

**Introductory Lesson: Understanding Memory**  
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**Abstract:**

In this lesson, students will explore the idea of memory and how different types of memory form the history that we study as a collective people. Emotions have a deep connection to memory and history, in that memories associated with emotion are more likely to be remembered, yet can warp the history we learn.

**Essential questions/enduring understandings:**

- What is memory?
- Is memory history?
- Is any history objective?
- How does human emotion map the history we study?

**Assessment:**

The teacher will utilize feedback from class discussion and the answers on worksheets to analyze student progress.

**Setting the Purpose:**

Students will learn how memory plays into historical study and documentation by examining different types of memories and historians perspective on how memory constructs history. Students will examine how emotion plays into memory retention, and therefore construction of history itself. The information from this lesson will be used as a base for further study of Lincoln related primary sources.

**Duration:**

1 to 3 class periods, depending on how many parts the teacher chooses to use in order to communicate the idea of history as memory.

**Procedure:**

**Part 1:**

*In this section you will define memory, and 5 types of memory that involved in the formation of history.*

- Start the class with an exercise on memory. If you do not have a computer with overhead available, you may choose to play the “Eyewitness Game” with your class as described on the [Neuroscience for Kids](#) webpage from Eric Chudler at University of Washington.

- If you have a lcd projector, you might show the students a photograph or short video, or you can use the CSI Memory Test: [http://forensics.rice.edu/html/picture\\_begin.html](http://forensics.rice.edu/html/picture_begin.html) .
- Ask students: If this photo or incident was connected to you, was important to you, do you think you would remember more or less? Why?
- Distribute [The Purpose of Memory](#) worksheet, and have students write their own definition of memory. Discuss the various definitions students constructed.
- Next, have students imagine that they do not have the ability to construct or keep memories in their heads. Have students individually brainstorm how this would affect their day to day lives using the next part of the worksheet. Discuss their answers and explore the idea that everything we know, both past and present, relies on our memory working correctly.
- Optional: You may want to discuss how memory works. Some sources to use are: [“How does Memory Work?”](#) from Softpedia, by Vlad Tarko of Sci-Tech news, or [How does Human Memory Work?](#) From April Holladay at Wonderquest and USA Today.
- Finally, have students complete the rest of the [The Purpose of Memory](#) worksheet. The five types of memories defined in this worksheet will guide their study throughout this unit. Teachers may use [Memory Terms Answer Sheet](#) to discuss answers.
- Close this session, explaining that how memory is connected to history will be explored in the next session.

## **Part 2**

***In this section, you and your students will explore how memory is history, and how emotion shapes our memories, and therefore, our history.***

- You may want to start this section with the question “What is history”? Students will then reform their answers after looking at how memory connects to history.
- Distribute [Memory Constructs History](#) worksheet and have students complete this. They will use their answers from [The Purpose of Memory](#) worksheet to complete this.
- Discuss their answers. You may want to spend some time on how emotion relates to our memories (whether it helps us to remember better or when it can hinder or warp memory) [The Role of Emotion in Memory](#) from Dr. Fiona McPherson gives a good explanation of this process.

### **Part 3**

*In this final section of this lesson, students will think about how memory is connected to history through a series of quotes from famous figures.*

- Either as a large group, small group or individually, have students complete the [History Quotes](#) worksheet.
- Now, show students [Taft's Lincoln Statue](#), located in Carle Park, Urbana, Illinois. Have them pick one of the history quotes from their worksheet that they feel *best* matches this picture, and explain why they feel it is best connected.

#### **Analysis of local primary sources:**

Students will use the following to guide their analysis:

- History Quotes Worksheet

#### **Ties to National primary source or sources:**

Students will use the information learned in this lesson to guide their analysis of primary sources centering on Abraham Lincoln.

#### **Attachments:**

- [The Purpose of Memory](#)
- [Memory Terms Answer Sheet](#)
- [Memory Constructs History](#)
- [History Quotes](#)

#### **Ties to Illinois State Learning Standards:**