

Book Title: Lincoln: A Photobiography

Author: by Russell Freedman

Grade Level: 6

Type: Nonfiction

Topic: Biography

Lexile: 1110

Discussion Questions

1. Do you think that the many photographs in this book add to the story or take away from it? Explain.
 - The photos add greatly to the story by helping the reader visualize Lincoln and the historical events in which he was involved. They make the text more interesting and easier to understand.
 - Some students may say they felt distracted by all the pictures and photographs. Some may say the photos detract from the story because they show only formal, stiff people and cannot show any action.
2. If you had to describe Abraham Lincoln and his life to someone else, how would you describe what kind of person he was and what kind of life he led?
 - He was determined, hard-working, and ambitious.
 - He was clever, smart, and witty, but also moody and depressed.
 - His life was difficult in many ways. He was successful, but his life was also filled with tragedy and, as president, with agonizing decisions.
3. How did Lincoln feel about slavery, and how did his opinions of slavery change during his years in office?
 - In his early career, Lincoln disagreed with the concept of slavery but was not very vocal about it.
 - At certain times in his career he said that he did not know what to do about states that already had and depended on slavery. He was inclined to let them continue to own slaves as long as no new slave states joined the Union.
 - In the years shortly before the war, Lincoln began to take a much stronger stand on slavery as morally wrong. As president, he eventually announced the Emancipation Proclamation and pushed through the Thirteenth Amendment.
4. What was Lincoln's family life like, first as a boy and then as a married man?
 - His life as a boy was difficult. His father moved the family often, and Lincoln learned to work hard from a very young age. His mother died when he was very young. He had no real formal education but worked hard to educate himself.
 - Lincoln's wife Mary Ann Todd was opinionated, stubborn, and hard to live with, but so was Lincoln himself. Though they often fought, they did love each other and the marriage was strong. Mary Todd Lincoln was very proud of her husband's accomplishments, though she was embarrassed by his down-home ways.
5. In the end, how did Lincoln feel about the outcome of the Civil War?
 - Lincoln was horrified by the tragedy of the war. He could never stop thinking about the casualties as real people who had given their lives.

- He saw the war as a great test of the ideal of democracy set out in the Declaration of Independence by the founding fathers. He felt the war was vital to the preservation and success of the Union, which should be preserved at any cost.
- The war aged Lincoln considerably because he agonized over the decisions he made and the lives lost.