

WILLIAMS COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART
EDUCATORS' GUIDE

Lincoln to the Nth Degree Tour

April 7 - May 8, 2009



Elementary, Middle, and High School Levels

**WILLIAMS
COLLEGE
MUSEUM
OF ART**

encounterart.

Front image:

Alexander Gardner (American, 1821-1882)
Portrait of Abraham Lincoln, 1865, reprint after 1916; photograph.

Gift of the estate of Sidney Newborg (Williams Class of 1904), 1959, Williams College Archives.
Photo by Art Evans.

Guide developed by:

Clare Henderson
Williams College, Class of 2011

Joann Harnden
Coordinator of Education Programs

OVERVIEW

We look forward to your visit at the Williams College Museum of Art (WCMA). We hope this information will help you to integrate your museum experience with your classroom lessons.

The Tour:

Your group will tour the exhibition **Lincoln to the Nth Degree**, which focuses on the dissemination of Lincoln's image and ideas. We take the bicentennial of Lincoln's birth as an opportunity to examine the rich history and undeniable influence of one of our greatest presidents. A profound communicator, Lincoln was not only aware of the importance of words, but also of the visual image as a mass communication tool. The exhibition includes examples of the many images of Lincoln produced during and after his lifetime, from photographs, prints, and sculpture to cartoons and even the Lincoln penny. Important events and speeches made by Lincoln were immortalized in both popular media and fine art, and the mystique surrounding Lincoln grew exponentially after his assassination.

Tours of **Lincoln to the Nth Degree** will examine the evolution of representations of Lincoln and consider the impact of his words and actions at a pivotal moment in U.S. history. We'll compare the role of image and mass media today with the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Students will discuss concepts such as democracy, freedom, individual rights, and equality while viewing various printings of the Emancipation Proclamation and the Gettysburg Address. We will consider the inconsistency of democratic ideals with the institution of slavery, and the challenges Lincoln faced as he drafted these documents, as students gain first-hand experience with Lincoln's words, which have been interpreted in diverse media and for varied purposes, helping to shape our conception of the U.S. government and its ideals. The tour will explore how everyday people interfaced with these documents and incorporated them into their lives. We'll also consider elements of presidential iconography that suggest Lincoln's place in history. The tour culminates with students creating their own unique redesign of the Lincoln penny to express their vision of Lincoln and the ideals of U.S. democracy.

Before and After Your Visit:

To help you use this material in your teaching, this guide contains:

- **Introduction** to the exhibition (**Page 5**)
- **Background** information and related history (**Page 6**)
- **Making connections** to English, history, and art curricula & standards (**Page 10**)
- **Pre & post-visit** discussion questions and activity suggestions (**Page 16**)

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to share creative suggestions, please don't hesitate to contact us. Please let us know if there are any particular areas of interest or special needs to be accommodated during your visit.

Contact the Education Office at (413) 597-2038 or e-mail Joann Harnden, Coordinator of Education Programs, at Joann.Harnden@williams.edu.

INTRODUCTION TO THE EXHIBITION

Organized in honor of Abraham Lincoln's bicentennial, **Lincoln to the Nth Degree** explores how Lincoln's image and ideas were shaped by the mass media of his day. New technologies of printing, printmaking, photography, and distribution allowed a worldwide public to see—with previously unknown immediacy—the appearance and words of the man charged with keeping the young republic from splitting in two. Lincoln's fame was constructed in an age that redefined “originality” and “reproduction” for the new circumstances of the modern world. The idea of reproducibility can even be seen in the fine arts of painting and sculpture; the examples on view were created to be copied.

The exhibition follows Lincoln through his political campaigns of 1858–60, the presidency and assassination, and his legacy in the form of monuments, poetry, and even the Lincoln penny, which was first issued in 1909 based on the relief sculpture by Victor David Brenner. Lincoln's speeches were well distributed through the popular press, but some, like the Gettysburg Address, achieved iconic status through decorative presentations and incorporation into works of art. The blurring of boundaries between picture and text was part of the memorializing that marked Lincoln's identity after his death.

-- Curator, Nancy Mowll Matthews

The objects have been drawn from three Williams College collections: the Williams College Museum of Art, the Chapin Library of Rare Books and Manuscripts, and the College Archives. The exhibition has been organized by Nancy Mowll Mathews, Senior Curator, with Robert Volz, Custodian of the Chapin Library. Research and label texts have been provided by Williams College graduate students in the history of art: George Philip LeBourdais '08, Layla Bermeo '09, Jamie Sanecki '09, Rebecca Shaykin '09, Bree Lehman '10, and undergraduate Ruth Ezra '10.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

History

Abraham Lincoln was born in 1809 in Kentucky to uneducated farmers. His family became impoverished when Lincoln was a child, and his mother died when he was nine. From then on he was raised by his father, Thomas, and his stepmother, Sarah. Lincoln and his stepmother were close and she encouraged his interests in education. The family moved to Illinois and when Lincoln was twenty-two he moved out on his own. He only had a couple of years of formal education, but he was a voracious reader and taught himself most of what he knew. In 1834, Lincoln was elected to the state legislature in Illinois. He decided to become a lawyer and taught himself the material needed to pass the bar exam in 1837. He practiced law and served four terms in the legislature, during which time he made his first speech denouncing slavery. During the late 1840s and early 1850s, he began to foment his reputation as an opponent of slavery and served in the Illinois House of Representatives.

The landmark debates between Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas in 1858 were over the Illinois seat in the United States Senate. The debates featured the issue of slavery prominently and prefigured many of the questions Lincoln would face in the presidential race of 1860.

Abraham Lincoln was nominated as the Republican candidate for the presidency in 1859, after the other candidates were determined to have antagonized key segments of the Republican constituency. Lincoln was eloquent and moderate, and much was made of his honest upbringing and self-made achievement. Lincoln was a brilliant lawyer and state legislator, and his reputation preceded him. He was also a “Western” candidate, which the party felt would appeal to the newer states. He ran a modest campaign, letting the party publicize and raise awareness. The election results were dramatically sectionalized, with Lincoln not even appearing on the ballot in several Southern states. He was the first Republican president, and won almost entirely because of his Northern support.

During Lincoln’s campaign and election, the Southern states made clear their intentions to secede. By the time he was inaugurated in March 1861, seven Southern states had seceded and Lincoln had evaded an assassination attempt. The Confederacy was established and it became clear that fundamental division was a certainty. At the outset of the war, Lincoln tried to stop the spread of slavery and offer compensated emancipation instead of outlawing slavery in any

substantial way. As time went on, Lincoln realized that he would not win the war without freeing the slaves. Thus, the Emancipation Proclamation, effectively enforced January 1, 1863, freed all slaves in areas not already in the Union.

The battle at Gettysburg was the bloodiest of the war until that point, and many Northerners were unhappy with Lincoln's policies, particularly the military drafts. The New York Draft Riots were a violent and dramatic manifestation of this unrest, and Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg addressed the weakening support for the Union Cause. Lincoln re-aligned the cause of war with the ideals of freedom and human equality enumerated in the Declaration of Independence. The speech is quoted endlessly, and is regarded as one of the most effective and monumental speeches in American history.

Lincoln was re-elected, and delivered his second inaugural address on March 4, 1865. The tone is much more optimistic, having abolished slavery and seeing victory over the Confederacy as imminent. He began the process of Reconstruction towards the end of the war, in the face of concerns about how to re-integrate the Southern states into the nation.

John Wilkes Booth, a fairly well-known actor from Maryland, had initially plotted, with several accomplices, to kidnap Lincoln. An ardent opponent of racial equality, he changed his plans after learning of Lincoln's goal of introducing voting rights for blacks. He planned to assassinate the President at Ford's Theater, and arranged for his co-conspirators to kill Vice President Andrew Johnson and Secretary of State William Seward. During the play *Our American Cousin*, on April 14, 1865, Booth made his way past Lincoln's bodyguards and shot him in the back of the head while the audience was laughing. He narrowly escaped through a back alley behind the theater, where a family friend had arranged for a horse to carry him out of Washington.

Lincoln was carried across the street to a boarding house, where he remained in a coma for several hours before dying. William Seward was gravely injured during the attempted murder, conducted almost simultaneously with Lincoln's attack, but he eventually recovered. The nation was plunged into a state of deep mourning in the immediate aftermath, and Booth was pursued in a twelve-day manhunt that resulted in his death. Lincoln's image, immortalized in Currier & Ives prints and Matthew Brady photographs, was disseminated in huge quantities after his death. The most visible version is the Lincoln penny, released in 1909, but artistic images are also widely recognized, evoking the ideals of freedom and equality that he represents for so many Americans.

The following images and documents will be featured in **Lincoln to the Nth Degree:**

The Campaigns

Portrait of Lincoln from the Lincoln-Douglas Debates, 1858

Political Cartoons, 1860

The Presidential Inauguration, 1861

This series of debates prefigured the major principles at issue in the 1860 election, the most important of which was slavery. Humoristic drawings depicting the unique characteristics of each candidate were very popular, and Lincoln's unique countenance was great fodder for political cartoons. Winslow Homer's engraving captures the scene of the 1861 presidential inauguration.

Lincoln as President

Lincoln sat for many photographic portraits during his presidency, and he was no stranger to political image making; in fact, many of his early portraits coincide with landmark events in his career. Lincoln himself felt that Matthew Brady's photograph, which was retouched and minimized harsh lines, shadows, and awkward features, was pivotal in transforming the freshman Illinois senator into a serious presidential contender. Brady's portrait and others served as sources for many sculptures, engravings, and lithographs during Lincoln's life and after his death. Abolitionist activist Sarah Fisher Ames' marble bust and Leonard Wells Volk's life mask of Lincoln both appear in the exhibition. The importance of Lincoln's words and actions for the fate the country is evident in the **Emancipation Proclamation** and the **Gettysburg Address**, depicted in the exhibition in various formats, as they would have entered the lives of ordinary people through newspaper articles, decorative prints suitable for hanging in schools and home parlors, as well as artwork to adorn the Library of Congress.

Family Values

Lincoln and his wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, had four sons, only one of whom survived to adulthood. Their other three sons died in childhood or adolescence, and their family was thus plagued by the tragedy of these losses. Few photographs or prints exist of Lincoln's entire family, so the few that exist were widely circulated to reinforce the image of Lincoln as a family man. The image of the president as a family man still has resonance in today's political arena.

Assassination

The exhibition features a Currier and Ives print depicting a romanticized view of Lincoln's death Lincoln's dying hours. His wife, Mary, was in fact ushered out of the room because of her impassioned wailing. The calm, ordered state of Lincoln's body in the print is also misleading. In reality, his body was laid diagonally to fit in the unaccommodating bed. The death of Lincoln was a subject of morbid fascination, and prints and photographs of the president were in high demand after his death. The exhibition also features a playbill from Ford's Theater, newspaper articles, a stereograph of the New York funeral procession, and a War Department broadside issuing a reward for Booth's capture.

In Memoriam

Lincoln's body made several stops on the way back to its burial place in Illinois. In each place, a grand procession took place to commemorate the president. With the exception of Confederate loyalists who celebrated his death, most of the country deeply mourned the martyred president. Lincoln had a particularly heartfelt memorial in France, where he had many friends and admirers because of his egalitarian ideals.

Common Coin

The Lincoln Penny was released in 1909, the centennial of Lincoln's birth. Initially, two stalks of wheat flanked the words "One Cent, United States of America" on the reverse side. The relief profile portrait on the obverse is by Victor David Brenner, based on a Matthew Brady photograph of the President. The reverse design was changed in 1959 to depict the Lincoln Memorial, with the statue of Lincoln showing faintly in the center. Four new designs for the reverse of the penny will be issued by the U.S. mint in 2009 to commemorate the bicentennial of Lincoln's birth.

Sources

Curatorial Text from Lincoln to the Nth Degree: Williams College Museum of Art Senior Curator Nancy Mowll Matthews, Custodian of Chapin Library Robert Volz, and Williams College graduate students George Philip LeBourdais '08, Layla Bermeo '09, Jamie Sanecki '09, Rebecca Shaykin '09, Bree Lehman '10, and undergraduate Ruth Ezra '10.

Kunhardt, Jr., Philip B., Philip B. Kunhardt III, and Peter W. Kunhardt, Lincoln: An Illustrated Biography. NY: Grammercy Books, 1992.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

History

The life and death of Lincoln offer a window into a decisive period in our nation's history. The focus on Lincoln's image provides a lens through which students can examine important events in American history curricula—the Civil War, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the Reconstruction. His identity personifies some of the ideals with which our country has historically been associated, such as freedom and equality. The ability to examine a famous person's achievements and legacy, as well as the skills needed to understand the context, purpose and effect of a historical document, are integral in early elementary education standards. For fourth and fifth graders, the sequence of tour stops will form a narrative of Lincoln's life that will resonate with the chronology of the Civil War. Students will recognize the foundations of political ideals and be able to evaluate the application of these standards in modern life. By fifth grade, students should be able to connect the events portrayed in the exhibit to the American institution of slavery. They will see firsthand the Emancipation Proclamation, and connect the abolition of slavery to the ideals that Lincoln espoused.

English Language Arts

The major documents included in the tour—the Emancipation Proclamation, the Draft Riot manifesto, and the Gettysburg Address—are powerful statements on the political upheaval of the period. Lincoln's speeches, in particular, are some of the most moving and iconic oratories in American history. Students can read and re-examine what makes them so special: the word choice, strength of language, rhetorical strategies, and connection to greater ideals.

Art

Students will see Lincoln's image in many manifestations. In official photographs, satirical cartoons, and haunting masks, Lincoln's face has been used for many purposes. Students of all ages can begin to consider the multitude of ways that an image can be manipulated. Students will learn about the artistic mode of portraiture and examine the differences in versions of Lincoln's image. They will recognize the many types of artistic portrayal included in the exhibit: lithograph, photograph, drawing, sculpture, and engraving. This exhibition shows, as Lincoln well understood, that images can be more powerful than words. Students will examine the ways in which images can serve as powerful political tools. They will consider what visual

symbols represent the presidency and American government to them and find examples of nineteenth-century presidential iconography.

STANDARDS

The following list presents examples of Massachusetts standards that relate to the material and activities covered in the Lincoln to the Nth Degree tour.

Visual Arts Standards

- 1** Methods, Materials, and Techniques. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the methods, materials, and techniques unique to the visual arts.
- 3** Observation, Abstraction, Invention, and Expression. Students will demonstrate their powers of observation, abstraction, invention, and expression in a variety of media, materials, and techniques.
- 4** Drafting, Revising, and Exhibiting. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the processes of creating and exhibiting artwork: drafts, critique, self-assessment, refinement, and exhibit preparation.
- 7** Roles of Artists in Communities. Students will describe the roles of artists, patrons, cultural organizations, and arts institutions in societies of the past and present.
- 8** Concepts of Style, Stylistic Influence, and Stylistic Change. Students will demonstrate their understanding of styles, stylistic influence, and stylistic change by identifying when and where art works were created, and by analyzing characteristic features of art works from various historical periods, cultures, and genres.
- 10** Interdisciplinary Connections. Students will apply their knowledge of the arts to the study of English language arts, foreign languages, health, history and social science, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering.

English/Language Arts

- 1** Students will use agreed-upon rules for informal and formal discussions in small and large groups.

- 2 Students will pose questions, listen to the ideas of others, and contribute their own information or ideas in group discussions or interviews in order to acquire new knowledge.
- 8 Understanding a Text. Students will identify the basic facts and main ideas in a text and use them as the basis for interpretation.
- 9 Making Connections. Students will deepen their understanding of a literary or non-literary work by relating it to its contemporary context or historical background.
- 15 Style and Language. Students will identify and analyze how an author's words appeal to the senses, create imagery, suggest mood, and set tone, and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.

History and Social Science

PreK – K Concepts and Skills

- 2 Use correctly words and phrases related to chronology and time (*now, long ago, before, after; morning, afternoon, night; today, tomorrow, yesterday; last or next week, month, year; and present, past, and future tenses of verbs*). (H)
- 6 Give examples that show the meaning of the following concepts: *authority, fairness, justice, responsibility, and rules*. (C)

PreK-K Standards

PreK –K.1

Identify and describe the events or people celebrated during United States national holidays and why we celebrate them. (H) [Presidents' Day]

PreK–K.5

Retell stories that illustrate honesty, courage, friendship, respect, responsibility, and the wise or judicious exercise of authority, and explain how the characters in the stories show these qualities. (C)

Grade 1 Standards

- 1.2 Identify the current President of the United States, describe what presidents do, and explain that they get their authority from a vote by the people. (H, C)

- 1.3 Identify and explain the meaning of American national symbols [the American flag, the bald eagle, the White House, the Statue of Liberty]. (H, C)
- 1.5 Give reasons for celebrating the events or people commemorated in national and Massachusetts holidays [including Presidents' Day]. (H, C, G)
- 1.8 Give examples that show the meaning of the following words: politeness, achievement, courage, honesty, and reliability. (C)

Grade 2 Concepts and Skills

- 2 Use correctly words and phrases related to time (*now, in the past, in the future*), changing historical periods (*other times, other places*), and causation (*because, reasons*). (H)
- 7 Give examples of fictional characters or real people in the school or community who were good leaders and good citizens, and explain the qualities that made them admirable (e.g., honesty, dependability, modesty, trustworthiness, courage). (C)

Grade 2 Standards

- 2.7 Give examples of fictional characters or real people in the school or community who were good leaders and good citizens, and explain the qualities that made them admirable (e.g., honesty, dependability, modesty, trustworthiness, courage). (C)
- 2.10 After reading or listening to a variety of true stories about individuals recognized for their achievements, describe and compare different ways people have achieved great distinction. (H)

Grade 3 Concepts and Skills

- 1 Explain the meaning of time periods or dates in historical narratives (*decade, century, 1600s, 1776*) and use them correctly in speaking and writing. (H)
- 2 Observe visual sources such as historic paintings, photographs, or illustrations that accompany historical narratives, and describe details such as clothing, setting, or action. (H)

- 3 Observe and describe local or regional historic artifacts and sites and generate questions about their function, construction, and significance. (H)
- 6 Give examples of why it is necessary for communities to have governments (e.g., governments provide order and protect rights). (C)

Grade 5 Concepts and Skills

- 3 Observe and identify details in cartoons, photographs, charts, and graphs relating to an historical narrative. (H, E, C)
- 8 Define and use correctly words related to government: *citizen, suffrage, rights, representation, federal, state, county, and municipal*. (C)
- 9 Give examples of the responsibilities and powers associated with major federal and state officials (the President, chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, governor, state senators, and state representatives). (C)

Grade 5 Standards

- 5.8 Identify the links between the political principles and practices developed in ancient Greece and such political institutions and practices as written constitutions and town meetings of the Puritans. (H, C)
- 5.12 Explain the causes of the establishment of slavery in North America. Describe the harsh conditions of the Middle Passage and slave life, and the responses of slaves to their condition. Describe the life of free African Americans in the colonies. (H, G, E, C)
- 5.16 Explain the meaning of the key ideas on equality, natural rights, the rule of law, and the purpose of government contained in the Declaration of Independence. (H, C, E)
- 5.22 Identify the various leaders of the Constitutional Convention and describe the major issues they debated [including rights of individuals and slavery] (H, E, C)
- 5.23 Describe the responsibilities of government at the federal, state, and local levels (e.g., protection of individual rights and the provision of services such as law enforcement and the building and funding of schools). (C)

- 5.24** Describe the basic political principles of American democracy and explain how the Constitution and the Bill of Rights reflect and preserve these principles. (C)
- 5.31** Describe the significance and consequences of the abolition of slavery in the northern states after the Revolution and of the 1808 law that banned the importation of slaves into the United States. (H)
- 5.35** Identify the key issues that contributed to the onset of the Civil War [including the debate over slavery] (H,E)

U.S. History

- USI.7** Describe the major debates that occurred at the Convention [including the rights of individuals and slavery] and the “Great Compromise” that was reached. (H, C)
- USI.29** Describe the rapid growth of slavery in the South after 1800 and analyze slave life and resistance on plantations and farms across the South, as well as the impact of the cotton gin on the economics of slavery and Southern agriculture. (H)
- USI.31** Describe the formation of the abolitionist movement, the roles of various abolitionists, and the response of southerners and northerners to abolitionism. (H)
- USI.36** Summarize the critical developments leading to the Civil War [including the Lincoln-Douglas debates (1858) and the election of Abraham Lincoln (1860)]. (H)
- USI.38** Analyze Abraham Lincoln’s presidency, the Emancipation Proclamation (1863), his views on slavery, and the political obstacles he encountered. (H, C)
- USI.39** Analyze the roles and policies of various Civil War leaders and describe the important Civil War battles and events. (H)
- USI.40** Provide examples of the various effects of the Civil War [physical and economic destruction, increased role of the federal government, the greatest loss of life on a per capita basis of any U.S. war before or since]. (H, E)

PREPARING FOR A VISIT

Tours will focus on Lincoln's pivotal role in history, the democratic concepts of freedom and equality, and the influence of Lincoln's words in the Emancipation Proclamation and the Gettysburg Address. Through historical photos, cartoons, prints, sculptures and more, we will explore the influence of visual images and the symbols of American government in shaping the public's political views.

The Lincoln tour can also be combined with a tour of the Founding Documents, for a focus on the concepts of individual freedom and equality. **Please let us know ahead of time about any other topics you'd like us to address in the tour.**

Preparation and Discussion

- Review the description of the exhibition and background material
- Consider the possible curriculum connections and provide your students with relevant background before your visit.
- Inform students what they will see and do at the museum, introducing key concepts through class discussion and/or activities.

Suggested Discussion Questions:

- What is a government?
What is the basis of the United States government?
- What is a citizen? What rights do citizens have? Who should be considered a citizen?
Do all Americans have equal rights and opportunities?
- What makes someone a good leader?
Who was Abraham Lincoln? Was Abraham Lincoln a good leader?
- What does Abraham Lincoln mean to Americans?
Does he mean different things to different people?
- What are some symbols of America and American government?
What do they mean?

- What powers does a president have?
How is a president chosen?
- What is slavery?
When and why was there slavery in the United States?
- What was the Civil War?
What caused it? When did it happen?

Literacy

Reading books before or after your visit can also help students develop a richer understanding of the historical context of the texts and images they will see at the museum. Here are some recommended books and web texts available through the C/W MARS library system:

PreK - 2

What Lincoln Said by Sarah L. Thompson. NY: Harper Collins, 2009.

This book introduces readers to Lincoln using his own words, selected and paired with colorful illustrations for young readers.

Grades 3 - 5

The Gettysburg Address in Translation: What It Really Means by Kay Melchisedech Olson.

Mankato, Minn.: Capstone Press, 2009.

Presents the full text of the Gettysburg Address in both its original version and in a translated version using everyday language. Describes the events that led to Lincoln's famous speech and its significance through history.

The Gettysburg Address by Abraham Lincoln; illustrated by Michael McCurdy; with a foreword by Garry Wills. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995.

The text of the Gettysburg Address with scratchboard illustrations.

Middle School and High School

The Gettysburg Address by Abraham Lincoln; illustrated by Michael McCurdy; with a foreword by Garry Wills. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995.

The text of the Gettysburg Address with scratchboard illustrations.

The Gettysburg Graphic by C.M. Butzer. NY: Bowen Press/Collins, 2009.

The Gettysburg Address is transformed into a graphic novel.

Chasing Lincoln's Killer by James L. Swanson. NY: Scholastic Press, 2009.

This suspenseful book, based on rare archival material, trial manuscripts, and interviews, recounts the escape of John Wilkes Booth and follows the twelve-day effort to capture him.

For the full text of the **Emancipation Proclamation** and the **Gettysburg Address**:

Library of Congress: Gettysburg Address

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/gadd/>

National Archives: The Emancipation Proclamation

http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured_documents/emancipation_proclamation/

Suggested Pre/Post Visit Activities for Elementary Grades

Leadership Collage

Discuss what characteristics make someone a good leader and a good citizen. Create a collage by drawing and writing about people you know or have read about who have these qualities.

Vote _____ for President!

1. Begin this activity with a discussion about portraiture. What is a portrait? What can an artist express in a portrait? What kinds of choices can the artist make? What were some of the things we learned about portraiture at the museum? How were the sitters posed? Where were they looking? What were they wearing?
2. Explain that each student is going to create a self-portrait to advertise that they are running for president of their town (alt: school, family, classroom, or an imaginary domain). Help students brainstorm what kinds of choices they are going to make. What will they do as President? How is that special? What about the student will make him/her a good President? How will they show these qualities in their self-portrait? Think about the portraits seen at the museum.
3. Have students make a list of five characteristics and initiatives that they will include in their poster. What images will they use to illustrate these qualities? What will they be seated in their portrait or doing something active? What words will they choose to use

in their poster? How will they combine the images and text to best express their personality?

4. Draw a sloppy copy to flesh out the idea.
5. Make the final poster.
6. Have each student write a short “campaign speech.” Start with the words selected for the poster and flesh these ideas out into sentences. Use persuasive language to express your point of view.
7. Display the posters around the classroom. Have each “candidate” stand in front of their poster and give their campaign speech!

Suggested Pre/Post Visit Activities for Middle – High School

Class Discussion: Visual Analysis

Ask students to collect images of past and present presidents in the mass media. Then discuss as a class what messages about the president are conveyed by the visual elements of these images? Is presidential iconography the same as it was in Lincoln’s day? What has changed and what has remained the same?

Class Debate

While many people since the Civil War have thought of Lincoln as the Great Emancipator, in the twentieth century, some people began to question whether Lincoln should have acted sooner and more completely to provide rights to all African Americans. There are several key questions that can be explored in a class debate: Was Lincoln too influenced by his racist roots and too concerned with preserving the union? Should he have taken a stronger abolitionist position at the beginning of his presidency, or would that have been a mistake? Do images of Lincoln represent him too heroically? Should he be represented differently?

Writing: Text Analysis

Some have referred to the Emancipation Proclamation as the “second Declaration of Independence.” Do you agree? What are the similarities and differences?

Class Discussion: Text Analysis

Though the Gettysburg Address is now often quoted and considered a rhetorical masterpiece, it did not receive an overwhelmingly positive response at the time it was delivered. A very brief address, it was overshadowed in the newspapers by the other speeches given that day.

Others have criticized the logic of the address. For example, H. L. Mencken argued that the appeal for a government “of the people, by the people, and for the people” makes little sense when the southern forces were, it could be argued, fighting for the right to self-govern. Is the Gettysburg Address really a great text? What has made it so memorable and powerful to so many people?

Social Studies/Creative Writing:

Would Reconstruction have gone differently if Lincoln had not been assassinated? Write a story exploring what could have happened in Lincoln’s remaining years in office, if he had lived.

Education Programs

At the Williams College Museum of Art, our Education Programs strive to instill in visitors a love of art and an appreciation for all that a museum can offer.

As a teaching museum, we are committed to finding innovative approaches to teaching and learning through art—making connections across disciplines, building literacy skills, and encouraging the exchange of ideas.

Our programs engage participants in active experiences with art and investigate art history, artistic practices, and the issues that artwork raises. We are always available to discuss ways to tailor our programs and provide support to help you make the most out of your experience with us.

Education programs at the Williams College Museum of Art are made possible by the Eugénie Prendergast Trust.

Staff:

Cynthia Way

Director of Education and Visitor Experience

Cynthia.Way@williams.edu

413.597.2183

Joann Harnden

Coordinator of Education Programs

Joann.Harnden@williams.edu

413.597.2038

**WILLIAMS
COLLEGE
MUSEUM
OF ART**

**15 Lawrence Hall Dr., Suite 2
Williamstown, MA 01267
t: 413.597.2429 f: 413.458.9017
www.wcma.org**

The museum is open:
Tuesday-Saturday; 10 am-5pm
Sunday 1-5 pm. Free Admission