



Social Studies Exemplary Text Student Handout

Abraham Lincoln wasn't the sort of man who could lose himself in a crowd. After all, he stood six feet four inches tall. And to top it off, he wore a high silk hat.

His height was mostly in his long bony legs. When he sat in a chair, he seemed no taller than anyone else. It was only when he stood up that he towered over other men.

At first glance, most people thought he was homely. Lincoln thought so too, once referring to his "poor, lean, lank face." As a young man he was sensitive about his gawky looks, but in time, he learned to laugh at himself. When a rival called him "two-faced" during a political debate, Lincoln replied: "I leave it to my audience. If I had another face, do you think I'd wear this one?"

According to those who knew him, Lincoln was a man of many faces. In repose, he often seemed sad and gloomy. But when he began to speak, his expression changed. "The dull, listless features dropped like a mask," said a Chicago newspaperman. "The eyes began to sparkle, the mouth to smile, the whole countenance was wreathed in animation, so that a stranger would have said, 'Why, this man, so angular and solemn a moment ago, is really handsome.'"

Lincoln was the most photographed man of his time, but his friends insisted that no photo ever did him justice. It's no wonder. Back then cameras required long exposures. The person being photographed had to "freeze" as the seconds ticked by. If he blinked an eye, the picture would be blurred. That's why Lincoln looks so stiff and formal in his photos. We never see him laughing or joking.

Freedman, R. (1987). *The Mysterious Mr. Lincoln. Lincoln: A Photobiography*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

This is an example of exemplary text found in *Common Core Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects: Appendix B Text Exemplars and Sample Performance Tasks*. Retrieved from http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf

Social Studies Exemplary Text Teacher Resource

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At first glance, most people thought he was homely. Lincoln thought so too, once referring to his "poor, lean, lank face." As a young man he was sensitive about his gawky looks, but in time, he learned to laugh at himself. When a rival called him "two-faced" during a political debate, Lincoln replied: "I leave it to my audience. If I had another face, do you think I'd wear this one?"

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Source: Freedman, Russell. *Lincoln: A Photobiography*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1989. (1987) From Chapter One: "The Mysterious Mr. Lincoln"

EFL 2

Word Count 287

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Teacher introduces the text with minimal commentary and students read it independently. Teacher then reads passage aloud. Give a brief definition to words students would likely not be able to define from context (underlined in text). Teacher guides the students through a series of text-dependent questions. Complete the performance task as a cumulative evaluation of the close-reading.

Text-Dependent Questions

1. What contributed to Lincoln's height?
2. How did he appear 'no taller than anyone else' when seated?
3. What word did people use to describe Lincoln at first glance?
4. What personal quality did Lincoln use to adapt to his appearance? [Lincoln stood out in a crowd as much for his wit and humor as his height.]
5. What would change about Lincoln's appearance when he began to speak?
6. Using the text and your answer to the last question, why is it "no wonder" that no photograph taken of him showed this appearance change?
7. Compare the photography process during Lincoln's life with how we take pictures today.

Performance Tasks for Informational Texts

According to the text, what personal characteristics do you think a person should have to be a good President? [RI.3.1]