Lesson Plan: Happy Birthday, Mr. Lincoln!

**Grades:** 1st  
**Subjects:** Social Studies and English/Language Arts  
**Time Required:** one class period (50-60 minutes)  
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**OVERVIEW**  
President Abraham Lincoln’s birthday is remembered each year in February. Many states, including Tennessee, combine Lincoln’s birthday with President George Washington’s and celebrate Presidents’ Day. On Presidents’ Day, a federal holiday, students do not go to school. This lesson will help students understand why they are out of school for Presidents’ Day.

**GOAL**  
Students will understand who President Lincoln was and why we celebrate his birthday.

**OBJECTIVES**  
Upon completion of the lesson students will be able to identify age-appropriate, key details about Lincoln’s personal life and public accomplishments.

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**MATERIALS USED**

- Graphic organizer  
- Crayons and/or pencils  
- Computer with Internet access and projector  
- Whiteboard and dry-erase marker OR Word document that can be projected with the words “Who, What, When, Where, Why” on it.

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**CURRICULUM STANDARDS**

**English/Language Arts:**

1.SL.CC.2 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.  
1.RL.KID.1 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.  
1.RL.KID.2 Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.  
1.RL.KID.2 Identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.

**Social Studies:**

1.26 Identify and describe the events or people celebrated during the following national holidays, and examine why we celebrate them: ..., Presidents’ Day,...

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**INVESTIGATIVE QUESTION**

Who was Abraham Lincoln and why do we celebrate his birthday?
RESOURCES

From the Library of Congress:
Lincoln the Rail Splitter http://www.loc.gov/item/93504457/
Abraham Lincoln Log Cabin https://www.loc.gov/item/ky0095/ 
Split Rail Fence https://www.loc.gov/item/2017805013/ 
Lincoln with his Family http://www.loc.gov/item/2003666395/ 
Abraham Lincoln as President http://www.loc.gov/item/2003663986/ 
Emancipation http://www.loc.gov/item/scsm000336/
Lincoln Memorial Statue http://www.loc.gov/item/2010630879/ 
Lincoln Memorial https://www.loc.gov/item/2010630765/ 

From other sites:
U. S. Mint http://www.usmint.gov/mint_programs/circulatingCoins/?action=CircPenny
Coloring Page http://www.supercoloring.com/coloring-pages/history/abraham-lincoln
Abraham Lincoln Coloring Page http://www.supercoloring.com/pages/young-abe-lincoln-was-good-with-an-axe

PROCEDURE

Pre-teach: If necessary, pre-teach the following vocabulary words: ax, president, rail, rail-splitter, log cabin, slaves, memorial

Step 1: Begin by showing students Lincoln the Rail Splitter. Guide students in their observations of the image’s details, making sure they notice: young man, dressed in work clothes, out in woods, open book, log cabin in background, splitting wood, wood fence in background, title of image (“Lincoln the Rail Splitter”), man is sweating.

Step 2: Ask students to reflect by asking them what questions they might have about the image or by asking the students:
- Who do you think this is?
- Where is he?
- Why is he cutting the wood? (He appears to be cutting wood to make a fence.)
- Why does he have a book with him? (Maybe he might take a break to read the book.)
- Why is he chopping up the tree? Is he building a fence or tearing it down?
- Where is his family?

Step 3: Some students may have guessed that the young man in the image is Abraham Lincoln. If not, explain to students that the young man in the image is Abraham Lincoln and he grew up to be our sixteenth president.
Say: Abraham Lincoln really did live in a log cabin. He was born in a log cabin in Kentucky. Show students pictures of the log cabin.
## Procedure

| Step 3 (cont.) | Say: One of Lincoln's first jobs was using an ax to split rails and make fences just like this one. Show students a picture of a **split rail fence**.  
Say: Abraham Lincoln grew up, got married, and had three sons. Show students picture of **Abraham Lincoln with his wife and sons**.  
Say: Abraham Lincoln became our sixteenth president. He was president during the Civil War, a sad time for our country. Abraham Lincoln helped keep our country together. Show image of **Lincoln as president**.  
Say: What are some words we could use to describe President Lincoln? Pause to allow each student time to respond with a describing word. Students may suggest tall, beard, father, husband, reader, rail-splitter, etc.  
Say: While Lincoln was president, many slaves gained their freedom after he issued the **Emancipation Proclamation** in 1863. Show students image of **emancipation**.  
Say: President Lincoln died at the end of the Civil War. He was killed by a man who did not agree with his efforts to reunite the North and the South. Today we remember Abraham Lincoln on Presidents’ Day and when we see his likeness on the penny, the five-dollar bill, and the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. Show students picture of a penny. Show students a picture of a **five dollar bill**. Show students pictures of the Lincoln Memorial (statue and aerial view). |
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| Step 4 | Next review some of the facts you have just learned about Abraham Lincoln by reading the Abraham Lincoln stories from America’s Story. If possible, project onto screen for students to see as you read. Have students watch and listen for key details about Lincoln’s life. On a whiteboard or on a projected Word document, write the words:  
- Who?  
- What?  
- When?  
- Where?  
- Why?  
Next ask students, “Who can remember some of the key details about Lincoln’s life?” Guide students in a discussion about who today’s lesson was about, what he did, when he lived, where he lived, and why he is famous. |
| Step 5 | Give each student a copy of the graphic organizer “Happy Birthday, Mr. Lincoln!” and pencils and/or crayons. Read aloud the question for each box, allowing students time to fill in their answers with a word or picture.  
Lincoln Memorial Statue by Daniel Chester French, Washington, D.C. [2006 May 3] |
| Step 6 | Ask students why they think we remember Lincoln’s birthday and not other presidents’ birthdays. |
**EVALUATION**
Collect student papers. Students who have filled in all four boxes with a correct response have attained mastery of the material. Students who have filled in three boxes with a correct response are learning but have not yet achieved mastery. Students who have filled in one, two, or no boxes with a correct response need to review the lesson again.

**EXTENSIONS**
To extend the lesson, provide links to the online book about Abraham Lincoln and the Web sites listed in this lesson on your teacher Web site for students to review at home with their parents. You may also want to include a link to a coloring page about Lincoln.

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Happy Birthday, Mr. Lincoln!
Use key details (words or pictures) from Abraham Lincoln’s life to retell his story.

1. Where was Abraham Lincoln born?  
2. What did he look like?

3. Why is he famous?  
4. How do we remember him today?