Early Life

Abraham Lincoln was born in a one-room cabin in Kentucky. His father lost everything of value to their family, forcing them to move to Indiana. Life didn't get any better. Lincoln was not rich. When he was only 9 years old, his mother died, leaving his older sister Sarah to take care of Abraham.

Abraham was very interested in learning, but did not get a strong education. Most of what he learned, he taught himself through reading books that he would borrow.

Making His Own Way

After his family moved to Illinois, Abraham Lincoln decided to start working. He did several different jobs. At one point, Lincoln made his living by splitting wood. Splitting wood is when you cut a log vertically using an axe. He decided to try his hand in politics, winning a seat in the Legislature at the age of 25. During his many terms in the Illinois Legislature, he studied law. He began working as a lawyer.

In 1845, Abraham Lincoln ran for Congress and won! He would continue his political career by running for Senate in 1860. He lost the election. However, during his campaign, Lincoln spoke out against slavery. Doing this gained him a lot of attention from people all over the United States.

In the late 1850s, Lincoln became part of a new political party. This group of people were against the southern states leaving the Union, and they were opposed to slavery. They were not going to change the states that had slaves, but they were determined that no new states would become slave states. This was called the Republican Party.

Presidency

In 1860, Lincoln ran in the Presidential election. The Democrat party chose to put forth more than one candidate. In doing so, the Democrats split their votes. This allowed Lincoln to win the electoral vote. The southern states were furious, and one-by-one began to secede, or leave the Union.

The Civil War

Abraham Lincoln was firm in his belief that the states should ALL stick together. Lincoln called for a Union Army to fight the southern states. On April 12, 1861, the Battle of Fort Sumter began the war. This would be known as the bloodiest war in the history of the United States. Neighbors fought neighbors, families fought families, and brothers fought brothers. The country was divided. 600,000 lives were lost during the Civil War.

On January 1, 1863, Abraham Lincoln issued a new law. It was called the Emancipation Proclamation. This new order freed all the slaves in the Confederate states. Not all slave-holders followed the law, but this proclamation set the country up for the 13th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. This amendment gave freedoms to all men, not matter their race.

Later that year, Lincoln would speak at the place where the bloodiest battle of the Civil War happened: Gettysburg. This address is considered one of the most famous speeches ever given.

In 1865, Robert E. Lee surrendered to the Union, thus ending the Civil War. Lincoln would be assassinated before he would see his dream of reconstruction happen in his torn country.

What was Abraham Lincoln's childhood like?

How did he serve in politics?

What party was Lincoln a part of?

What did they believe?

What was the Emancipation Proclamation?

How did Lincoln die?

After reading this text, what is your opinion of Abraham Lincoln? Was he a good or evil man? Would he be someone you would like to meet? Why or why not? Explain your thinking.