



Mary Lincoln



Mary Ann Todd was born in Lexington, Kentucky on December 13, 1818, to a **prominent** and **influential** family whose **ancestors** had a **distinguished** record in the American Revolution.

When she was about eight years old, Mary entered the Academy of Dr. John Ward, an Episcopal minister who was ahead of his time in running a **coeducational** school. Mary received more education than most women did at that time and, perhaps as a result, she sometimes expressed her opinions more freely than some of her contemporaries considered proper.

Considering her wealthy and **aristocratic** family background, her attitude toward marriage was surprisingly free of snobbery. She said "I would rather marry a poor man - a man of mind - with a hope and bright prospects ahead for position, fame and power than to marry all the houses of gold."

On November 4, 1842, Mary Todd and Abraham Lincoln were married. Because Lincoln came from a humble background, some members of Mary's family did not approve of her choice of a husband. In the course of their marriage, Mary sometimes lived under circumstances less **luxurious** than she was accustomed to, but she eventually became First Lady of the United States.

During Mr. Lincoln's Presidency a terrible Civil War was fought. Mary was occasionally accused of having greater loyalty to those rebelling against the United

States than to the United States. These accusations were based on the actions of her slaveholding Kentucky relatives. Lincoln offered a position in the United States Army to the husband of one of Mary's half sisters, Ben Hardin Helm, only to have him reject it and then joined the army fighting to break up the United States. He was one of six relatives of Mary who fought against the United States. When Helm died in battle, Lincoln provided a pass for his widow to cross the lines. He also granted passes to Mary's half sister, who was subsequently accused of smuggling medicines to those fighting to break up the United States. However Mary's loyalty was beyond question. She called the **insurgents** "rebels" and "traitors" and by some reports she became a more ardent **abolitionist** than her husband. The influence of the abolitionist Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, and that of her **mulatto** seamstress, Elizabeth Keckley, who became a confidante of hers, probably helped change the attitude of a woman who was raised in a slaveholding family.

After General Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox, ending the fight to break up the United States, John Wilkes Booth assassinated President Lincoln. Shortly after her husband's death, Mary wrote: "There never existed a more loving and devoted husband." Mary Todd Lincoln died in Springfield on July 16, 1882, having never returned to the home she shared with Abraham Lincoln.



Vocabulary Words—Mary Lincoln

Name _____

Teacher's Name _____

Date _____

Use your dictionary and then in your own words write a short [8 words or less] definition of each of the following words. Then write a paragraph using at least 5 of the words.

Prominent

Influential

Ancestor

Distinguished

Coeducational

Aristocratic

Luxurious

Insurgent

Abolitionist

Mulatto



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Use your dictionary and then in your own words write a short [8 words or less] definition of each of the following words. Then write a paragraph using at least 5 of the words.

Prominent	widely known
Influential	exerting power
Ancestor	a person from whom one is descended [parents, grand-parents, great-grandparents]
Distinguished	marked by excellence, dignified, eminent
Coeducational	education for males and females
Aristocratic	tastes, manners, and opinions of the privileged class
Luxurious	the most expensive, lavish, plush, extravagant
Insurgent	a person who revolts against the government
Abolitionist	a person who wanted to end slavery [by any means legal or illegal]
Mulatto	of mixed black and white ancestry



Teacher Page

The Flesch-Kincaid reading level is 11th grade.

Educational Objectives: The student will be able to

1. Read and comprehend
2. Use a dictionary
3. Write a paragraph

National Learning Standards¹

The following National Learning Standards for Language Arts are utilized by the activities.

- Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational text
- Uses grammatical and mechanical conventions in written compositions

Illinois Learning Standards:

Language Arts:

State Goal 1:	Read with understanding and fluency
Late Elementary 1A2a	Read and comprehend unfamiliar words using root words, synonyms, antonyms, word origins and derivations
Late Elementary 1.A.2b	Clarify word meaning using context clues and a variety of resources including glossaries, dictionaries and thesauruses
Late Elementary 1B2a	Establish purposes for reading; survey materials; ask questions; make predictions; connect, clarify and extend ideas.
Late Elementary 1C2a	Use information to form and refine questions and predictions
Late Elementary 1C2b	Make and support inferences and form interpretations about main themes and topics.
Late Elementary 1C2c	Compare and contrast the content and organization of selections.
State Goal 3:	Write to communicate for a variety of purposes
Late Elementary 3C2a	Write for a variety of purposes and for specified audiences in a variety of forms including narrative (e.g., fiction, autobiography), expository (e.g., reports, essays) and persuasive writings (e.g., editorials, advertisements).

¹ These national learning standards came from the *McRel* webpage <http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp> *McRel* is a nationally recognized, private, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving education for all through research, product development, and service. The United States Department of Education lists *McRel* as an affiliated site.