

# Teaching with Historical Personal Narratives in the Elementary & Middle Grades

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1. Anticipatory Set: Ask students if someone from their family has ever shared a story about them when they were young/baby or has just simply shared a family story with them.  
Share with students that they will be reading stories from the past.

2. Introduce historical narratives

What is narrative writing?

- Writing that tells a story or recounts an event.
- The narrator shares his/her experiences, observations, thoughts, feelings and motivations.

As tools, they help students to:

- Identify points of view through words and phrases
- Identify and question multiple perspectives of the same event
- Learn that stories can be unreliable
- Learn that telling stories is important in our culture

## Minimum standards met by this activity:

Key Ideas and Details:

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K-5.1**  
(With prompting and support, K-3) Ask and answer questions about key details in a text. (And refer and quote/cite textual evidence to support analysis, 4-5<sup>th</sup>)
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1**  
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2**  
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K-5.3**  
(With prompting and support, K-3) Describe and explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical text based on specific information in the text.

Craft and Structure:

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6**  
Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K-5.8**  
(With prompting and support, K-3) Identify the reasons an author gives to support points in a text. (5<sup>th</sup> and explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K-5.9**  
(With prompting and support K) Identify similarities in and differences between two texts on the same topic. (And compare and contrast 2-3rd) (And integrate, 4-5th) information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8**  
Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

Comprehension and Collaboration:

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6-8.1**  
Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

3. Historical event that will be studied:

President Abraham Lincoln's Assassination

Have students do the following:

**Observe:**

Underline 3 important words or phrases that will help you understand the narrator's point of view of Abraham Lincoln and his assassination.

**Reflect:**

In the margins of your paper, annotate or write **why** you believe the words or phrases are important.

4. Let's discuss!

- Using the words and phrases from your narrative, what was the author's point of view of President Lincoln's assassination?
- Discuss and explain how the points of view are similar and/or different.  
*\*Hint: Use the timeline, map and their words to help you explain. ;-)*

**On your own:**

List 2 things the narratives tell you about life in the U.S. at the time of President Lincoln's death in 1865.

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**Additional Resources:**

- **Library of Congress Teacher Guides:** <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/guides.html>
- Wineburg, Sam. "Thinking Like a Historian". TPS Quarterly – Historical Thinking: Vol. 3, No. 1, Winter 2010. [http://www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/quarterly/historical\\_thinking/article.html#](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/quarterly/historical_thinking/article.html#)
- Shopes, Linda. "What is Oral History?". History Matters: The U.S. Survey on the Web: Making Sense of Oral History. < <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/oral>>