

**TITLE:** Examining Children's Books

**ABSTRACT:** In this lesson, students will examine the two children's books, *He Knew Lincoln* and *The Perfect Tribute* about Abraham Lincoln and connected to Chic and Virginia Sale. Students will compare and contrast these books, their historical perspective and discuss the historical accurateness of both of these books.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS/ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS:**

- Does historical fiction change the way we see history?
- Is history static, or does our views and beliefs about events and people change?
- Who decides what is history and how to tell it?

**ASSESSMENT:** Students will be assessed by examining both the compare and contrast sheet used in this assignment as well as through classroom discussion.

**SETTING THE PURPOSE:** Students will examine historical perspective through two children's books of the early 1900's. Both of these children's books were used as the base for sketches and films that Chic Sale and Virginia Sale performed. Students will discuss how children's historical fiction affects the historical perspective of a nation.

**DURATION:** One to two class periods

**PROCEDURE:**

- Write on overhead or on the board, "Do you think children's books can affect the way we see history? Why or why not?" Give them a few minutes to write down an opinion, and then discuss their answers.
- Review yesterday's primary source review with students, focusing on Chic Sale and Virginia Sale's skits and acting parts involving Lincoln. Tell students that today the class will be reading those two children's books that influenced the performances.
- Distribute Listening to Historical Fiction Worksheet
- You may want to discuss both authors briefly, Ida Tarbell and Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews, a suffragette who has little to no biographical information on the web, but surely information in books, most likely those concentrated on women authors of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Depending on how many copies of both of the books you can get a hold of, you may choose to read each book to students, have the students read parts of the book, or if you have access, have a local actor or local figure come in or tape a reading of each book. *The Perfect Tribute* is currently available for free download on the web; however, reasonably

priced copies of both books can be obtained new or used on the web. With a little searching, it is also possible to obtain original copies of both books for students to look through as a historic document itself.

- As both stories are read, students should think about whether they feel the stories are historically accurate. (In fact, Andrew's book is somewhat accurate, based on a real event, while Tarbell's is not). Students will fill in the first two rows during the reading. The third column is filled in directly after the reading, and the last during research completion in the next phase of the unit.
- After both stories are read, students will discuss whether they think this represents the real Lincoln. Also, students will discuss whether children's books can shape, either accurately or inaccurately, how people feel about people and moments in history. If information in these books is inaccurate, why do the students feel authors do this? Is it intentional? If so, why? Should historical fiction be written? Why or why not?
- Tell students that tomorrow the class will examine quotes from people who actually knew Lincoln and from Lincoln himself.

**ANALYSIS OF LOCAL PRIMARY SOURCES:** No local sources are used in this lesson; however, these books will be tied to the local primary sources analyzed in the previous lesson.

**TIES TO NATIONAL PRIMARY SOURCE OR SOURCES:** The Perfect Tribute and He Knew Lincoln will be examined. While copies of the books are both downloadable and available for purchase on the web, teachers can also find original copies on the web for students to examine.

**LIST OF MATERIALS AND RESOURCES:**

- The Perfect Tribute by Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews. Charles Scribner & Sons, 1907.
- He Knew Lincoln by Ida M. Tarbell. Phillips Publishing Co., 1907.
- Internet Archive: <http://www.archive.org/index.php> This non-for profit site has digitized countless books for viewing, many available as pdf downloads as well. Both books are available by using above link and doing a search through the site's search engine, or clicking the links below.  
The Perfect Tribute  
He Knew Lincoln
- Listening to Historical Fiction Worksheet

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- The Perfect Tribute by Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews. Charles Scribner & Sons, 1907.

C. Adrian, June 2006

- He Knew Lincoln by Ida M. Tarbell. Phillips Publishing Co., 1907.
- Listening to Historical Fiction Worksheet