

LIVING HISTORY: An Interview with Lincoln



A Union of Professionals

After students learn about the similarities and differences between Obama and Lincoln (refer to “Learning History: Two Presidents from Illinois”), show students the inauguration on television or via the Web (cnn.com), and/or have them read the transcript of President Obama’s speech. Students should make notes about what they heard and the connections between the two men and their roles in history.



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Have students share with the class what they noted and their reactions to the speech. Ask students: Given what you learned about the similarities and differences between Obama and Lincoln, were you surprised by anything President Obama said or did not say in his speech? Finally, have students, with a partner, write and perform an interview between a reporter and Lincoln about his reactions to Obama’s inauguration.

LIVING HISTORY: The First 100 Days

After students discuss the themes in President Obama’s address (refer to “Making History: The Inaugural Address of Barack Obama”), students will contribute to an ongoing conversation—by reporting and/or writing editorials for the school newspaper, writing blog and journal entries, etc. Their work will highlight President Obama’s legislative actions during the first 100 days of his administration, how the actions compare with the themes identified in his inaugural speech, and/or how the actions affect or could affect the country, their community and their family.

In addition, you may want to maintain a classroom bulletin board with each of the themes stressed in Obama’s inaugural address. Post press clips or newspaper articles under each theme to document actions taken as his administration moves forward.

Students also can track activities chronologically with a large calendar posted on the wall that can be used to indicate when legislation was proposed, when a theme was mentioned in a speech, etc.