

POINT OF VIEW IN STATUES OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN: THREE LOOKS AT A LEADER



Quick and easy activity ideas to start using Library of Congress primary sources in the classroom

Teacher Instructions

Goal

How can using statues and sculptures of Abraham Lincoln help your students understand the man and the myths that surround him?

Background

If I say “monument to Abraham Lincoln,” what comes to mind? You might think first of the famous Lincoln Memorial, which has a prominent place on the National Mall in Washington and is featured on the back of the five dollar bill. But there are many other statues that pay tribute to the sixteenth president of the United States, each in their own way. Studying and comparing these various works of art can reveal a great deal about Lincoln’s accomplishments as well as how each artist himself viewed, or chose to depict, Lincoln.

Students might begin with the statue of Lincoln in the Lincoln Memorial, analyzing the posture of the figure, the clothing, and other objects in the sculpture, including the inscription. Compare the size of the statue with the men working on it. What does each choice the sculptor made say about his view of Abraham Lincoln?

Studying additional sculptures offers insight into other aspects of Lincoln’s life and accomplishments that the artists have chosen to represent. For example, compare this photograph of the Sculpture of Abraham Lincoln, full-length, standing, facing front, as captain in the militia to Lincoln Statue, Lincoln Park, [Washington, D.C.].

Activities

Teachers can have students compare the statues:

- What impression does the clothing of each convey?
- What do the items or props included in each sculpture say about Lincoln?
- Why might each sculptor have posed the figure as he did?
- How does each sculptor detail Lincoln’s face?
- Why might each sculptor have chosen to immortalize that particular aspect of Abraham Lincoln?
- Students may compare the uniform of the militia captain to the suits worn by the “emancipator” and the seated figure in the Lincoln Memorial.”

- For more photos of statues and sculptures of Lincoln from the Library of Congress - <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/search/>
- Oration by Frederick Douglass, delivered on the occasion of the unveiling of the freedmen’s monument in memory of Abraham Lincoln, in Lincoln Park, Washington, D. C., April 14th, 1876 - <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/lcrbmrp.t0c12>
- Daniel Chester French, sculptor - <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/apr20.html>

Primary Sources

Lincoln Statue, Lincoln Memorial, [Washington, D.C.]



Photograph. Between 1921 and 1922. From Library of Congress: *Prints & Photographs Division*.
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/npc2008010778/>

Sculpture of Abraham Lincoln, full-length, standing, facing front, as captain in the militia, ca. 1832



Photograph, Leonard Crunelle. 1930. From Library of Congress: *Prints & Photographs Division*.
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2009630146/>

Statue of Abraham Lincoln, Lincoln Park, Washington, D.C.



Photograph, Carol M. Highsmith. 2010. From Library of Congress: *Prints & Photographs Division*.
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010642152/>









PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS TOOL

OBSERVE

REFLECT

QUESTION

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FURTHER INVESTIGATION

http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Primary_Source_Analysis_Tool.pdf



Guide students with the sample questions as they respond to the primary source. Encourage them to go back and forth between the columns; there is no correct order.

TEACHER'S GUIDE ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCES

OBSERVE

Have students identify and note details.

Sample Questions:

What do you notice first? · Find something small but interesting. · What do you notice that you didn't expect? · What do you notice that you can't explain? · What do you notice now that you didn't earlier?

REFLECT

Encourage students to generate and test hypotheses about the source.

Where do you think this came from? · Why do you think somebody made this? · What do you think was happening when this was made? · Who do you think was the audience for this item? · What tool was used to create this? · Why do you think this item is important? · If someone made this today, what would be different? · What can you learn from examining this?

QUESTION

Have students ask questions to lead to more observations and reflections.

What do you wonder about...
who? · what? · when? · where? · why? · how?

FURTHER INVESTIGATION

Help students to identify questions appropriate for further investigation, and to develop a research strategy for finding answers.

Sample Question: What more do you want to know, and how can you find out?

A few follow-up activity ideas:

Beginning

Have students compare two related primary source items.

Intermediate

Have students expand or alter textbook explanations of history based on primary sources they study.

Advanced

Ask students to consider how a series of primary sources support or challenge information and understanding on a particular topic. Have students refine or revise conclusions based on their study of each subsequent primary source.

For more tips on using primary sources, go to

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers>

http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing_Primary_Sources.pdf