

Title: Lesson 2 – Letters-Windows into the Past

Key Words – condolence, petition,

Grade Level-Second Grade

Time Allotted-90 minutes (Can be broken into two 45 minute lessons.)

Lesson Overview	Students will look at actual letters written during the 1800's. They will answer questions about the letters, in small groups and then come together to share their findings. Using the information from the letters, they will make generalizations that will facilitate their window into the past and allow them to draw conclusions about Abraham Lincoln, people and time period.
Guiding Question(s)	Who wrote letters? Why did people write letters? What do these letters reveal to us about the people and this time period?

Learning Objectives (SWBAT – Students Will Be Able to)

- The students will understand that letters are a way of written communication.
- The students will be able to see the importance of letter writing as a form of communication during this time period in our history.
- The students will be able to examine and use historical letters to answer questions and come to conclusions about people and history.

Standards of Learning

History SOLs: K.1, 1.2, 2.11

- K.1 The students will recognize that history describes events and people of other times and places by
- a) identifying examples of past events in legends, stories, and historical accounts of Pocahontas, George Washington, Betsy Ross, and Abraham Lincoln.
- 1.2 The student will describe the stories of American leaders and their contributions to our country, with emphasis on George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Abraham Lincoln, and George Washington Carver.

- 2.11 The student will identify George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Susan B. Anthony, Helen Keller, Jackie Robinson, and Martin Luther King, Jr. as Americans whose contributions improved the lives of other Americans.

English SOLs:

Oral Language

- 2.3 The student will use oral communication skills.
- b) Share stories or information orally with an audience.
 - c) Participate as a contributor and leader in a group.
 - d) Summarize information shared orally by others.

Reading

- 2.8 The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of fiction and nonfiction.
- d) Ask and answer questions about what is read.
 - e) Locate information to answer questions.

OAH Historical Skills Taught:

Historical Comprehension: The students will read historical letters with comprehension, to develop their ability to take into account what that information reveals of the individuals involved—their motives and intentions, their hopes, doubts, fears, strengths, and weaknesses. The students are also developing the ability to describe the past through the eyes of those who were there. By reading the letters and answering questions about them, students learn to take into account the historical context in which the events unfolded.

Historical Analysis and Interpretation: The students will use primary sources to analyze cause-and-effect relationships in historical events. The students are considering multiple perspectives of various peoples in the past by reading about their differing motives, beliefs, interests, hopes, and fears.

Historical Research Capabilities: The students are formulating historical questions from encountering the historical letters written to Abraham Lincoln or written by him.

Assessment Tool(s) –

- Demonstrates understanding by participating and answering questions orally during discussions
- Question sheet about letters
- Each group summarizes their letter and makes decisions about the person who wrote it.

Materials/Resources needed

- Analyzing/Question-Word “Window” shaped Template



window into the past.docx

- Original copies of seven letters, with transcriptions, written by Abraham Lincoln and letters written to him and/or his family members, during the same time period. (In files attached to lesson)
- Envelopes (where available) of original letters. (In files attached to lesson)
- Teacher-created audio versions of letters above for students to listen to.
*****Audio tapes will be created and provided with this project at a later date.***
- Large chart paper to record student/group responses.
- Personal Journals to record exit slip learning.

Modifications (to meet needs of diverse learners)

- Small groups of students work on “Analyzing/Question sheet” activity allowing for students of varying abilities to be put together.
- Allowing small groups to discuss the letters among themselves before sharing with teacher helps the insecure learner.
- Lower-level readers will be assisted by teacher individually or paired with an assistant.
- Letters are provided on audio-tape so they can be heard and not just read for all students to develop a higher level of understanding.

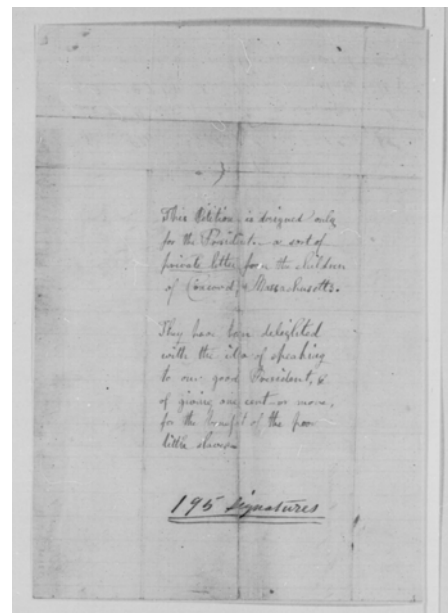
Instructional Procedures/Process (How will you guide your students through this activity)

- Students will be placed in co-operative learning groups of 2-3 with the teacher making grouping decisions based on reading levels and oral competencies.

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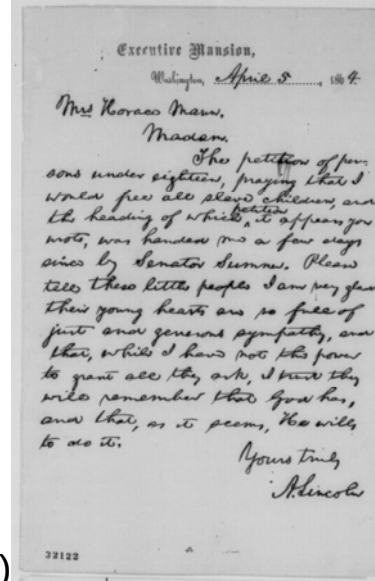
- They will be assigned tasks (jobs) within their groups: (1) letter reader, (2) recorder (writer), (3) speaker (person who shares the group's assignments.)
- Each group will be given an original letter and envelope to read (or listen to). Then each group will complete the "Analyzing/Question sheet" about the letter they have been given. They will be given about 15-20 minutes to complete their paper.

Letter #1-A children's petition to the president asking him to free "all the little slave children in this country."



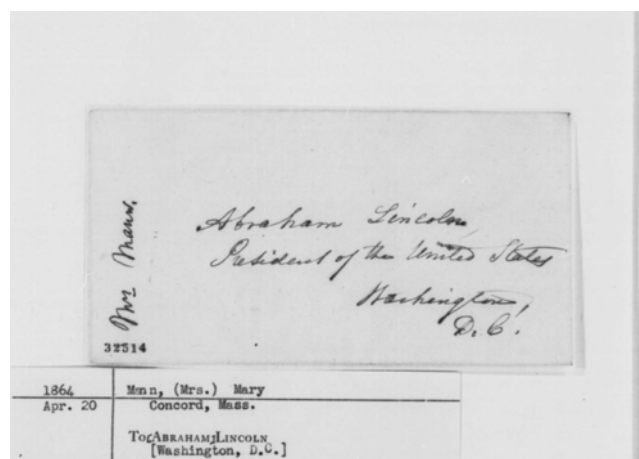
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Letter #2-A letter to Mary Mann from Abraham Lincoln, Tuesday, April 5, 1864



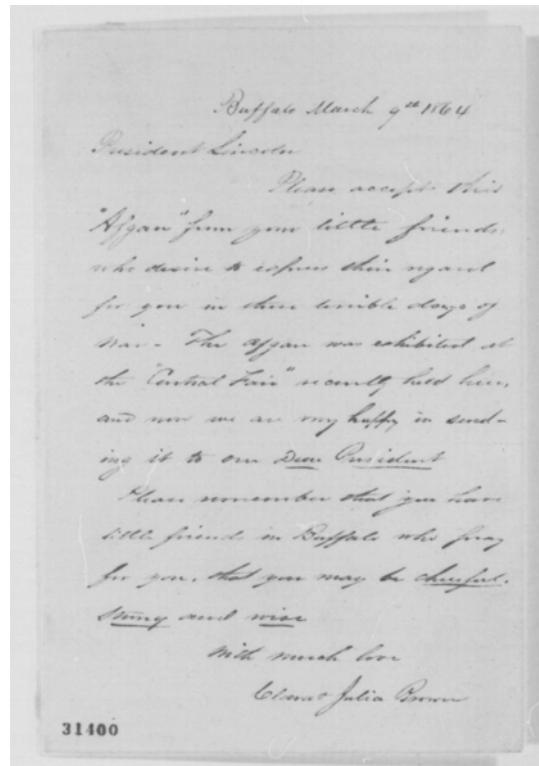
(Responding about the petition from the children)

Letter #3-From Mary Mann to Abraham Lincoln, April 20, 1864. (In response to his letter to her of April 5, 1864)

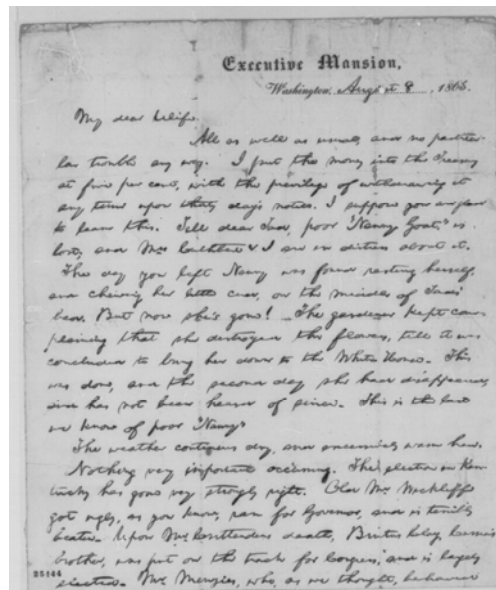


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Letter #4-From young girls Clara Brown and Julia Brown to Abraham Lincoln,
March 9, 1864.

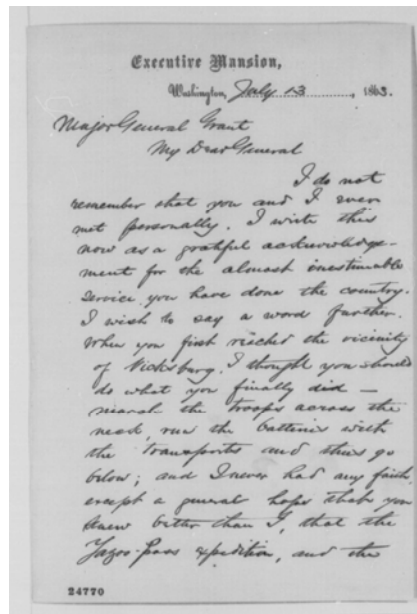


Letter #5-From Abraham Lincoln to Mary Todd Lincoln, August 8, 1863.
(Referring to Tad's "Nanny Goat" who is lost from the White House.)

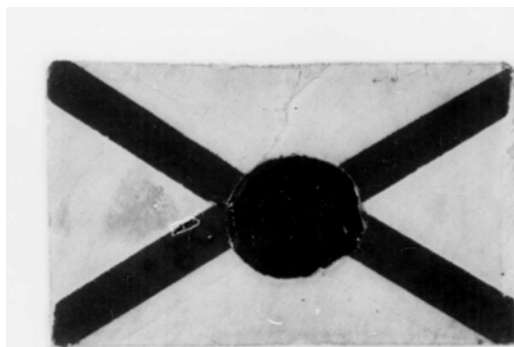


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Letter #6-Abraham Lincoln to Ulysses S. Grant, July 13, 1863. (Congratulations on capture of Vicksburg)



Letter #7-A letter of condolence from Queen Victoria to Mary Todd Lincoln, April 29, 1865.



- The question sheet will be a “window” shaped paper that will have sections where they will answer questions such as: Who was writing to whom? (Include full names.) What is the letter about? (Main idea

(topic) of the letter?) When was the letter written? Where did the letter come from? (Tone) How do you think the person feels who is writing the letter? Why do you think they wrote the letter? What do you still wonder about the letter?

- The groups will come together as a whole class and each “speaker” person from each small group shares their “window” paper with the whole class, especially their summary.
- As the students summarize, the teacher records that information on a large class chart. For example, “President Lincoln was writing to his wife to tell her about “Nanny Goat who was missing in the White House.”

Closure

- The teacher reads and reviews the student summaries on the large chart. Students discuss what these summaries tell us about the letters we read.
- Exit Slip: The students will write and respond in their personal journals:
 1. Why did people write letters during the age of Lincoln?
 2. What do these letters show us about the people and this time period?