



# Lincoln's Many Hats

## An Unlikely Path to the White House

### More than a President

We all know Abraham Lincoln as the towering figure in the tall, black hat. President Lincoln was one of our country's strongest leaders, guiding the nation through its darkest hours. But before he became the President, Lincoln was a man of multiple careers, wearing many different hats.

From the untamed outdoors to the busy world of politics, Lincoln's journey was anything but ordinary. Imagine him as a muscular boatman, battling river currents and thieves alike. Or picture the future president as a postmaster, braving winter storms to deliver mail. These were just a few of the many roles he played before being elected to the highest office in the United States.

Lincoln's varied experiences included everything from chopping wood and running a store to surveying land and serving as a state legislator. His talent for problem-solving even led him to becoming an inventor! It's a captivating journey that shows us the life of an extraordinary man who would eventually become one of America's greatest presidents.

### Boatman

At nineteen, Lincoln set off on a perilous journey down the mighty Ohio River. With a friend as his partner, he guided a flatboat weighed down with goods from Indiana to the faraway state of Louisiana. This was

an incredibly challenging task: they had to navigate dangerous river waters, defend their cargo from attacks by thieves, and skillfully avoid collisions with large ships. This demanding adventure tested Lincoln's strength and courage, helping him to develop character that he would need to face the hardships that lay ahead.



Lincoln fights the currents as a boatman



Lincoln wields his mighty ax

### Railsplitter

When Lincoln was twenty-one years old, he and his family moved from Indiana's frontier to Illinois. Shoulder to shoulder with his father, Lincoln wielded an ax with powerful force, felling towering trees that would become the walls of their family cabin. The remaining logs were split into sturdy rails and used for building fences. Later, during his presidential campaign, people called Lincoln "The Railsplitter" to show how strong and hard-working he was, and to remind everyone that he had worked his way up from a poor farm boy to become the president of the United States.



# The Lincoln Loop

## Shopkeeper

The following year, Lincoln swapped his ax for an apron, trading the rough life of a farmer for the bustling world of business. He landed a job behind the counter of a brand-new store, where he quickly proved himself to be a trustworthy worker. Lincoln loved the store and dreamed of owning his own shop. With his friend William Berry, he took a leap of faith and bought one of the general stores nearby. Business was booming at first, but tough times hit the town, and their store started to struggle. Lincoln decided to cut his losses and sell his share of the business to Berry. But fate dealt another cruel blow when Berry passed away, leaving Lincoln to take care of the mess left from their failed venture. Instead of running away from his problems, he made a tough choice: to work tirelessly until every last penny was paid back. This showed everyone just how honest and determined he was, earning him the nickname "Honest Abe," a name that would stick with him for the rest of his life.



The Lincoln-Berry Store

## Glossary

Captivating: extremely interesting

Perilous: full of danger or risk

Wielded: to hold and use a tool

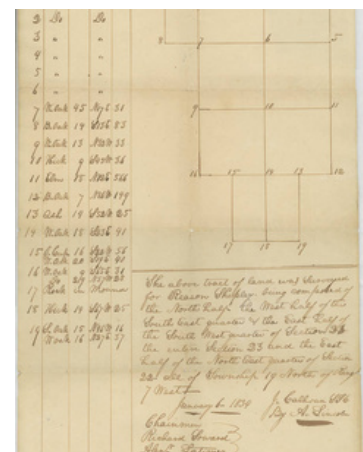
Venture: a risky project with an unknown outcome

Keen eye: a sharp and accurate ability to notice and understand details.

## Surveyor

Lincoln's next occupation took him out of town and into the wilderness. He became a surveyor's assistant, a role that demanded a keen eye for detail and strong math skills. Even though he had only attended school for less than a year, Lincoln was determined to succeed and dove into the world of geometry and trigonometry (advanced types of math). He spent countless hours measuring and mapping the untamed Illinois landscape. Surveying new towns, roads, and farms, Lincoln

developed problem-solving abilities that would someday help him tackle some of the country's toughest issues.



Survey Measurements Taken by Lincoln



## The Lincoln Loop

### Legal Career

Abraham Lincoln's legal career was the foundation for his future leadership. Without formal training, he devoured law books and transformed himself into a gifted courtroom lawyer. Over two decades, he argued thousands of cases, sharpening his problem solving skills, his speaking ability, and his knowledge of the law. He also served as an Illinois legislator, gaining political experience and building important connections. Little did he know that these skills and relationships would lead him to the presidency. He also applied his legal experience when he wrote the Emancipation Proclamation, a key document that freed millions of slaves and changed the course of American history forever.

### President in the Making

From humble beginnings as a young rail-splitter to a distinguished lawyer, and ultimately, the leader of a nation, Abraham Lincoln's many careers all led to his success. Each job, whether it was building cabins, running a store, or arguing in court, came with unique obstacles and successes. Lincoln met a variety of people throughout these roles, allowing him to hear and develop a respect for differing viewpoints. It's fascinating to see how wearing all of these hats, each with its own unique hardships and victories, helped Lincoln develop the extraordinary skills necessary to lead the nation through the Civil War.

### Lincoln's Signature Style

Did you know that President Lincoln was super tall? He was as tall as Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson! Can you imagine how much taller he looked when he wore one of his famous hats?

Lincoln's hats were seven to eight inches tall! They looked like tall chimneys, so people called them "stovepipe" hats. Even though Lincoln's wife Mary hated his hats, Lincoln wore them all throughout his presidency.



Lincoln's hat might have even saved his life once! During an attack, someone tried to harm him, but they hit his hat instead of his head!

Lincoln also used his hat as a special briefcase. He tucked all kinds of important papers in there!

Lincoln wore his last hat on the night that he was assassinated. The hat was rescued from the theater where he was attacked and kept safe. It is now on display in the Smithsonian Institute, a special museum.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Reading Comprehension

Use "Lincoln's Many Hats" to answer the questions below.

What business did Lincoln run with his friend?

Which job did Lincoln do for over twenty years?

Which two careers required Lincoln to do a lot of studying on his own?

Where is Lincoln's famous stovepipe hat currently located?

Which of Lincoln's careers do you think you'd like to try? Why?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Reading Comprehension

Use “Lincoln’s Many Hats” to answer the questions below.

The following question has two parts.

Part A:

According to the text, how did Lincoln’s early experiences as a surveyor contribute to his later success as a leader? Choose the BEST answer.

- A. His work as a surveyor taught him the importance of compromise and negotiation.
- B. His experience as a surveyor helped him develop strong critical thinking skills.
- C. His time as a surveyor made him more determined to achieve his goals.
- D. His work as a surveyor taught him the value of hard work and perseverance.

Part B:

Which piece of evidence below BEST supports your answer to Part A?

- A. He became a surveyor’s assistant, a role that demanded a keen eye for detail and strong math skills
- B. Even though he had only attended school for less than a year, Lincoln was determined to succeed and dove into the world of geometry and trigonometry.
- C. He spent countless hours measuring and mapping the untamed Illinois landscape.
- D. Surveying new towns, roads, and farms, Lincoln developed problem-solving abilities that would someday help him tackle some of the country’s toughest issues.

Based on the description of Lincoln’s boatman journey, what can be inferred about his character?

- A. He was afraid of danger and preferred a safer lifestyle.
- B. He was a natural leader who could inspire others.
- C. He was resourceful and could come up with solutions to challenging situations.
- D. He was easily discouraged by setbacks.

# Reading Comprehension

## Answer Key

What business did Lincoln run with his friend?

A general store

Which job did Lincoln do for over twenty years?

Lawyer

Which two careers required Lincoln to do a lot of studying on his own?

Surveyor & Lawyer

Where is Lincoln's famous stovepipe hat currently located?

The Smithsonian

Which of Lincoln's careers do you think you'd like to try? Why?

Answers will vary.



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