

LINCOLN'S WORDS ECHO THROUGH TIME

OBJECTIVES

STUDENTS WILL:

- REFLECT ON WHY CERTAIN SPEECHES OR WORDS ENDURE ACROSS TIME AND HOW THEY RELATE TO PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE VALUES.
- ANALYZE AND UNDERSTAND THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S KEY QUOTES.
- EXPLORE HOW LINCOLN'S WORDS CONTINUE TO INFLUENCE THE MODERN WORLD

INSTRUCTIONS

PART I – INTRODUCTION AND DISCUSSION

ASK STUDENTS TO SHARE QUOTES THEY ARE FAMILIAR WITH. IT CAN BE POPULAR CULTURE, HISTORICAL, OR EVEN WORDS FROM THEIR PARENTS! THE OPTIONS ARE UNLIMITED.

GIVE STUDENTS TIME TO THINK INDIVIDUALLY AND WRITE DOWN A FEW QUOTES. IF THEY ARE STRUGGLING, OFFER THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLES:

POP CULTURE	HISTORICAL	PARENTS
"THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME."	"I HAVE A DREAM...."	"TWO WRONGS DON'T MAKE A RIGHT."
"MAY THE FORCE BE WITH YOU."	"THE ONLY THING WE HAVE TO FEAR IS FEAR ITSELF."	"BECAUSE I SAID SO."
"I FEEL THE NEED – THE NEED FOR SPEED!"	"AND SO, MY FELLOW AMERICANS, ASK NOT WHAT YOUR COUNTRY CAN DO FOR YOU -- ASK WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR COUNTRY"	"MONEY DOESN'T GROW ON TREES."

HAVE STUDENTS SHARE THEIR QUOTES. AS A CLASS, DISCUSS THE CONTEXT, RELEVANCE, AND IMPORTANCE OF THEIR QUOTES.

Ask:

*WHY DO CERTAIN QUOTES ENDURE OVER TIME WHILE OTHERS FADE INTO OBSCURITY?

- *FOLLOW-UP:* WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU THINK MAKE A QUOTE MEMORABLE OR IMPACTFUL? IS IT THE MESSAGE, THE CONTEXT IN WHICH IT WAS SAID, OR THE PERSON WHO SAID IT?

2. HOW CAN A SINGLE QUOTE REFLECT THE VALUES OR STRUGGLES OF AN ENTIRE ERA OR GENERATION?

- *FOLLOW-UP:* CAN YOU THINK OF A FAMOUS QUOTE THAT CAPTURES THE SPIRIT OF ITS TIME (E.G., A POLITICAL MOVEMENT, A PERIOD OF SOCIAL CHANGE)? HOW DOES THIS QUOTE CONTINUE TO RESONATE TODAY, OR IS ITS MEANING UNDERSTOOD DIFFERENTLY BY MODERN AUDIENCES?

3. HOW DO QUOTES INFLUENCE OR SHAPE OUR WORLDVIEW, BEHAVIORS, OR ACTIONS?

- *FOLLOW-UP:* DO YOU BELIEVE THAT FAMOUS QUOTES HAVE THE POWER TO INSPIRE CHANGE, MOTIVATE ACTION, OR CHALLENGE EXISTING IDEAS? CAN YOU THINK OF AN EXAMPLE WHERE A FAMOUS QUOTE LED TO REAL-WORLD CONSEQUENCES OR SHIFTS IN THINKING?

PART II: THE WORDS OF LINCOLN

NOW THAT STUDENTS HAVE DISCUSSED THE POWER OF QUOTES, INTRODUCE THE IDEA THAT SOME OF THE MOST ENDURING WORDS IN HISTORY WERE SPOKEN BY ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

USE THE QUOTES BELOW OR HAVE THE STUDENTS RESEARCH THEIR OWN QUOTES BY LINCOLN. HAVE THEM CHOOSE ONE THAT THEY FIND MEANINGFUL AND FIND THE FOLLOWING:

- WHO WAS HIS AUDIENCE?
- WHAT WAS THE GREATER CONTEXT OF THE WORDS?
- WHY WAS THIS TOPIC IMPORTANT IN LINCOLN'S TIME?
- WHERE WERE THE WORDS WRITTEN/SPOKEN?
- WHEN WAS THE QUOTE MADE?

PART III: HOW LINCOLN'S WORDS ECHO THROUGH TIME

STUDENTS WILL PROVIDE EVIDENCE THAT LINCOLN'S WORDS STILL MATTER VIA THE PROMPT: IN WHAT WAYS ARE LINCOLN'S WORDS STILL RELEVANT TODAY?

- 2-3 PARAGRAPH RESPONSE
- A SLIDESHOW
- AN INFOGRAPHIC

RESOURCES

HERE ARE SOME QUOTES YOU CAN OFFER THE STUDENTS WITH EXPLANATIONS.

- "THE WORLD WILL LITTLE NOTE, NOR LONG REMEMBER WHAT WE SAY HERE, BUT IT CAN NEVER FORGET WHAT THEY DID HERE."
- "THAT THIS NATION, UNDER GOD, SHALL HAVE A NEW BIRTH OF FREEDOM—AND THAT GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE, SHALL NOT PERISH FROM THE EARTH."
- "FONDLY DO WE HOPE, FERVENTLY DO WE PRAY, THAT THIS MIGHTY SCOURGE OF WAR MAY SPEEDILY PASS AWAY. YET, IF GOD WILLS THAT IT CONTINUE UNTIL ALL THE WEALTH PILED BY THE BONDSMAN'S TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS OF UNREQUITED TOIL SHALL BE SUNK, AND UNTIL EVERY DROP OF BLOOD DRAWN WITH THE LASH SHALL BE PAID BY ANOTHER DRAWN WITH THE SWORD, AS WAS SAID THREE THOUSAND YEARS AGO, SO STILL IT MUST BE SAID 'THE JUDGMENTS OF THE LORD ARE TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS ALTOGETHER.'"
- "WITH MALICE TOWARD NONE, WITH CHARITY FOR ALL, WITH FIRMNESS IN THE RIGHT, AS GOD GIVES US TO SEE THE RIGHT, LET US STRIVE ON TO FINISH THE WORK WE ARE IN, TO BIND UP THE NATION'S WOUNDS..."
- "MY PARAMOUNT OBJECT IN THIS STRUGGLE IS TO SAVE THE UNION, AND IS NOT EITHER TO SAVE OR TO DESTROY SLAVERY. IF I COULD SAVE THE UNION WITHOUT FREEING ANY SLAVE I WOULD DO IT, AND IF I COULD SAVE IT BY FREEING ALL THE SLAVES I WOULD DO IT; AND IF I COULD SAVE IT BY FREEING SOME AND LEAVING OTHERS ALONE I WOULD ALSO DO THAT."
- "IT IS FOR US THE LIVING, RATHER, TO BE DEDICATED HERE TO THE UNFINISHED WORK WHICH THEY WHO FOUGHT HERE HAVE THUS FAR SO NOBLY ADVANCED."
- "A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF CANNOT STAND. I BELIEVE THIS GOVERNMENT CANNOT ENDURE PERMANENTLY HALF SLAVE AND HALF FREE. I DO NOT EXPECT THE UNION TO BE DISSOLVED—I DO NOT EXPECT THE HOUSE TO FALL—BUT I DO EXPECT IT WILL CEASE TO BE DIVIDED."

- “THAT ON THE FIRST DAY OF JANUARY, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND SIXTY-THREE, ALL PERSONS HELD AS SLAVES WITHIN ANY STATE OR DESIGNATED PART OF A STATE, THE PEOPLE WHEREOF SHALL THEN BE IN REBELLION AGAINST THE UNITED STATES, SHALL BE THEN, THENCEFORWARD, AND FOREVER FREE...”
- “AS I WOULD NOT BE A SLAVE, SO I WOULD NOT BE A MASTER. THIS EXPRESSES MY IDEA OF DEMOCRACY. WHATEVER DIFFERS FROM THIS, TO THE EXTENT OF THE DIFFERENCE, IS NO DEMOCRACY.”
- “I PRAY THAT OUR HEAVENLY FATHER MAY ASSUAGE THE ANGUISH OF YOUR BEREAVEMENT, AND LEAVE YOU ONLY THE CHERISHED MEMORY OF THE LOVED AND LOST, AND THE SOLEMN PRIDE THAT MUST BE YOURS TO HAVE LAID SO COSTLY A SACRIFICE UPON THE ALTAR OF FREEDOM.”

TEACHER KEY

1. THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS (1863)

“THE WORLD WILL LITTLE NOTE, NOR LONG REMEMBER WHAT WE SAY HERE, BUT IT CAN NEVER FORGET WHAT THEY DID HERE.”

- *WHY IT WORKS:* THIS QUOTE IS FROM ONE OF LINCOLN’S MOST FAMOUS SPEECHES, REFLECTING THE PROFOUND SIGNIFICANCE OF SACRIFICE IN WAR. IT’S A REMINDER THAT ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS, THOUGH, AS HISTORY HAS SHOWN, LINCOLN’S WORDS HAVE HAD AN ENDURING IMPACT ON THE AMERICAN CONSCIOUSNESS.

“THAT THIS NATION, UNDER GOD, SHALL HAVE A NEW BIRTH OF FREEDOM—AND THAT GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE, SHALL NOT PERISH FROM THE EARTH.”

- *WHY IT WORKS:* THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS LINES IN AMERICAN HISTORY, EMPHASIZING DEMOCRACY AND EQUALITY. IT SPEAKS TO THE PRINCIPLES OF FREEDOM AND SELF-GOVERNANCE, WHICH RESONATE THROUGH THE AGES.

2. SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS (1865)

“FONDLY DO WE HOPE, FERVENTLY DO WE PRAY, THAT THIS MIGHTY SCOURGE OF WAR MAY SPEEDILY PASS AWAY. YET, IF GOD WILLS THAT IT CONTINUE UNTIL ALL THE WEALTH PILED BY THE BONDSMAN’S TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS OF UNREQUITED TOIL SHALL BE SUNK, AND UNTIL EVERY DROP OF BLOOD DRAWN WITH THE LASH SHALL BE PAID BY ANOTHER DRAWN WITH THE SWORD, AS WAS SAID

THREE THOUSAND YEARS AGO, SO STILL IT MUST BE SAID 'THE JUDGMENTS OF THE LORD ARE TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS ALTOGETHER.'"

- *WHY IT WORKS:* THIS POWERFUL QUOTE REFLECTS LINCOLN'S DEEP SENSE OF MORALITY AND JUSTICE, ACKNOWLEDGING THE PAINFUL COST OF SLAVERY AND THE CIVIL WAR. IT SPEAKS TO THE ENDURING THEME OF RECONCILIATION AFTER CONFLICT.

"WITH MALICE TOWARD NONE, WITH CHARITY FOR ALL, WITH FIRMNESS IN THE RIGHT, AS GOD GIVES US TO SEE THE RIGHT, LET US STRIVE ON TO FINISH THE WORK WE ARE IN, TO BIND UP THE NATION'S WOUNDS..."

- *WHY IT WORKS:* THIS CALL FOR UNITY AND HEALING AFTER THE CIVIL WAR EMBODIES LINCOLN'S VISION FOR A NATION THAT RISES ABOVE DIVISION AND CONFLICT, A MESSAGE THAT CONTINUES TO RESONATE TODAY.

3. LINCOLN'S LETTER TO HORACE GREELEY (1862)

"MY PARAMOUNT OBJECT IN THIS STRUGGLE IS TO SAVE THE UNION, AND IS NOT EITHER TO SAVE OR TO DESTROY SLAVERY. IF I COULD SAVE THE UNION WITHOUT FREEING ANY SLAVE I WOULD DO IT, AND IF I COULD SAVE IT BY FREEING ALL THE SLAVES I WOULD DO IT; AND IF I COULD SAVE IT BY FREEING SOME AND LEAVING OTHERS ALONE I WOULD ALSO DO THAT."

- *WHY IT WORKS:* THIS QUOTE SHOWS LINCOLN'S PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO PRESERVING THE UNION DURING THE CIVIL WAR, YET ALSO UNDERScores HIS COMMITMENT TO THE IDEALS OF LIBERTY AND EQUALITY.

4. LINCOLN'S REPLY TO THE WISCONSIN SOLDIERS (1863)

"IT IS FOR US THE LIVING, RATHER, TO BE DEDICATED HERE TO THE UNFINISHED WORK WHICH THEY WHO FOUGHT HERE HAVE THUS FAR SO NOBLY ADVANCED."

- *WHY IT WORKS:* THIS QUOTE, FROM LINCOLN'S ADDRESS AT GETTYSBURG, CALLS ON THE LIVING TO CONTINUE THE WORK OF THOSE WHO SACRIFICED THEIR LIVES IN THE CIVIL WAR, EMPHASIZING THE ENDURING NATURE OF THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM AND EQUALITY.

5. LINCOLN'S HOUSE DIVIDED SPEECH (1858)

"A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF CANNOT STAND. I BELIEVE THIS GOVERNMENT CANNOT ENDURE PERMANENTLY HALF SLAVE AND HALF FREE. I DO NOT EXPECT THE UNION TO BE DISSOLVED—I DO NOT EXPECT THE HOUSE TO FALL—BUT I DO EXPECT IT WILL CEASE TO BE DIVIDED."

- *WHY IT WORKS:* THIS SPEECH SET THE TONE FOR LINCOLN'S OPPOSITION TO THE SPREAD OF SLAVERY AND IS A KEY STATEMENT ON UNITY. IT RESONATES DEEPLY IN TIMES OF NATIONAL DIVISION, REMINDING PEOPLE THAT UNITY IS ESSENTIAL FOR SURVIVAL.

6. LINCOLN'S EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION (1863)

"THAT ON THE FIRST DAY OF JANUARY, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND SIXTY-THREE, ALL PERSONS HELD AS SLAVES WITHIN ANY STATE OR DESIGNATED PART OF A STATE, THE PEOPLE WHEREOF SHALL THEN BE IN REBELLION AGAINST THE UNITED STATES, SHALL BE THEN, THENCEFORWARD, AND FOREVER FREE..."

- *WHY IT WORKS:* THIS IS A DIRECT STATEMENT OF LINCOLN'S MORAL AND LEGAL STAND ON SLAVERY. IT IS A LANDMARK MOMENT IN AMERICAN HISTORY AND ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT EXECUTIVE ACTIONS IN THE NATION'S STORY.

7. LINCOLN'S STATEMENT ON DEMOCRACY (1858)

"AS I WOULD NOT BE A SLAVE, SO I WOULD NOT BE A MASTER. THIS EXPRESSES MY IDEA OF DEMOCRACY. WHATEVER DIFFERS FROM THIS, TO THE EXTENT OF THE DIFFERENCE, IS NO DEMOCRACY."

- *WHY IT WORKS:* THIS SUCCINCT QUOTE ENCAPSULATES LINCOLN'S DEEP BELIEF IN EQUALITY AND FREEDOM. IT SPEAKS TO THE BROADER IDEALS OF DEMOCRACY THAT HAVE SHAPED AMERICAN SOCIETY AND STILL RESONATE GLOBALLY.

8. LINCOLN'S LETTER TO MRS. BIXBY (1864)

"I PRAY THAT OUR HEAVENLY FATHER MAY ASSUAGE THE ANGUISH OF YOUR BEREAVEMENT, AND LEAVE YOU ONLY THE CHERISHED MEMORY OF THE LOVED AND LOST, AND THE SOLEMN PRIDE THAT MUST BE YOURS TO HAVE LAID SO COSTLY A SACRIFICE UPON THE ALTAR OF FREEDOM."

- *WHY IT WORKS:* A MOVING EXPRESSION OF EMPATHY AND SACRIFICE, THIS LETTER TO A MOTHER WHO LOST MULTIPLE SONS IN THE WAR UNDERSCORES LINCOLN'S MORAL LEADERSHIP AND THE PROFOUND COST OF WAR.

WHY THESE QUOTES WORK FOR THE LESSON:

- ENDURANCE OF IDEAS: EACH OF THESE QUOTES REFLECTS ENDURING PRINCIPLES—FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY, EQUALITY, AND UNITY—THAT STILL SHAPE AMERICAN VALUES AND ARE QUOTED FREQUENTLY TODAY.
- RHETORICAL POWER: LINCOLN'S ABILITY TO SPEAK DIRECTLY AND POWERFULLY TO THE HEART OF NATIONAL ISSUES MAKES HIS WORDS MEMORABLE AND EFFECTIVE.
- RELEVANCE ACROSS TIME: THE THEMES IN THESE QUOTES—WAR, PEACE, JUSTICE, AND UNITY—CONTINUE TO RESONATE IN MODERN CONTEXTS, MAKING THEM IDEAL FOR A LESSON ON HOW LINCOLN'S WORDS HAVE LIVED ON.

THESE QUOTES NOT ONLY HELP ILLUSTRATE LINCOLN'S VISION AND LEADERSHIP, BUT THEY ALSO PROVIDE A RICH FOUNDATION FOR EXPLORING HOW LANGUAGE AND IDEAS ENDURE OVER TIME AND CONTINUE TO SHAPE OUR UNDERSTANDING OF HISTORY AND SOCIETY.