

Abraham Lincoln: It’s Lincoln Penny Day! (Group Participation Version)

By Carol Montgomery

Performance Time = about 5 1/2 minutes

Readability = 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(* The readability score is higher because of the Latin words “E Pluribus Unum” and the grammar “mistakes” in the historical documents that were quoted, I believe.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 levels.**)

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 in 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.)
- **This script was written specifically to encourage performances to younger classes or parent programs.**

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Narrator 1: (*speaks to audience*) It’s Lincoln Penny Day! And every time I speak, please, echo me. You say what I say, okay?

Kids/Audience: Okay!

Narrator 1: (*excited*) It’s Lincoln Penny Day!

Kids/Audience: (*excited*) It’s Lincoln Penny Day!

Narrator 1: So, let’s learn about Lincoln.

Kids/Audience: So, let’s learn about Lincoln.

Narrator 1: From the Lincoln penny!

Kids/Audience: From the Lincoln penny!

Citizen 1: On the front of the Lincoln penny you will see President Lincoln’s profile; that is, a side view of his face.

Citizen 2: (*pretends to study a coin*) 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 1: Why didn’t Lincoln shave his beard?

Kids/Audience: Why didn’t Lincoln shave his beard?

Narrator 2: I’m glad you asked. That’s 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 brother’s 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 Chatauque 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?

Kids/Audience: 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?

Kids/Audience: 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!

Kids/Audience: 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?

Kids/Audience: 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: So, 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 closely you will even find some strange Latin words—“E Pluribus Unum.”

Narrator 1: E Pluribus Unum.

Kids/Audience: 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.

Kids/Audience: 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.”

Narrator 1: In God we trust.

Kids/Audience: In God we trust.

Narrator 2: The funny thing is, Abraham Lincoln never saw his penny.

Citizen 3: (*to audience*) But, you can see lots of Lincoln pennies! Maybe even one for the year you were born!

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: Let’s go find some Lincoln pennies!

Kids/Audience: 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 in 2011):

http://myhero.com/myhero/go/specialevents/lessons_view_blu.asp?id=3686&eid=1

“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://myloc.gov/Exhibitions/gettysburgaddress/Pages/default.aspx>

This site contains Library of Congress information on Lincoln’s **Gettysburg Address**. Bottom left has a link to an outstanding 3 min **video interview** at the Library of Congress about the speech and the document. (Your students should know the word “facsimile.”)

http://www.alplm.org/education/The_Gettysburg_Address.pdf

The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum presents a **teachers guide** for grades 5-8 on the **Gettysburg Address**.

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

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.)

http://www.alplm.org/education/ALPLM_ExperienceTRP.pdf

Although this PDF from the Abraham Lincoln Museum in Springfield, Illinois, focuses on a field trip to the museum, pages 16-17 include an interesting timeline scavenger hunt you may have your students do and p. 23 has a webbing for students to put information they discover about Lincoln. (Every student should learn to do a webbing while doing

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research in elementary and middle school. You could use this printable with a book or an online timeline.)

You Tube: (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=d91IpWAM2cE&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=1F4kl46e-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=Bv6TWHph6sY>

Part I of the **Animated Hero Classics** video on Abraham Lincoln from Discovery Education, this video includes Abraham Lincoln’s trip to Washington DC from Springfield, Illinois with his two boys. 2:33

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vw38JlzyfJo&feature=related>

Part II of the animated video on Abraham Lincoln from Discovery Education, this video shows Lincoln wrestling with his boys in the White House and covers the start of the Civil War. (Shows Lincoln using his hat as his file cabinet.) 2:19

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hHkD73bLjkE&feature=related>

Part III of the animated video on Abraham Lincoln from Discovery Education, this video starts with the retreat of the Union army and shows many of the sick and wounded Lincoln visited during the war. 2:40

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-N-owql-S48&feature=related>

Part IV of the animated video on Abraham Lincoln from Discovery Education, this video starts with Lincoln’s son reading a letter to the Cabinet and moves to a disagreement on the performance of the general. Lincoln is ready to state his desires and the video ends. 1:47

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TbRKFU-B0Ec&feature=related>

Part V of the animated video on Abraham Lincoln from Discovery Education, this video starts with words by Frederick Douglass. It covers the death of Lincoln’s son. 3:39

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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3l9-2zjgZEY&feature=related>

Part VI of the animated video on Abraham Lincoln from Discovery Education, this video starts with Lincoln and his wife visiting “former slaves” and moves to Lincoln’s plan to free the slaves. Shows Lincoln’s compassion. 3:41

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5-KF8UN6a4&feature=related>

Part VII of the animated video on Abraham Lincoln from Discovery Education, this video starts with part of a speech recounting the number of men killed in the Civil War. (The word “negro” is mentioned in the speech.) Lincoln says, “I hate war!” Then, the Gettysburg Address scene is set where Lincoln reads the start of the speech. (The video stops after the phrase, “all men are created equal.”) 3:06

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

Part VIII of the animated video on Abraham Lincoln from Discovery Education, this video continues the Gettysburg Address to the end. 2:20

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

Part IX of the animated video on Abraham Lincoln from Discovery Education, this video starts with Lincoln’s reelection and his welcome of Frederick Douglass into the White House party. It does not show Lincoln’s assassination, but mentions it just before the video ends. 1:48

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jndZOHM_vXM&feature=related

Part X of the animated video on Abraham Lincoln from Discovery Education, this video starts with people honoring Lincoln’s memory (e.g., flag-draped coffin, passing train carrying his body). 2:32

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

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

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDUO2C_nsqE

“The Faith of Abraham Lincoln” is covered in this video via his words and a beautiful painting. No church, no religion, no particular faith is mentioned; however, faith in God is held up in honor by the artist’s rendition of Lincoln praying at Gettysburg. Beautiful. 4:11

“Lincoln Penny Day” Curriculum Links (Valid in 2011):

<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

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<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=lYDxgaj4OD0&feature=related>

Young coin collector gives his opinions on the “2010 Penny Reverse Back Changed!” 1:58

<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

http://www.usmint.gov/mint_programs/lincolnredesign/

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

<http://www.usmint.gov/kids/teachers/lessonplans/cents/>

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.stoller-eser.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.

<http://www.k-state.edu/smartbooks/Lesson051.html>

An unusual lesson plan for grades 3-5 based on the book Are Your Arms a Hundred Years Old? By Sharon Bell Mathis—also called The Hundred Penny Box. Even if you don’t have the book, the lesson plan provides an interesting launch into a variety of speaking/writing activities requiring some research. You could easily make this into a set of small group activities.