

Abraham Lincoln: It's Lincoln Penny Day!
(Short Version)
By Carol Montgomery

Performance Time = less than 4 minutes

Readability = Grade 5.2 *

(* The readability score is higher because of the Latin words "E Pluribus Unum" and the grammar "mistakes" in the historical documents that were quoted, I believe. This is a **good script for readers of different reading ability.**)

Cast (6-12+):

Narrator 1	Grace #1
Narrator 2	Grace #2
Citizen 1	Grace #3
Citizen 2	Lincoln #1
Citizen 3	Lincoln #2
Citizen 4	Lincoln #3

Kids/Audience

Note:

- For fewer parts combine the 4 citizens into 2—odd & even.
- You may also have Grace and Lincoln read their entire lines as one reader; however, you **MUST** choose excellent readers with expression for success. Grace's lines are difficult because of grammar mistakes that we preserved from her original letter. (There is an online link to her letter at the end of this script. Feel free to correct the grammar if you prefer.)
- The group participation script was written specifically to encourage performances to younger classes or parent programs. It has been shortened here for those who prefer no audience participation.

Vocabulary:

Abraham	humiliation
affection	husband's
agreeable	interesting
Almighty	January
America	Lincoln
anyway	moustache
audience	Narrator
Bedell	national
believed	necessity
bounties	oneness
brought	Pluribus
candidate	popular
Chatauque	preserved
choicest	president
citizen	presidential
constitute	proclaimed
cunning	Proclamation
daughters	prosperity
different	received
discover	recipients
Emancipation	seventeen
encouraged	translated
fasting	Unum
forgotten	well-wisher
Grace's	Westfield
gracious	whiskers
Hamlin's	

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Narrator1: (*speaks to audience*) It's Lincoln Penny Day! So, let's learn about Abraham Lincoln from the Lincoln penny!

Citizen 1: On the front of the Lincoln penny you will see President Lincoln's profile.

Citizen 2: I see Lincoln had hair, one eye, a nose, and even a beard!

Citizen 1: Of course he had two eyes, but the side view shows only one. Do you see a moustache?

Citizen 2: No. So, that means he knew how to shave his moustache! But, why didn't he shave his beard?

Narrator 2: I'm glad you asked. That is an interesting story. It all started in 1860 when eleven-year-old Grace Bedell wrote a letter to the popular presidential candidate Abraham Lincoln. In her letter she wrote...

Grace #1: (*pretends she's reading her letter aloud*) "Dear Sir," (pause) "My father has just home from the fair and brought home your picture and Mr. Hamlin's. I am a little girl only eleven years old, but want you should be President of the United States very much so I hope you wont think me very bold to write to such a great man as you are. Have you any little girls about as large as I am If so give them my love and tell her to write to me if you cannot answer this letter."

Grace #2: (*pretends she's reading her letter aloud*) I have got 4 brothers and part of them will vote for you anyway and if you will let your whiskers grow I will try and get the rest of them to vote for you. You would look a great deal better for your face is so thin. All the ladies like whiskers and they would tease their husband's to vote for you and then you would be President."

Grace #3: "My father is going to vote for you and if I was a man I would vote for you to but I will try and get every one to vote for you that I can I think that rail fence around your picture makes it look very pretty I have got a little baby sister she is nine weeks old and is just as cunning as can be. When you direct your letter direct to Grace Bedell Westfield Chataouque County New York"

Grace #1: "I must not write any more"

Grace #2: "answer this letter right off"

Grace #3: "Good bye"

Grace #1, #2, #3: Grace Bedell

Narrator 1: Did you get that?

Citizen 2: Get what?

Citizen 1: A girl encouraged Lincoln to grow a beard.

Citizen 2: And he did!

Narrator 2: Here is what Lincoln wrote in response to Grace's letter...

Lincoln #1: "My dear little Miss. (*pause*) Your very agreeable letter of the 15th is received. I regret the necessity of saying I have no daughters. I have three sons—one seventeen, one nine, and one seven, years of age. They with their mother constitute my whole family."

Lincoln #2: "As to the whiskers, having never worn any, do you not think people would call it a piece of silly affection if I were to begin it now? Your very sincere well-wisher"

Lincoln #1, #2: A. Lincoln

Narrator 1: Did you get that?

Citizen 2: Get what?

Narrator 2: Lincoln thought it might be silly to grow a beard.

Citizen 2: But, he did it!

Narrator 1: And it's on the Lincoln penny!

Citizen 3: There is also a date on the front of the Lincoln penny.

Citizen 4: Is that the year when Lincoln was born?

Citizen 3: Nope. It shows when the coin was minted or made.

Narrator 1: Did you get that?

Citizen 4: Get what?

Citizen 3: The date on the coin shows the year it was minted or made.

Citizen 4: It's not Lincoln's birth year!

Narrator 2: It's not President Lincoln's birth year, but you may be able to discover a penny for **your** birth year. In fact, if you study the Lincoln penny you will even find some strange Latin words—"E Pluribus Unum."

Narrator 1: E Pluribus Unum.

Narrator 2: It's translated, "out of many, one." It means out of many states, we have one United States of America. President Lincoln believed it was critical to preserve the Union, the oneness of the United States. E Pluribus Unum—"out of many one."

Narrator 1: Out of many, one.

Narrator 2: And, President Lincoln believed in one God. The Lincoln penny has the words “In God we trust.” That was Lincoln—a man who trusted God. In fact, when Abraham Lincoln made the Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863 to set the slaves free he ended it by asking for the ...

Lincoln #1, #2, #3: “Gracious favor of Almighty God.”

Narrator 2: And, just a couple of months later, Abraham Lincoln proclaimed a national day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer. Here is part of what he wrote...

Lincoln #1: We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven.

Lincoln #2: We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity.

Lincoln #3: We have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation has ever grown.

Lincoln #1, #2, #3: But we have forgotten God....

Narrator 2: President Lincoln believed the words on the Lincoln penny, “In God we trust.” The funny thing is, Abraham Lincoln never saw his penny.

Citizen 3: But, you can see the Lincoln penny.

Citizen 4: And, if you collect a few you will see many different penny backs. Lincoln had only one back for 56 years, but the Lincoln penny has had at least seven backs. How many different penny backs can you find?

Narrator 1 & 2: Let's go find some Lincoln pennies!

(* Note: We usually refer to Lincoln's coin as a “penny,” but coin collectors call it a “one cent coin.”)

Some of the Best Lincoln Curriculum Links (valid Feb. 2016)

<http://myhero.com/teachersroom/lessonview.asp?id=41>

"Mr. Lincoln's Attic III: Can a Letter Change History?" In 1860, eleven-year-old Grace Bedell wrote a letter to presidential candidate Abraham Lincoln, suggesting he may "look a great deal better" with a beard. Her letter touched him and he answered it. Later, they met. Of course, Mr. Lincoln had a beard!

http://www.k6edu.com/6thgrade/social_studies/abraham-lincoln.html

Lesson plan for grades 5-6, but could easily be adapted for younger students. It's worth looking at this page just for the song lyrics (folk song tune "Shortnin' Bread").

<http://www.historyplace.com/lincoln/>

This scroll down extensive time line covers Lincoln's life and that of his family (even his ancestors). There are a few thumbnail photos and lots of links to documents.

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/gettysburg-address/>

This site contains Library of Congress information on Lincoln's **Gettysburg Address**. (Your students should know the word "facsimile.")

http://www.illinois.gov/alplm/museum/Learning/Documents/The_Gettysburg_Address.pdf

The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum presents a teachers guide (grade 5-8) on the Gettysburg Address.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BvA0J_2ZpIQ

(You may have to copy/paste the link to get it to work.) You Tube video of the **Gettysburg Address**. 2:49

http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured_documents/emancipation_proclamation/

The National Archives presents information on the **Emancipation Proclamation** at this site. Additional resources at the bottom include a transcript of the Proclamation, a 46 second audio link to an interview with a former slave, and more. Grades 5-12.

<http://13thamendment.harpweek.com/>

"**The End of Slavery: The Creation of the 13th Amendment**" site has plenty of information for older students (e.g., slavery and secession, policies on emancipation.)

You Tube Links (valid in February, 2016):

(Three pages of links because of multiple parts to videos. **Lincoln Penny Day links on the last page.**)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2lp_bXY7Ek

Greatest Heroes in History presents Part I of three from the documentary on Abraham Lincoln. This video covers Lincoln's life from boyhood to Lincoln's election as president. Absolutely excellent for grades 3+. 8:39 Pre-screen.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d91lpWAM2cE&NR=1>

Greatest Heroes in History presents Part II of three from the documentary on Abraham Lincoln. This video covers Lincoln's life from his election to the presidency to the Civil War including the decision to announce the Emancipation Proclamation so the war became a moral war for freedom for the slaves. 8:38 Pre-screen.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IF4kl46e-Vg&NR=1>

Greatest Heroes in History presents Part III from the documentary on Abraham Lincoln. This video covers the death of Lincoln's son, the influx of black slaves to fight, in the Civil War and the continuing battle including Gettysburg. From the Gettysburg Address to Lincoln's last speech the video ends after the assassination of Abraham Lincoln 6:33 Pre-screen (e.g., photos of death).

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELYkeyqnLcl>

Very short slide show "Biography of Lincoln," ends on the note that Lincoln's character was such that people believed he would do what is right, regardless of the consequences.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LsON8pEXvLc&feature=related>

Here is Disneyland's new "Great Moments with Mr. Lincoln" animatron. Starts with the focus on the concept of liberty. Could be boring to the immature or the distracted. Still, well done. Brings back memories. 4:25

"Lincoln Penny Day" Curriculum Links (Valid in Feb. 2016):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBFCw6bUWIk>

Lincoln Wheat/Memorial Cents: US Coin History and Facts video of info from a coin shop (mentioned only at the end). 2:31

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jG-1nhjWOK4>

History of the Lincoln Penny and celebration of it in 2009—mentions rare pennies. 2:19

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O7xundKMGPQ&feature=related>

"Spare Change Ep11: The Lincoln One Cent Penny" video on the history of the Lincoln Penny—from a coin collecting and numismatic perspective. Lots and lots of historical and coin details for older students interested in coin collecting. Sponsored. 15:20

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http://www.usmint.gov/mint_programs/circulatingCoins/?action=CircPenny

US Mint site for photos and information on the Lincoln One Cent Coin.

<http://www.usmint.gov/kids/teachers/lessonPlans/coin-program/lincoln-bicentennial-cent.cfm>

US Mint site for free lesson plans and information both for the Lincoln/Shield penny and the 2009 Lincoln Bicentennial penny. Grades K-6 (Note: The K-1 lesson plan PDF has a US map that K-6 teachers could use.)

<http://www.lessonplanspage.com/ScienceWillTheBoatSinkOrFloat4.htm>

"Will It Float or Sink?" lesson plan for K-5 science using pennies and foil. Note: The lesson says it's for fourth grade, but you can easily adapt the activity to any elementary grade based on your questions and what you ask the students to do independently. For young students just give a demo and let them predict the results of the experiment.

<http://www.gsseser.com/NIE/PDFs/Water%20properties.pdf>

This science activity on the "Properties of Water" uses pennies.: "How many drops of water can you fit on a penny?" Although it sounds like an easy activity, it may be adapted for grades K-10—especially if you include the proper vocabulary (e.g., polarity, hydrogen bonding, surface tension...).

<http://sciencespot.net/Media/pennylab.pdf>

Here's another PDF on the lab experiment of how many drops of water can fit on a penny. This one provides different printable lab sheets and teacher notes.

