal states that were also slave owners. He schematically organized for the freeing of slaves in Confederate-controlled regions only at this premature stage of the war.

As an administrator, Lincoln was deemed inefficient. This was because of the

way he ran his office. He operated the presidential office like one large law firm. The only members of staff he had were two male secretaries. He was needlessly accessible to special pleaders and office seekers, something that is uncommon for those efficient in administration. However, this is not to say that he was poor at leadership. He exhibited superb leadership, unwavering in his quest for the restoration and preservation of the Union. He was also a great orator, the Gettysburg Address and his inaugural speeches attest to this.

His administration ensured the enactment of the 1862 Homestead Act. He was also good at foreign affairs, evidenced by the goodwill he acquired from Europe because of his Emancipation Proclamation and the way he handled the Trent Affair to avoid going to war with Great Britain. By 1864, the Confederacy had opted to go the guerilla war direction and this being an election year; Lincoln saw defeat coming his way. George McClellan was his nemesis in the elections, campaigning on a peace platform. However, when the results were announced, Lincoln won with 55% of the popular vote as well as 212 Electoral votes. On the 28th of March, 1865 the Confederate forces under General Robert E. Lee surrendered to the Union General, bringing the war to an end⁴.

Immediately, Lincoln embarked on reconstructing the country, although as early as 1863 the work had begun in areas that were firmly under the control of the Union military. He intended this to be quick with least retribution, but then faced a radical section of Republicans both in the Senate and the House who differed with him on this⁵. However, before this developed fully into a political battle, Abraham Lincoln got assassinated by John Wilkes Booth.

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