

Name: _____

Abraham Lincoln

February is the birthday month of two of our country's most important presidents—George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Washington, the country's first president, was born on February 22, and Lincoln, our 16th president, on February 12. We celebrate their combined birthdays on President's Day which falls this year on Monday, February 21.



Abraham Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln is most famous for leading the country during the American Civil War and for bringing about the end of slavery.

Lincoln was born in a tiny one-room cabin in Kentucky. His family was poor and moved around a lot. At one time, they lived in a cabin with only three walls! The family kept a fire burning near the open space to warm the cabin.

Lincoln had only about one year of schooling, but he loved to read. He was also a pretty good story-teller and liked to tell jokes.

Lincoln was not handsome. He was tall, skinny, awkward, and poorly dressed. But people liked him in spite of his appearance because he was good-natured and honest.

Lincoln became President during one of our nation's most difficult periods. The Northern states and Southern states were split on the issue of slavery. Most states in the North opposed it; the states in the South did not. As a result of this disagreement, the Southern states wanted to leave the Union and form their own separate country. Lincoln believed that this was illegal. He was determined that the country should remain united, and he was willing to use force to keep it that way. The Southern states resisted. The result was the American Civil War (also called the '*War Between the States*').

Lincoln believed that slavery was wrong. However, at the beginning of the war, he did not believe that the Constitution gave the government the right to end slavery. Later, he realized that slavery must be abolished (ended) to keep the country together. In 1862, two years into the war, he issued the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing all the slaves in the South.

Very many people died during the war, and many others endured extreme hardship. For a long while, it looked as if the South would win, and many people in the North were discouraged. But Lincoln refused to give up. In the

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end, Lincoln's determination paid off. The North eventually won the war, and the North and South remained united as one country.

Less than a week after the war ended, Lincoln was assassinated (murdered). Lincoln was at the theatre with his wife when a man named John Wilkes Booth snuck up from behind and shot the President in the back of the head. Lincoln died the next day.

Today, Lincoln is remembered as a hero. However, he was not a popular president. In fact, he was so disliked that he received over 10,000 death threats during his lifetime. But Lincoln wasn't afraid of being disliked. He believed in doing what he thought was right, no matter what.

1. What is Abraham Lincoln best known for?
2. What brought about the Civil War?
3. Why didn't Lincoln try to end slavery at the beginning of his presidency?

When did he decide that slavery had to be abolished (ended)?

4. What did the Civil War accomplish?
5. How did Lincoln die?