

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



## Mary Todd Lincoln and the Boys

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## Mary Todd Lincoln and the Boys

### A. Header

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- ❑ Grades 4-8
  - ❑ Number of Sessions and Length of lesson
- Eight 30 to 55 minute activities that can occur over a two week period.

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

- ❑ **Park name.** Lincoln Home National Historic Site, Springfield Illinois
- ❑ **Description:** Students will compare and contrast their lives with the lives of Mrs. Lincoln and her sons, Robert, Edward, William and Thomas by analyzing pictures, manipulating similar objects and writing about their discoveries of life in the mid-1800s through objects found at the Lincoln Home site.

**Activity 1** – “How to Read an Object” with several objects from the Lincoln Collection

**Activity 2** – Mealtime Etiquette

**Activity 3** – Toys and Games: Then and Now

**Activity 4** – Mary’s Household Chores

**Activity 5** – The Boys See another Dimension



**Activity 6** – Collectable Cards

**Activity 7** – Creating a Classroom Museum

**Activity 8** – Wrap up Activity and Discussion

- ❑ **Essential question** – How is family life today similar to, and different from the lives of the Lincoln family in the 1850s?

## **B. Museum Collections Used in this Lesson Plan**

See table in section G.

## **D. National Educational Standards**

NSS-USH.5-12.4 Expansion and Reform (1801-1861)

Chapter 3, US History Standards for Grades 5 - 12

Era: 4: Expansion and Reform [1800-1861]

Standard 2 – Understands how life in the Midwestern capitol of Springfield, Illinois, was evolving and changing, especially for Mary Lincoln and the Lincoln boys.

NL-ENG.K-12.2 Understanding the Human Experience

Students read a wide range of history and stories of Mary Lincoln, the Lincoln boys, their pets, eating and etiquette, games, entertainment and other parts of family life so as to understand the many dimensions of human experience.

NL-ENG.K-12.11 Participating in Society

Students participate by analyzing, reflecting, discussing historical artifacts of the Lincoln family and creating stories about how life might have been.

NL-ENG K-12.12 Applying Language Skills

Students write, draw and create, collect and explain what they understand and have accomplished as they studied the home life of Mary Lincoln and the boys.

## **E. Student Learning Objectives**

After these lessons, students will be able to:


- ❑ Critically analyze museum objects from the Lincoln Home National Historic Site.
- ❑ Use the analysis to develop an understanding of family life in the 1850s.
- ❑ Communicate their understandings of the differences and similarities of family life in the 1850s and 2000s through a written essay.
- ❑ Create a classroom museum exhibit on family life in the 1850s.

## **F. Background and Historical Context**

See section M, Resources of this lesson plan and the [National Park Service virtual museum exhibit on the Lincolns in Springfield and the Lincoln Home National Historic Site at www.nps.gov/liho](http://www.nps.gov/liho).







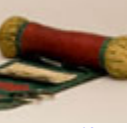






**G. Museum Collections and Materials Used in this Lesson Plan**


<i>Lincoln Home Artifact photos</i>	<i>Similar Items and other materials</i>	<i>Length of time</i>
<p>Activity 1-</p> <div style="display: flex; flex-wrap: wrap;"> <div style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">   <a href="#">Cradle</a>            (LIHO 5401)         </div> <div style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">   <a href="#">Bones and seed grouping</a>            (LIHO 5241, 4367, 5242, 5261, 5244)         </div> <div style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">   <a href="#">Cake stand</a>            (LIHO 255)         </div> <div style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">   <a href="#">Mary's commode</a>            (LIHO 104)         </div> <div style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">   <a href="#">Trundle Toy</a>            (LIHO 6762)         </div> </div>	<p>"How to Read an Object" worksheet          Examples of bones and other seeds</p>	<p>30 – 40 minutes</p>
<p>Activity 2-</p> <div style="display: flex; flex-wrap: wrap;"> <div style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">   <a href="#">Dish</a>            (LIHO 192)         </div> <div style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">   <a href="#">Dish</a>            (LIHO 196)         </div> <div style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">   <a href="#">Relish Dish</a>            (LIHO 192)         </div> <div style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">   <a href="#">Platter</a>            (LIHO 432)         </div> <div style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">   <a href="#">Dining Table</a>            (LIHO 25)         </div> <div style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">   <a href="#">Wood Stove</a>            (LIHO 559)         </div> </div>	<p>Dishes and tableware</p>	<p>55 minutes plus a lunch time</p>



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<p><b>Activity 3-</b></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">   <a href="#">Blocks</a>        (LIHO 1639)     </div> <div style="text-align: center;">   <a href="#">Dominoes</a>        (LIHO 1613)     </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">   <a href="#">Marbles</a>        (LIHO 367)     </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> </div>	<p>Marbles, Dominoes, alphabet &amp; numbered blocks</p>	<p>One 45-55 minute        Or        Two 30 minute sessions</p>
<p><b>Activity 4 –</b></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">   <a href="#">Darning Bell</a>        (LIHO 277)     </div> <div style="text-align: center;">   <a href="#">Basket</a>        (LIHO 278)     </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">   <a href="#">Housewife</a>        (LIHO 1288)     </div> <div style="text-align: center;">   <a href="#">Humming bird sewing clamp</a>        (LIHO 1597)     </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">   <a href="#">Button</a> (LIHO 7970)     </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> </div>	<p>Darning egg or plastic eggs, buttons, needles, thread, fabric swatches, Now &amp; Then Chart</p>	<p>55 minutes</p>
<p><b>Activity 5 –</b></p> <div style="text-align: center;">   <a href="#">Stereoscope</a>        (LIHO 273)     </div>	<p>View Master, slides, camera, shoebox stereoscope, Lincoln stereograph</p>	<p>One 55 minute or two 30 minute sessions</p>
<p><b>Activity 6 –</b></p>	<p>YuGiOh or Pokemon Cards, Collectible sports cards, business cards, card stock paper, computer with business card creating</p>	<p>55 minutes</p>



 <a href="#">Fido</a> <a href="#">(LIHO 5408)</a>		software or markers	
Activity 7 (no additional LIHO items)	Various, as decided by teacher	55 minutes or more	
Activity 8 (no additional LIHO items)	Venn Diagram	55 minutes	

## H. Vocabulary

Archeological Dig – A place where researchers look for fossils, tools, etc. from past human life.

Artifact - A found object considered to have historic or aesthetic value.

Brooch – A relatively large decorative clasp.

Calling card - A small card with a guest’s name on it, which was used to inform the mistress or master of the house who was visiting.

Carte-de-visite – An early type of photograph attached to heavy paper or cardboard.

Chamber Pot – A portable vessel used in a bedroom as a toilet.

Commode – A toilet.

Cradle – A bed for a baby, usually on rockers.

Darning egg – A wooden egg shaped object to assist in mending socks.

Engineering – To plan, build or manage; to do the work of an engineer.

Etiquette – The practices or behaviors prescribed by social expectations.

Excavate - To dig, shovel, or remove earth or sand.

Housewife – A married woman who manages her own house.

Invention – An original device or process; something invented.

Legend - A romanticized or popularized myth.

Outhouse – A small enclosed structure with one or two holes over a pit; an outdoor toilet.

Pin cushion – A small cushion in which pins may be stuck.

Stereograph - a pair of images, usually photographs, which are placed side by side. When looked at through a special viewer, they appear to be a single three-dimensional image. These were used as parlor entertainment and as educational tools starting in the 1850s.

Stereoscope – A large wooden box used to view stereographs; a three-dimensional viewer.

Thimble – A cap or cover used in sewing to protect the finger pushing the needle.

Trundle - A low bed on wheels that could be stored under a higher bed.

Victorian – Typical of the reign of Queen Victoria of England (1837-1901): the culture, fashion, tastes of that era.



## I. Teacher Tips

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Cut photos apart from captions and laminate for Activity 1.  
Make the class stereoscope for Activity 5.  
See individual activities

## J. Lesson Implementation Procedures

### *Activity 1: "How to Read an Object from the Lincoln Home National Historic Site Collection"*

#### **Materials:**

Museum photos:

- LIHO 5401 (cradle),
- LIHO 5241 (Bone and seed grouping of LIHO 4367, 5241, 5242, 5261, and 5244 with the caption for 5241),
- LIHO 255 (cake stand),
- LIHO 104 (commode),
- LIHO 6762 (trundle toy)

Similar items of bones and seeds

1 copy of "How to Read an Object" for each group

Teaching tip: Cut the pictures and captions apart. Laminate the pictures to make them more durable. Put all the captions on a single page and make enough copies for each group to have one

Essential question: "What can we learn about the Lincoln family from looking very closely at an object?"

Divide class into small groups; Give each group a different picture to examine and the "How to Read an Object" handout. Have students use inquiry method to discuss history, material, size, date, function, maker/manufacturer, place of origin, function and use, cultural significance of the selected object.

Have groups compare their responses.

Give each group a handout that lists all the captions to the pictures. Have students match the caption to their pictures. Have students discuss what these objects are and how they were used. Distribute examples of seeds and bones and other similar items. Then ask students what additional questions they want to pursue after handling objects, specimens and photographs.





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If computers are readily available, have students review the Lincoln Home site and web exhibit and related material that the lesson plan is based on. Otherwise, print out the web exhibit for student review. Ask them to view the objects, specimens, and photographs and read documents.

## Activity 2 - "Mealtime Etiquette"

Materials needed:

Museum photos

Dining Table (LIHO 25)

Stove (LIHO 559)

Dishes (LIHO 192, 195, 196, 198, 432)

Similar items: contemporary dishes and tableware (either real or paper and plastic),

Now and Then Chart,

Dining Etiquette guide: <http://www.bsu.edu/students/careers/students/interviewing/dining>; Cross

cultural dining etiquette: [http://www.sideroad.com/Cross\\_Cultural\\_Communication/dining-](http://www.sideroad.com/Cross_Cultural_Communication/dining-etiquette.html)

etiquette.html; Victorian etiquette: <http://www.logicmgmt.com/1876/etiquette/etiquette.htm>

Essential Question: How has mealtime changed from the Lincolns' era to today?

Have a discussion on what meal time is like in students' homes. Include such questions as:

Who does the cooking?

Which room does the family eat its meals in?

Do you sit at a table?

Who is there with you?

Does your whole family eat together at the same time?

Do you talk about your day with family members while eating?

Is there a TV in the room?

What kinds of dishes and silverware do you use?

Where and how do you fill your plate?

Predict how people in the future will know what we eat.

Show the pictures and discuss contemporary formal family dinners. Have a discussion on what meal time may have been like for Mary Lincoln and her family. Include such questions as:

Who did the cooking?

Which room did they eat their meals in?

Did they sit at a table?

Did the whole family eat together at the same time?

Did they talk about their day with family members while eating?

What kinds of distractions may have occurred in the room?

What kinds of dishes and silverware did they use?

Where and how did they fill their plates?



What foods did they eat?  
How do we know what they ate?

Teach students proper table etiquette including: how to set a table, how to use a napkin, how to hold a knife and fork, excusing themselves to leave the table, etc. See Cooperative Extension Service "[Polite Is Right](#)" curriculum page 34 from State Land Grant University or National Supply House or contact your local Cooperative Extension Service.

Activity: Have an in classroom luncheon, using proper modern etiquette. It can be either formal or informal setting.

Extension Activities:  
Research foreign dining customs.  
Research Victorian foods.

### **Activity 3 – Toys and Games: Then and Now**

Materials: Picture of Lincoln boys' toys (LIHO 367, 1613,1639)

A set of wooden alphabet blocks

A set of dominoes

Marbles

Essential question – How has a child's play time changed since the 1850s?

Lead the class in a discussion on toys by asking the following questions:

"What kinds of toys or games do you play at home?"

"What kinds of skills do you need to play these games?"

"What kind of thinking do you have to do to play these games?"

Put the blocks, dominoes, and marbles into different areas in the room. Divide the class into 3 groups and send each group to a station to "Play." Give them no other directions. Students must figure out what to do to have fun with the toys. After 10-15 minutes, have the groups rotate. After each group has been to each station, have them return to their seats.

Discuss their experience. Ask the following questions:

"How are these toys different from the ones you play with at home?"

"How were the skills you needed different? How were they the same?"

"What kind of thinking did you have to do?"

Show the picture of the toys. Discuss how different the toys in the picture are compared to the modern ones they played with.



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Ask how children's lives have changed: technology, creativity, skills, activity levels, materials, etc. List the changes.

Assess by having students write their own rules for playing one of the toys.

#### **Activity 4 – Mary's Household Chores**

Materials: sewing kit picture LIHO 277, 278, 1288, 1397, 1597

Darning egg (a wooden egg shaped object, can use a plastic Easter egg as a substitute)

Variety of buttons (shank, two holes, four holes, wooden, seashells, plastic, covered, etc.), needles, thread, fabric swatches, thimble (optional),

Essential Question: What do we do as clothes get worn, e.g. holes in socks or jeans' knees or missing buttons?

Show pictures of sewing artifacts and discuss uses of objects in pictures.

Show the darning egg and demonstrate how it is used to keep a sock's shape while mending it.

Hands on – give each student fabric swatch, button, needle, thread (thimble optional)

Demonstrate how to thread needles, tie knot, sew on button, etc. or bring in guest demonstrator (parent, high school Home Economics student, etc.)

Other Questions –

Compare the different styles of buttons and how each student handled the sewing challenges both physical and aesthetic.

Why don't people repair clothes (skills, machines, easier to throw away-we've become a disposable society)?

What is the advantage of taking care of clothes by hand (economic, personal satisfaction)?

Use Now & Then assessment chart document

#### **Extension activities:**

Mend a sock.

Show the picture of Mary's button brooch. LIHO7970

Students can make their own brooches from buttons. Use a shank button. Cut off the shank.

Students can paint pictures on them with oil based paint. Glue a pin back to it with a glue gun.

Tie in recycling and how we've become a disposable society.

Have students research Mary's jewelry, Victorian jewelry, hair jewelry.

#### **Activity 5: The Boys See another Dimension**



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Materials: Shoebox, digital camera, [Lincoln stereograph](#), stereoscope artifact (LIHO 273), modern View Master with slides

Essential question - How do we see in three-dimensions?

Prior to lesson teacher makes a stereoscope out of a shoebox.

Instructions for home made stereoscope:

1. Remove the lid of the shoebox.
2. Cut 2 eyeholes in one end of the box.

Introduce artifact photo of the Lincoln stereoscope on overhead projection to interpret as a class.

To demonstrate how we need 2 eyes to see depth, have students partner up and each student cover one eye and try to give a high five across the front of their bodies. (Make sure their hands are going left to right and not forward.) Discuss.

Show students the home made stereoscope and demonstrate how it works using the sample stereograph of Lincoln from the material list.

Give students digital cameras to take two photos of any object. One photo taken from holding the camera slightly left of center of the body and the other photo from slightly right of center. While students are taking pictures other students can experiment with modern view masters to discover how they work.

Next print out the two photos (be sure to keep them in same order) cut and paste them side-by-side. Have students view their photos in the stereoscope.

Discuss which students' stereograph worked and whose didn't and why not.

Extension Activities:

If needed during sharing of the digital camera in step 5, provide two pictures or other stereograph pictures for students to physically cut and paste to make their own stereograph.

Provide several examples of optical illusions for students to experience.

The teacher should point out the "science" of optics and how these illusions work.

### **Activity 6: Collectible Cards**

Materials: collectible cards (Pokemon, YuGiOh, baseball or sports cards, etc.), business cards, Artifact pictures of Fido Carte-de-visite and Lincoln's calling card LIHO 5408, 6760  
Card stock paper, computer with business card creating software or markers

Essential question: Why do people collect things? (Value, sentiment, personal interest, hobby, etc.)



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Show the Fido Carte-de-visite. What do the students think this might be in addition to a picture? Show similar objects: baseball or other sports cards, senior picture or name card collection, Pokemon, etc. Now what do you think this picture of Fido might be? (Being Lincoln's dog made Fido famous. The Lincolns had this formal portrait of Fido made because they could not take him with them to the White House.) Discuss the similarities between modern trading cards and cartes-de-visite. Show the picture of Lincoln's calling card and compare it to a modern business card.

Have students pair off. Give each student a copy of the information from Victorian Calling Cards and Carte-de-visite. Each student will read one of the information sheets and teach the information to his/her partner. If computers are available, have students visit these websites for a virtual museum trip and see more examples of Cartes-de-visite: Lincoln Funeral Carte-de-visite ; Matthew Brady Photography

Discuss how the uses for these cards have changed since the 1800s. Have students create their own "calling" or collectible card using Microsoft Publisher Business Card, Paintshop or equivalent on computer, or using index cards or card stock or paper and markers or paint. They should each make multiple copies for trading with other students. They should stamp or put name and data on reverse side if using the carte-de-visite as the model.

Business or Trading Card Rubric

	3	2	1	0
Completeness	Includes name and motto or statistics, some kind of border, decoration, and/or icon	Includes name and some decoration	Has name only	No name, little decoration
Effort	Extremely neat and detailed	Neat and detailed	Neat, but few details	Sloppy

Extension Activity:  
Students research Lincoln's dog, Fido

**Activity 7: Creating a Classroom Museum.**

Develop a classroom museum or exhibit on 19<sup>th</sup> century family life. You can plan to have a parent open house to showcase your museum.

Have class discussion to decide on what kinds of objects to use in your exhibit.

The following are examples of tasks that students could complete to create their museum:

- Research a particular topic on Lincoln family life



- ❑ Select and research individual Lincoln Home objects for exhibit
- ❑ Write captions and thematic label for objects students create
- ❑ Design and install the exhibit.
- ❑ Bring in personal collections of the type we have studied.
- ❑ Develop a marketing and public relations strategy
- ❑ Write articles for the newspaper, radio and TV releases
- ❑ Train as docents or tour guides.

### **Activity 8: Wrap Up Activity and Discussion**

Discuss what students have learned about the similarities and differences between the lives of the Lincolns and their own lives. Have students create a Venn Diagram showing those similarities and differences.

Students will be assessed on a written essay that explains what they have learned about the similarities and differences using the following prompt:

What would a typical day be like for you if you lived in the 1850s? What kinds things would you do? What objects would you use? How is this day different from a typical day in your life today?

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

Create a Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting our experiences in the early 2000s to the experiences of the Lincolns in the mid-1800s.

Activity 1 - completed read an object sheet

Activity 2 - practicing etiquette at a meal.

Activity 3 - written rules to game or toy.

Activity 4 - Now and Then chart on clothing care practices.

Activity 5 - oral explanation of 3-dimensional vision.

Activity 6 - rubric for created business or trading card.

Activity 7 - museum

Activity 8 - students will be assessed on a written essay that explains what they have learned about the similarities and differences using the following prompt:

What would a typical day be like for you if you lived in the 1850s? What kinds things would you do? What objects would you use? How is this day different from a typical day in your life today?



## L. Extension and Enrichment Activities

See individual activities.

## M. Resources

Maintain an updated list of the references such as books, materials and sources useful in developing the lesson. These include the following:

### ❑ *Bibliography*

MacDonald, Fiona. *The World in the time of Abraham Lincoln*, (London: Belitha Press), 1997.  
Freedman, Russell. *Lincoln: A Photobiography*, (New York, NY: Clarion Books), 1987.

### ❑ *Annotated related web sites with url addresses*

National Park Service background on Lincoln - <http://www.nps.gov/liho/life/life.htm>

Lincoln Stereograph - [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/displayPhoto.pl?path=/ndlpcoop/nhnycw/ad/ad08&topImages=ad08002r.jpg&topLinks=ad08002v.jpg&displayProfile=0&dir=ammem&itemLink=D?cwnyhs:4.:/temp/-ammem_ftAs:)

[bin/displayPhoto.pl?path=/ndlpcoop/nhnycw/ad/ad08&topImages=ad08002r.jpg&topLinks=ad08002v.jpg&displayProfile=0&dir=ammem&itemLink=D?cwnyhs:4.:/temp/-ammem\\_ftAs:](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/displayPhoto.pl?path=/ndlpcoop/nhnycw/ad/ad08&topImages=ad08002r.jpg&topLinks=ad08002v.jpg&displayProfile=0&dir=ammem&itemLink=D?cwnyhs:4.:/temp/-ammem_ftAs:)

Victorian Calling Cards - <http://www.daysofelegance.com/callingcards.html>

Carte-de-visite - <http://www.rleggat.com/photohistory/history/cart-de-.htm>

Lincoln Funeral Carte-de-visite - [http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/coll/222b\\_bradyhandy.html](http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/coll/222b_bradyhandy.html)

Matthew Brady Photography - [http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/coll/222b\\_bradyhandy.html](http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/coll/222b_bradyhandy.html)

How to sew on a button - [http://www.ehow.com/how\\_4604\\_sew-button.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_4604_sew-button.html)

Optical illusions - [http://www.sandlotscience.com/illusion\\_Jump\\_Main/Master\\_Jump.htm](http://www.sandlotscience.com/illusion_Jump_Main/Master_Jump.htm)

Dining Etiquette guide - <http://www.bsu.edu/students/careers/students/interviewing/dining/>

Cross cultural dining etiquette - [http://www.sideroad.com/Cross\\_Cultural\\_Communication/dining-etiquette.html](http://www.sideroad.com/Cross_Cultural_Communication/dining-etiquette.html)

Victorian etiquette - <http://www.logicmgmt.com/1876/etiquette/etiquette.htm>

❑ Charts such as "How to Read an Object" [to be launched at [www.cr.nps.gov/museum](http://www.cr.nps.gov/museum)]. Now and Then Chart, Venn diagram, business or trading card rubric

## N. Site Visit

We recommend a visit to the web exhibit featuring the Lincoln Home National Historic Site collections, and a local county museum or historical society. The following are instructions on how to organize an actual park or local museum or historical society.

### ❑ Pre-visit:

Before the visit, have students visit the institution's website for an overview or provide brochures and other written/visual materials about the site. Have each student develop 2-3 questions to guide



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the visit. Work with park interpretive and museum staff to arrange the visit with challenging activities.

□ *Site visit:*

At the site, have students select at least two objects to analyze. Provide "How to Read an Object" sheets. It also includes an object sketch sheet (white space to make a detailed sketch of the objects). For younger students, develop a "scavenger hunt" object list to encourage close observation skills.

□ *Post-visit:*

Write stories (both fiction and non-fiction), make scrapbook pages, draw pictures, create a slideshow, etc.

□ *Virtual visit:* Assign an activity that requires a *virtual tour* of the park web site, and other virtual exhibits of other National Park Service sites and museums on the same topic.