

Teaching with Museum Collections  
**Lincoln Home** National Historic Site  
[www.nps.gov/history/museum](http://www.nps.gov/history/museum)



#### A. The Abraham Lincoln Home in Springfield, IL

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- ❑ **Grade Level:** K-4
- ❑ **Length of Lessons:** Seven 45-minute sessions that cover a seven-day period

#### B. Overview of this Collection-Based Lesson Plan

- ❑ **Park Name:** Lincoln Home National Historic Site, Springfield, Illinois
- ❑ **Description:** The theme of the lessons is for students to relate to the Lincoln family's everyday living during the 1800s in Springfield. Students will identify objects from Lincoln's home and describe their use. Comparisons can be made to how people live today through writing, discussing, and drawing. Students will observe the Victorian decorating styles used by Mary Todd Lincoln.
  - **Activity 1** – Reading an artifact: the globe
  - **Activity 2** – Lincoln's Home: history and design  
Who lives here?
  - **Activity 3** – The parlor: furnishings and purpose  
What did the Lincolns do in the parlor?
  - **Activity 4**– Lincoln's mirror  
Why did Lincoln grow his beard?
  - Activity 5**– Hat rack: displaying the Lincolns' hats  
What kind of hat do you wear?
  - Activity 6** – Creating a classroom museum  
Take a tour of the Lincoln home.
- ❑ **Essential question.** What does Lincoln's home tell us about the Lincoln family's life in Springfield, IL?



C. Museum Collections Used in this Lesson Plan



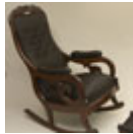
- [Wall Mirror \(LIHO 69\)](#)



- [Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, Front Parlor \(LIHO 6629\)](#)



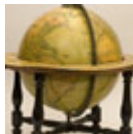
- [Hat Rack \(LIHO 51\)](#)



- [Rocking Chair and Footstool \(LIHO 1468 and LIHO 65\)](#)



- [Candelabrum \(LIHO 150\)](#)



- [Globe \(LIHO 2\)](#)



- [Commemorative Coin-Portrait \(LIHO 6767\)](#)



- [Commemorative Token-Portrait \(LIHO 6768\)](#)



- [Photograph of Lincoln Home \(LIHO 6827\)](#)

Include:

[www.nps.gov/history/museum](http://www.nps.gov/history/museum)

[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?cdn:2:/temp/~ammem\\_EY9k](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?cdn:2:/temp/~ammem_EY9k): Picture of Lincoln in a stovepipe hat. Picture of Lincoln's stovepipe hat

#### D. National Educational Standards

NSS-USH.K-4.1 LIVING IN WORKING TOGETHER IN FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES NOW AND LONG AGO

Understands family life now and in the past, and family life in various places long ago

Understands the history of the local community and how communities in North America varied long ago

#### E. Student Learning Objectives

- ❑ Activity 1: Students will learn how to read an object.
- ❑ Activity 2: Students will identify the Lincoln Home.  
Students will learn about the increasing costs of homes.  
Students will identify different housing styles.
- ❑ Activity 3: Students will identify the functions of the room.  
Students will create their own rooms.  
Students will identify period pieces from a home.  
Students will understand the use of electricity.
- ❑ Activity 4: Students will write a persuasive letter.  
Students will discuss the necessity of everyday grooming.
- ❑ Activity 5: Students will analyze the purpose of a hat.  
Students will identify hats from a different time period.  
Students will draw and design a hat.



## F. Background and Historical Context

The Lincolns spent seventeen years, from 1844 to 1861, in their Springfield home on Eighth and Jackson streets. At the time of the purchase, Lincoln supported the family by working as a lawyer, political speaker, and member of the Illinois State Legislature. Here, three of the Lincolns' four children were born. Eddie died in this home at the age of four.

In 1855 the family added a full second floor, the final addition to their home. It was here that the family celebrated Lincoln's nomination to the Presidency. Curiosity about who Abraham Lincoln was led many visitors to this Springfield home. An artist from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* arrived to sketch the inside of the house on Eighth and Jackson streets. Due to Mary's exquisite taste, many people were impressed with the house. Today, these drawings are the primary evidence of what the rooms looked like while the Lincolns occupied the house.

Abraham Lincoln won the Presidency on November 6, 1860. When he left for Washington in February 1861, hundreds of people wished the president-elect a fond farewell. Lincoln addressed the crowd from the train depot, "...to this place, and the kindness of these people, I owe everything..."

## G. Materials Used in this Lesson Plan

- **Similar items:** globe or map, pictures of modern homes, modern chair, mirror, baseball hat
- **Other materials:**
  - Activity 1: chart paper, marker
  - Activity 2: chart paper or blackboard, newspaper with home listings, paper with outlines of the Lincoln home, red, white, and blue markers or crayons
  - Activity 3: chart paper, Venn diagram, paper and pencil, plain paper, and colored pencils
  - Activity 4: writing paper, pencils, shaving cream, small brush, Popsicle stick
  - Activity 5: hats children bring from home, plain paper, pencils, crayons, scraps of materials

## H. Vocabulary

### Activity 1

Artifact-an object made or shaped by human craft, especially a tool, weapon, or ornament of historical interest

Globe-a spherical representation of the earth

### Activity 2

President-the chief officer of a governmental body

Springfield, Illinois-the capital of the state of Illinois



### Activity 3

Electricity-a form of energy that is found in nature

Ottoman-stool for feet

Parlor-a room used primarily for conversation or the receiving of guests

Victorian-the highly ornamented, massive style of architecture, décor, and furnishings popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century

### Activity 4

Persuade-to plead with; to urge

Shave-to remove the beard with a razor

### Activity 5

Bonnet-a cloth hat tied under the chin and worn by women and children

Shawl-a fabric garment used to cover the head or shoulders

## I. Teacher Tips

- ❑ Download and laminate color prints of the museum objects used in the lesson plan.
- ❑ Use online collections: objects, documents, maps, and photographs to further student inquiry and to address student learning objectives.

## J. Lesson Implementation Procedures

- ❑ *Activity 1: Introduction and Warm Up “How to Read an Object”*

Museum objects: Globe (LIHO 2)

- ❑ What does this globe tell about the Lincoln family's interests and decorating style? Post the question on a large banner at the front of the classroom. The object is a globe from the Lincoln's back parlor.
  - Grades K-1: Allow students to study the picture of the globe. Discuss together the shape, the function and use, and material. “How did the Lincoln children use this globe?” “Do you have a globe in your home?”
  - Grades 2-4: Divide the class into groups. Have the students write down responses to the globe's function and use. Write the number of students who have a globe in their home. Sample questions: “How did the Lincoln children use this globe?” and “Looking closely, what is the name of the ocean shown?”
  - Record their preliminary answers to the “banner” question on chart paper. Then ask students what additional questions they want to pursue after handling objects, specimens and photographs.
  - Encourage students to handle the globe or map and examine photographs.



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- If computer is available, have students visit the Lincoln Home website and take a virtual tour of the house.

□ **Activity 2: Lincoln's Home: History and Design: Who lives here?**

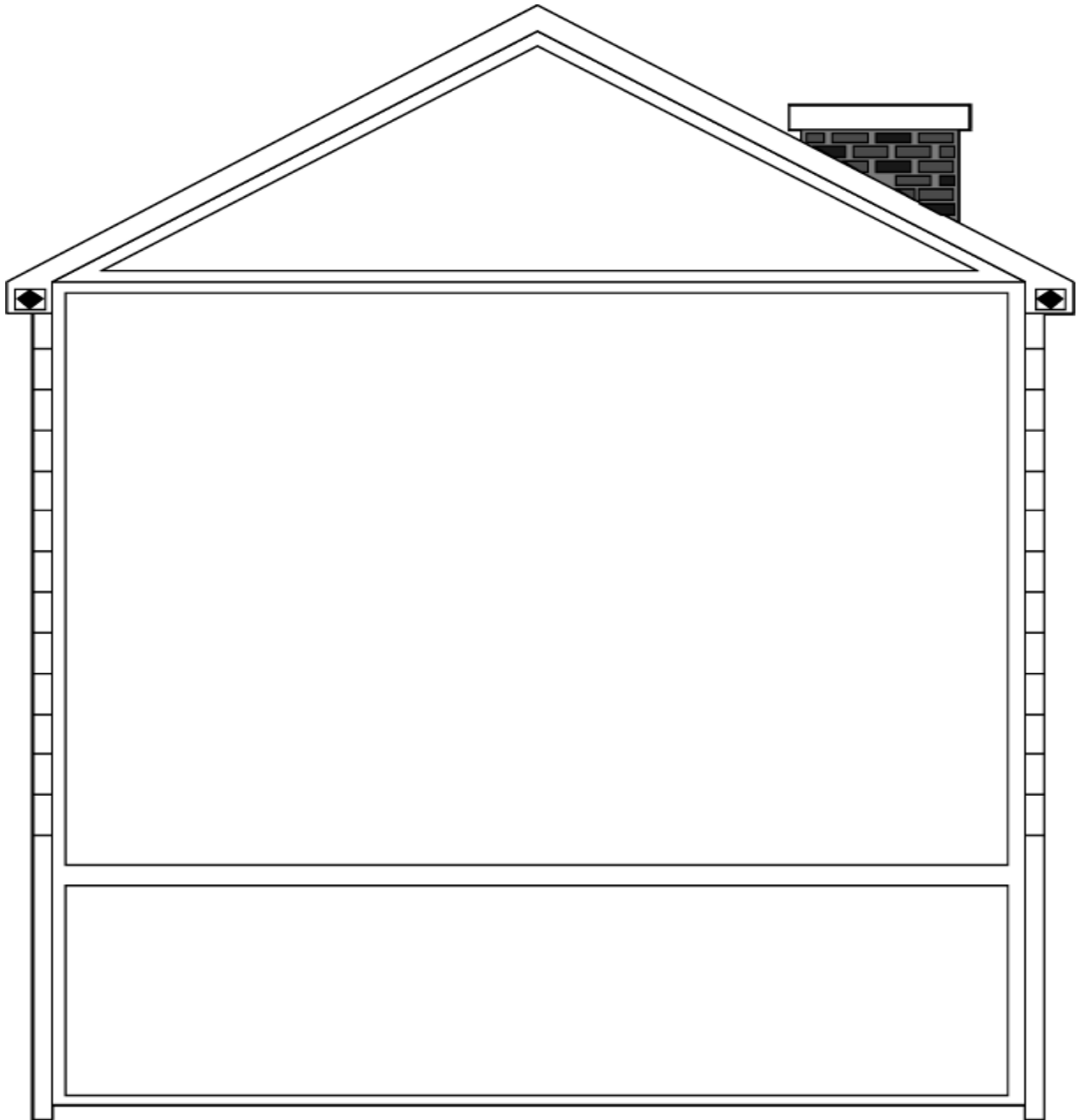
Museum Object: Photograph of Lincoln Home (LIHO 6827)

Objectives:

- Students will identify Lincoln's Home.
  - Students will obtain knowledge of the increasing cost of homes.
  - Students will identify the different housing styles and how they change over time.
- Show the students pictures of current houses. These can be obtained by the students and teacher as they bring in pictures of their own home or pictures from magazines and newspapers. After looking at the current houses, the teacher will display the Lincoln house and ask the following questions:
- How many chimneys are on the houses?
  - Do all houses have a design around the roof? (The Lincolns' roof has brackets and dentils [the decorative band around the top of the house]).
  - How many windows do the Lincolns have in the front of their house?
  - How are the windows aligned?
  - Why do you think the Lincolns had a fence? (The Lincolns and most families' houses had fences around their homes to keep animals out.)
  - Why do houses today have fences?
- Draw a line down the center of the Lincoln house. This divides into two equal sides.
- Can houses today be divided into two equal sides?
  - Are the windows of your house lined up top and bottom like the Lincoln house?
- Have the students each draw a picture of a house. Underneath the picture, have them write a short story about who lives there.
- The selling price of the Lincoln house was \$1,500. Tell the students to look through newspapers and find the different costs of houses. Have students discuss with the class the different costs that they found. How much do you think a home like the Lincolns' would cost today?
- Look closely at the people in the front of the house in the picture. Divide the class into small groups and create a story about these people. Have the class come together to share these stories. After sharing, inform the class that historians do not know who these people are.
- Distribute the house color sheet. This is the house Lincoln lived in when he was nominated for president. Draw the windows and door to the Lincoln house. Students may decorate the house red, white, and blue.



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Directions: Draw the windows and door on the Lincoln home. Decorate their house red, white, and blue.

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□ **Activity 3: The Parlor: Furnishings and Purpose: What did the Lincolns do in the parlor?**

Museum Objects: Newspaper illustration of parlor (LIHO 6629)  
Rocking chair and footstool (LIHO 1468 and LIHO 65)  
Candelabrum (LIHO 150)

Objectives:

- Students will identify the function of a room's furnishings and note style changes over time.
- Students will design their own parlor.
- Students will identify period pieces of furniture.
- Students will identify uses of electricity.

Day 1:

The Lincoln's parlor was used to entertain guests. The Lincoln boys were not allowed in the room. This is the room where Lincoln was told he was nominated for presidency. No photographs of the parlor were taken while the Lincolns lived there, but an artist from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* came to the Lincoln home in 1860 to sketch the rooms. These sketches show the Victorian style used during the 1800's. These drawings were used by the National Park Service to determine what artifacts were in the rooms and how to design the rooms today.

- Using references from any book showing the Victorian style, discuss: colors, patterns, wallpaper, paintings, and furniture. Find similarities between Lincoln's parlor and the reference books on Victorian homes.
- Ask students to discuss how these rooms differ from rooms in modern homes today.
- Collect pictures of modern living rooms from magazines. Either the students can cut them out from magazines in the classroom or the teacher may bring the pictures. The class will look at these pictures of contemporary living rooms.
  - Sample discussion questions: "What items are in these pictures? What items are in Lincoln's parlor?" Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast.
- Show the picture of the rocking chair and footstool. Ask, "Can you find this in the parlor?" The footstool is 5" high x 8" wide x 10.75" deep. This is much smaller than a contemporary footstool. Today's footstool is often called an ottoman. Mary Lincoln, like many women in the 1800's, used this footstool to rest her feet, making sure to not reveal her ankles.
  - The teacher can make a footstool using these measurements to show the class the actual size. Give each student a shoebox to decorate their own footstool.

Day 2:

- Continue to use the picture of Lincoln's parlor. Have the students note the original candelabrum from the Museum Objects. These candelabrum are in his house today.



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- Sample questions for students: “Can you find the candelabrum in the picture of the parlor? What did the Lincolns use the candles for?” “How do you light up your home? If your lights go out, does your family use candles or flashlights?” The Lincolns used candles to read books, to light their rooms, and as a general source of light. Candles were used in all homes during the 1800s.
- Discuss other ways we use electricity today (cooking, curling irons, washing machines, vacuums, etc.). As students look at the picture of the Lincoln parlor, ask them, “How did the Lincolns cool their home in the summer? How does your house stay cool in the summer? How did the Lincolns stay warm in the winter? How does your house stay warm in the winter?”
- Have students complete the ‘Electricity: Then and Now’ worksheet.
- Next, students may create their own parlor. This parlor should be based on the 1800’s Victorian style and use the measurements from the Lincolns’ parlor. Students may use a shoebox or plain paper, or graph paper. Bring in scraps of material, toothpicks, and other items to help their creation.

### Electricity: Then and Now

Household Task	Lincoln Home	Homes Today
Cooking		
Washing Clothes		
Entertainment		
Cleaning Dishes		

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□ **Activity 4: Lincoln's Mirror: Why did Lincoln grow his beard?**

Museum Objects: Wall mirror (LIHO 69)

Lincoln Portrait on coin (LIHO 6767)

Lincoln Portrait on token (LIHO 6768)

Objectives:

Students will develop a use of persuasive writing.

Students will discuss the necessity of everyday grooming.

- The class will examine two pictures: one of Abraham Lincoln with a beard and one of Abraham Lincoln without a beard. (Pictures of Lincoln are on the coins/tokens from the museum collection mentioned in the Museum Collections.)
- To promote discussion, ask students, "How does President Lincoln look different in these pictures?" or "In this picture, President Lincoln has a beard. In this one, he does not. How did President Lincoln get rid of his beard?"
  - An explanation of how shaving has changed over the years can be discussed.
  - Students can demonstrate the "old" method of shaving by using shaving cream (apply with a paint brush) and a Popsicle stick (substituting as a razor). This may lead to other grooming lessons. "Lincoln used his mirror for shaving; what do you use your mirrors for?"
    - Complete the 'Mirror, Mirror on the Wall' worksheet. The class can complete this together on an overhead, chalkboard, or chart paper.
  - Display the picture of Lincoln's wall mirror. Legend has it that this is his original mirror, and it hangs in the Lincoln home today. This mirror or one similar to it was used when Mr. Lincoln shaved while he lived in the house. In 1860, Lincoln received a letter from a little girl, Grace Bedell, requesting he grow a beard. She suggested that his face would look fuller and more appealing.
    - Lead discussion about the style of this mirror. "Do you have a mirror at home that looks like this?" How is this mirror different?"
    - Divide students into groups. Have the groups design their own mirror that they would like to have in their bedroom. This can be made on plain paper, dry erase board, or chalkboard.
  - Read aloud the Grace Bedell letter. She persuaded Lincoln to grow a beard. Ask the students, "What would you like to persuade our principal to do?"
    - The teacher will write an informal letter to the principal on the chalkboard using the students' ideas.
    - After the example, each student is to write an informal, persuasive letter to either their teacher or family member. The student may ask the teacher for a classroom pet or pizza party. She/he may ask their parent for a later bedtime, go out to eat, or an I-pod.



## Mirror, Mirror on the Wall

Directions: We use mirrors everyday! President Lincoln used his mirror to shave.  
How do you use mirrors?

In the morning:

In the afternoon:

In the evening:



- **Activity 5: Hat Rack: Displaying the Lincoln's hats.**  
**What kind of hat do you wear?**

Museum Object: Hat Rack (LIHO 51)

Objectives:

- The students will discuss the purpose of a hat.
- The students will identify hats from different time periods.
- The students will draw and design a hat.

- The teacher may bring various hats or have students bring in hats. The class could sit in a circle with the hats in the middle of the circle. Select each hat and ask, "Who would wear this hat?" or "Why would a person wear this hat?"
  - Write these hats on the board: sombrero, conductor hat, cowboy hat, stocking cap, beanie, musher's hat. Ask students, "Now, who wears these hats? And why do they wear them? What purpose does this hat have?"
    - Point out that the sombrero and cowboy hat protect the wearer's face from the sun. The stocking cap and musher's hat must keep the head warm. The beanie of today is more of a fashion statement and worn to look attractive.
  - Show a picture of Lincoln wearing his stovepipe hat and the picture of the hat rack from the museum objects. For discussion, ask, "What did Lincoln use his hat for?" (Lincoln often put notes in his tall, black hat.) "Do you have a hat rack in your home?" "What do you use if your home does not have a hat rack?" Discuss what other items the Lincolns put on the hat rack. (bonnets, shawls, and umbrellas) Compare and contrast what is used today vs. the bonnets, stovepipe hat, and shawls.
  - The students may draw and design their own hat or bonnet with scraps of material. On a separate piece of paper, the students can draw a hat rack to put in their home.

- **Activity 6: Creating a Classroom Museum.**  
**Take a Tour of Lincoln Artifacts**

Use these student-created materials:

- Lincoln home decorated in red, white, and blue (from Activity 2)
- Footstools (from Activity 3)
- Parlors (from Activity 3)
- Mirror Designs (Activity 4)
- Persuasive Letters (Activity 4)
- Bonnets (Activity 5)
- Stovepipe Hats (Activity 5)



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- With these student-created materials, the teacher should post the pictures of the Lincoln artifacts from the Museum Collections.
  - Depending on space, it is not necessary to display all pieces completed. For example, select only seven homes decorated in red, white, and blue; seven footstools; seven parlors, etc. But, be sure to include at least one material from each student.
  - Have students role play as tour guides. First, practice with a partner in the class. Invite other classrooms or parents to come inside the museum to learn about Lincoln. Each student can be a tour guide and explain all the items in the classroom museum. The students may use an index card as a reminder to explain:
    - Lincoln lived here before becoming President.
    - The Victorian style
    - The nonexistence of electricity
    - How Mrs. Lincoln used the footstool
    - Why Lincoln grew a beard
    - The request in their own persuasive letter
    - The kinds of hats the Lincolns wore.
  - At the end of the tour, the student can help the observer decorate a stovepipe hat to take home.

#### K. Evaluation/Assessment for Measurable Results

**Grades 2-4:** Write an answer to this question:

How is the Lincoln home different from homes today? (Use the style, cost, and the function of a room to explain your answer.)

**Grades K-4:**

Design of Lincoln's Home  
Venn diagram (cotemporary living rooms vs. parlor)  
Footstool activity  
Parlor recreation  
Mirror design  
Persuasive letter  
Decorating the hat or bonnet  
Tour Guide Presentation

Teacher may bring 2-4 artifacts or pictures of artifacts to show the children. Each student observes and touches the artifact or picture. The name of the artifacts should be written on the chart (see attached sheet). The student completes the column titled "Story it tells".



## Artifact Assessment

Artifact	Story It Tells

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## L. Extension and Enrichment Activities

Activity 1: Students may bring in an object from home. Students can practice describing that object. Students can trade and describe another student's object.

Activity 2: Give each student an outline of the state of Illinois. Students must identify five cities: Springfield, Chicago, Vandalia, Petersburg, and Lincoln. These are cities where Lincoln lived or worked.

Activity 3: Students can make a replica of the home using toothpicks, pencils, Popsicle sticks, pretzels, etc.

Activity 4: Interview an adult about how things have changed from his or her childhood. At home, students can sew on a button, wash dishes in the sink, and eat dinner by candlelight. Have them write one paragraph about this experience.

Activity 5: Count how many mirrors are in the student's house. Draw each one and name the room they are in. Lincoln used a mirror everyday. List items used everyday.

Activity 6: The student and his/her family can visit a local historic house. Have them write a description of some of the different objects they observed.

## M. Resources

- ❑ "How to Read an Object" chart at [http://www.nps.gov/history/museum/tmc/docs/How\\_to\\_Read\\_an\\_Object.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/history/museum/tmc/docs/How_to_Read_an_Object.pdf).
- ❑ Reference to Grace Bedell's letter: Sanders, Gerald. *Abraham Lincoln Fact Book and Teacher's Guide*. (Washington, DC: Eastern National), 1982, p 34.
- ❑ Reference to Grace Bedell's letter: [www.alplm.org/education/TRP\\_Attic.pdf](http://www.alplm.org/education/TRP_Attic.pdf).
- ❑ Reference to cost of Lincoln's Home: Sanders, Gerald. *Abraham Lincoln Fact Book and Teacher's Guide*. (Washington, DC: Eastern National), 1982, p 23.
- ❑ Reference to Victorian style: Gere, Charlotte. *Nineteenth-Century Decoration: The Art of the Interior*. (New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.) 1989.
- ❑ Reference to Victorian style: Zingman-Leith, Elan and Susan. *The Secret Life of Victorian Houses*. (Montgomery, AL: Elliot & Clark Publishing), 1993.
- ❑ Reference to the Lincoln Home Design: McAlester, Virginia & Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf), 1998.





## N. Site Visit

### Pre-visit:

Look in the local telephone book for any historical homes to visit in your area. Find museums near your town to visit. Invite a guest speaker, historian or high school history teacher to come to the class and talk about Abraham Lincoln.

### Site Visit:

Observe objects in that home and discuss the owners' life styles using these objects. Divide into groups giving each group a checklist of items to find in the home. Students can report objects found and describe the significance of the objects.

### Virtual Visit:

Assign an activity that requires a virtual tour of the park web site or other virtual exhibits of other National Park Service sites and museums on the same topic.