

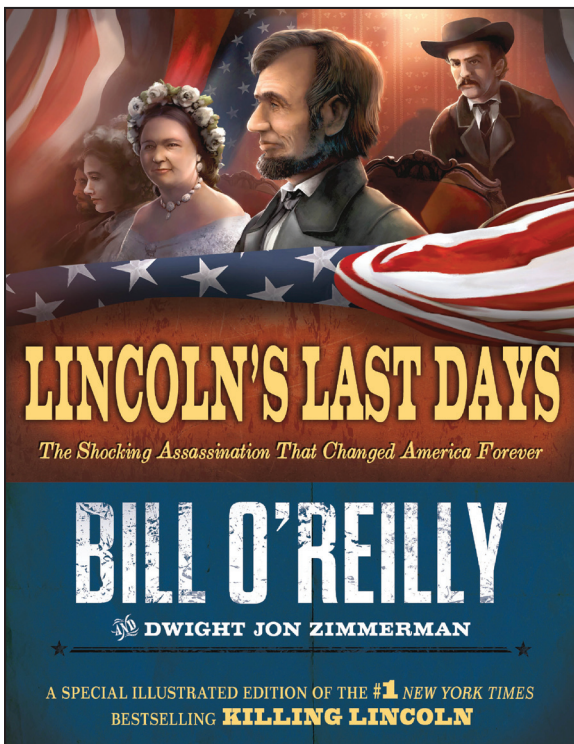
A TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR

LINCOLN'S LAST DAYS

The Shocking Assassination That Changed America Forever

by **Bill O'Reilly** and **Dwight Jon Zimmerman**

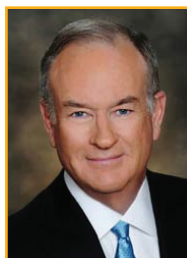
FOR
USE WITH
COMMON
CORE STATE
STANDARDS



ABOUT THE BOOK

In the spring of 1865, President Abraham Lincoln returns to Washington, D.C., after a brief tour of the defeated Confederacy, marking the end of America's bloody Civil War. Then on April 14, Lincoln is assassinated at Ford's Theatre by a famous actor named John Wilkes Booth. What follows is a thrilling chase, ending with a fiery shoot-out and swift justice for the perpetrators. With an unforgettable cast of characters, page-turning action, vivid detail, and art on every spread, *Lincoln's Last Days* is history that reads like a thriller. *Lincoln's Last Days* is a lavishly illustrated middle-grade edition of Bill O'Reilly's nonfiction bestseller *Killing Lincoln*.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Bill O'Reilly is a former high school history teacher and the anchor of *The O'Reilly Factor*. He is the author of several bestselling books, including *Killing Lincoln*.



Dwight Jon Zimmerman has adapted for young readers books by distinguished authors such as Dee Brown and James McPherson. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.

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time lines • glossary
bibliographies • index



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Using *Lincoln's Last Days* with Common Core State Standards:

Lincoln's Last Days is appropriate for grades 5 to 12 as a supplemental text in history and English classes. The book, while engaging, is a top-notch researched text that uses many primary sources and historical pictures to bring the account of Lincoln's last days to life. The Standards included for English/Reading are an example from the sixth grade; teachers may want to visit the Common Core State Standards website to apply their own grade-level equivalents. The subheadings and numerical references will help users easily locate the coordinating standards for specific grade levels.

Literacy in History/Social Studies

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.

RH.6-8.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

English Language Arts: Reading Informational Text

RI.6.2. Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

RI.6.5. Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas.

RI.6.8. Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Ask pairs of students to brainstorm a list of everything they know (or think they know) about President Lincoln and/or his assassination. Next, have students rank their information for accuracy: 1 if they are certain it is correct, all the way to 10, a guess. Then, have students write at least ten questions they would like to have answered before they begin reading the text.

As a class activity,* divide the room into three stations and place a poster at each station. For visual enrichment, it may be helpful to use a particular icon on each poster to represent each station. The posters should be set up as follows:

1. The first station will represent the **Union states** (you may want to use the flag of the Union army as its icon). Create three columns on this poster. At the top of the first column write: **Why did the Union not want the Confederate states to secede?** At the top of the second column write: **Why was the abolition of slavery so important to them?** On the top of the third column write: **Who were some of the famous Union soldiers and politicians?**
2. Another station will represent the **Confederate states** (you may want to use the battle flag of the Confederate States of America as its icon). Create three columns on this poster. At the top of the first column write: **Why did they want to secede from the Union?** At the top of the second column write: **Why was slavery so important to them?** On the top of the third column write: **Who were some of the famous Confederate soldiers and politicians?**
3. The third station will represent **The Players** in this unfolding story (you may want to use an icon of people, or of Lincoln and John Wilkes Booth). Create two columns for this poster. At the top of the first column write: **What facts do you know about Abraham Lincoln and his assassination?** At the top of the second column write: **What facts do you know about John Wilkes Booth, his accomplices, and their plans to assassinate Lincoln and his cabinet?**

Divide your students into three groups. Assign each group to a station. Instruct them to go to the station, brainstorm their "best answers" as directed by the questions on that poster and record their answers in the designated columns. When they are done, have each group present their notes and posters to the others.

KEY PLAYERS (refer to pages xii–xv in *Lincoln’s Last Days*)

Create a bulletin board from the Key Players section of the book. Or have students create a reference of important characters by making a graphic organizer that sorts the information in a way most helpful to them. Use as a reference for class discussions and partnership questions.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

These suggestions can be used individually to check comprehension of the material or for pairs of students to answer together and then follow up with a class discussion.

PART ONE: The Beginning of the End of the War (pages 1–58)

1. Explain why the Battle of Petersburg was a turning point in the war.
2. State why Ulysses S. Grant was Lincoln’s favorite general.
3. Interpret the reason the Confederate army laid waste to Richmond, Virginia. Why was the first American flag flown there after its capture symbolic of the future?
4. Classify the treatment that the Union army and President Lincoln faced from both its black and white citizens.
5. Analyze why Robert E. Lee and his troops lost hope at Amelia Court House. What decisions did Lee make?
6. List all of Lee’s challenges in Virginia, then rank them, in your opinion, from most important to least. As a class debate the results.
7. Explain why High Bridge was so important to both North and South strategies for success.
8. Diagram Colonel Francis Washburn’s strategy when faced with a battle where he was clearly outnumbered by cavalry and foot soldiers. Why did his bold plan fail?
9. Choose a winner in the battle to secure the town of Marshall’s Crossroads. Defend your choice with proof from the text.
10. Justify Lee’s decision to utter the most despicable word to a military leader: surrender.
11. Interpret Grant’s generous terms he offered Lee and his Confederate troops while at Appomattox Court House. Do you think these terms were already negotiated with Lincoln or not? Why?
12. List ten of the most important facts every American ought to know about this important part of our history. Discuss and refine your choices with a partner.

PART TWO: The Conspiracy to Assassinate (pages 59–91)

1. Describe the mood in Washington, D.C., after news of Lee’s surrender has been reported.
2. Characterize the relationship and connection that John Wilkes Booth had to Jefferson Davis. Compare his original intentions with his new plan.
3. Determine why the content of Lincoln’s speech so inflamed Booth and his comrades.
4. Discuss the three different elements that convinced Lincoln he would die in office. How did he decide to live with that fear?
5. Outline Booth’s expanded plan. What purpose did it serve? Who was brought into the plot? Why?
6. Argue whether you think Lincoln or Grant was more beloved to the residents of Washington, D.C. What about at the national level?
7. For general discussion: What evidence and sources does the author use to substantiate his claims in the text? Which sources are best to use for historical research such as this one? How do you evaluate the authenticity of a source?

PART THREE: Lincoln's Last Days (pages 93–184)

1. Describe Lincoln's last morning. What does this reveal about his character?
2. Propose a list of reasons Lincoln decided to attend the theater on the fateful night of April 14. How could one decision have changed history?
3. Why were people at Ford's Theatre excited that the Lincolns would be in attendance? Who else was happy with the news?
4. How was Lincoln's last cabinet meeting a good example of his leadership skills and style?
5. List the steps Booth took to set his plan into action. How and why did he attempt revenge on John Matthews?
6. Evaluate the role security played in the president's assassination. In what ways was this an area of weakness?
7. Explain why Lewis Powell was the only member of the conspiracy who was actually qualified to pull off his part of the plan. What did he do? How did his part turn out?
8. In detail, what was Booth's elaborate plan? What Latin words did he use to mark his dramatic exit? Did he have any misgivings about his goal?
9. How was Booth able to gain easy access in the theater and ultimately the president? Why was this allowed?
10. Summarize Powell's vicious attack on Secretary of State Seward and his family. What part of the plan succeeded, if any? What failed? Why?
11. Examine George Atzerodt's actions the night of the assassination. Defend whether you think he was still as complicit or as guilty as the other members of the conspiracy.
12. Did everything go exactly as Booth planned in the theater? What complications did he face with his evil plan?
13. At the drawbridge, mentioned on page 160, why did sentry Silas Cobb allow the riders to cross the bridge though he stated, "But I don't know I ought to"? Have you ever regretted doing something that you felt was wrong but did it anyway?
14. Also on page 160 the authors note that "When the war started in 1861, a curfew was established around the capital and strictly enforced." Discuss with students why this was done and its significance. You may also want to relate and discuss how and why this was done in other wars including World War II. *
15. How did young Dr. Charles Leale attempt to save Lincoln? Did any of these techniques seem absurd or familiar in any way?
16. What did the famous actress, Laura Keane, do in the theater once she heard Lincoln was shot? Why? What might have been her motives? What were the repercussions?
17. Defend the choices the doctor and Lincoln's closest associates made about his care and removal from Ford's Theatre. What guided their decisions? Why was it ironic Lincoln died in the particular room that he did?
18. Do you think all the people who entered Lincoln's room and stood vigil at his passing could predict the significance of the event at the time? In your opinion, what would have been the worst part? How was Mrs. Lincoln treated during this episode? Why?

PART FOUR: Chasing the Assassins (pages 185–239)

1. Reconstruct the steps the investigators took to gather evidence in the case of Lincoln's assassination and Seward's attempted murder. What locations did they focus on? Who did they believe were the key players? Were they correct on all counts?
2. Why did Dr. Samuel Mudd provide medical attention to Booth? What ailed him? How could it have spoiled all his plans? Do you think Mudd was as guilty as Booth and the others? Should he have faced the same consequences or not? Why?
3. Discuss Lafayette Baker's connection to the investigation. How much credit should have been given to him? Why? Who deserved the most credit? Why?

PART FOUR: Chasing the Assassins (continued)

4. In your opinion, who was guiltier of collusion: Dr. Mudd (and his wife) or Thomas Jones? Why? Who else helped the fugitives?
5. Explain why Booth was disappointed by the accounts of the tragedy in the newspaper. How did he hope to counteract those reports?
6. Trace the steps that led to Lewis Powell being taken into custody. How was coincidence a key to the authorities bringing him to justice? Who else did it implicate?
7. Debate whether communication was a barrier to the investigation or not. What technology was used to aid it? What hindered communication?
8. Describe the plan Dr. Mudd intended to follow based on his answers to investigators' questions. Why did the plan fail?
9. George Atzerodt's part was nearly undetected. What mistakes led to his capture?
10. Describe the funeral rites for President Lincoln. Where is his final resting place? Why? How was his journey there symbolic?
11. Why did detective Lafayette Baker believe John Wilkes Booth's only hope to escape was through Kentucky? What is a hunch? When should you follow one?
12. Summarize the steps that Lieutenant Luther Baker and Colonel Everton Conger took to bring Booth to justice. Why were they sent to Virginia? What motivated these two soldiers?
13. Describe the events as they unfolded at the Garrett Farm. How were Booth and David Herold captured?
14. Evaluate what the sentences given to the conspirators involved. Did each one deserve the death penalty? Who did many people think should have been pardoned or at least spared the death penalty? Do you agree?

AFTERWORD (pages 240–255)

How do the authors present the facts concerning Booth's body? Why are there still theories about its location? How do the authors dismiss theories that Booth not only survived but escaped? What choices must historians make about conflicting facts?

Summarize the legacies of each of the major players in Lincoln's assassination in a single sentence, including his own family. Which one surprised you the most? Who do you think suffered the most from his loss? Include the section on Abraham Lincoln, Mary Todd Lincoln, and Their Children (pages 260–263).

LINCOLN'S WORLD (pages 256–265)

A WALK THROUGH WASHINGTON, D.C., IN THE 1860s (pages 256–259)

Compare and contrast the Washington, D.C., of the 1860s to today's national capital, using both the description in this section, and the maps on pages 257 and 292. Would you want to live during the momentous time in America's history described in the book or not? Would you like to live there or visit now? Which sites would you most like to see in D.C.?

DID YOU KNOW? (pages 266–282)

TWENTY IMPORTANT AND INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE CIVIL WAR (pages 266–272)

Review this section in small groups and discuss the following questions: Which of these facts did you find most interesting? Why? How do you think the author authenticated these facts? What sources do you think he used? Which fact would you want to explore in more detail? Where would you go to look for more information regarding this topic? Would it be a primary or a secondary source?

DID YOU KNOW? (continued)

Have a debate about this section of the book. Which facts are easiest to substantiate? When are facts considered the truth and not just a theory? Which of these facts would you consider true? Which could still be debated? In their groups, allow students only a half hour in the library to try to substantiate or authenticate one of the facts. Discuss the reliability of their sources.

TRANSPORTATION DURING THE CIVIL WAR (pages 273–274)

How would your life, including your hobbies and friendships, be different without the technology and transportation options you've come to depend upon?

FLAGS OF THE CIVIL WAR (pages 275–276)

Why are flags important? Why did the Confederate flag go through so many different designs? Were you surprised to learn that the Stars and Bars was never the official flag of the South but only a battle flag?

WEAPONS OF THE CIVIL WAR (pages 277–279)

How did the technology of warfare change during the Civil War? How did it work in the favor of the North?

MEDICINE DURING THE CIVIL WAR (pages 280–282)

How was the practice of medicine during the Civil War closer to medical care in the Middle Ages than to care today? What implications did this have for soldiers? Would it have made a difference to Lincoln himself?

TIME LINES (pages 283–290)

Have students compare the time lines of Lincoln and Booth. What interesting facts do they notice? Discuss how time lines help readers understand more about a topic. What did they learn from this section that was not covered in the rest of the book?

RECOMMENDED WEBSITES (pages 304–305)

Allow students time to explore some or all of the Internet resources suggested in the book. Have them evaluate the websites for quality by rating the following characteristics on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 = inferior; 10 = highest quality), then discuss the results as a class:

Rate (1-10)	Website Name:	Notes
	Organization of material	
	Ease of navigation	
	Visual appeal	
	Use of pictures, maps, timelines	
	List of references/bibliography	
	Author identified	
	Copyright or dated materials	

Average Rating

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

VOCABULARY

You may want to familiarize students with military vocabulary; refer to the glossary of Military Terms (pages 297–299). Students can create bookmarks featuring pictures/drawings of the various terms.

VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

Using context clues, have students insert the correct word from the book. The following examples are from Chapters 2–11; create other examples if needed.

fortifications

agility

audacity

distribute

degenerates

haggard

reunification

crucial

detachment

veranda

1. "The two men sit on the _____, taking no notice of the cold." (Chapter 2)
2. "All the president needs now is for Grant to finish the rest of the job, and then he can get to the work of _____ that will be known to history as Reconstruction." (Chapter 4)
3. "Lee quietly gives the order to unload the supply train and _____ the food in an organized fashion." (Chapter 5)
4. "His eyes were red as if with weeping, his cheeks sunken and _____, his face colorless." (Chapter 5)
5. "Union soldiers are digging trenches and _____ along the road and reinforcing them with fallen trees and fence rails to protect themselves from rebel bullets." (Chapter 6)
6. "Capture or destroy the _____, even if takes the last man of your command to do it." (Chapter 8)
7. "Infantry is no match for the speed and _____ of cavalry." (Chapter 9)
8. "The _____ of the Union cavalry charge and its succeed-at-all-costs desperation ignites panic in the rebel force." (Chapter 9)
9. "At a time when it is _____ to be on the move, he [Lee] chooses to remain in place." (Chapter 10)
10. "The battle _____ into butchery and a confused struggle of personal conflicts." (Chapter 11)

READING STRATEGY FOCUS: Making Connections

Good readers make connections while they read. In other words, they think about how a story relates to themselves and their experiences, or it reminds them of something else. This helps a reader stay involved in the story by comparing it to what they already know. Teach students to make a variety of connections like the ones described below. Sticky notes are the perfect item for students to jot their connections while they read. Allow time for the students to discuss with each other the connections they made with each other.

Text-to-Text Connections:	When something in the book reminds you of another book; it might be a character, a conflict, a setting, or the organization of the material. It connects one BOOK to another BOOK.
Text-to-Self Connections:	When something from the book reminds you of something from your own life.; it could be what someone said or did that reminds you of yourself or someone you know. It's anything that connects YOU to the STORY.
Text-to-World Connections:	When something connects to things in the real world; it could be a connection about a person, a place, or an event that reminds you of a story in the news or your neighborhood. This connection is from the WORLD OF THE BOOK to the REAL WORLD.

HISTORY

Primary sources are those documents that feature first-hand accounts and information about a time period, a person, or an event. In pairs, review the Bibliography (pages 300–301) and highlight any materials that would be considered a primary source. Also review the photographs, maps, and other documents within the book, and interpret whether they would be considered primary or secondary sources.

For an amazing reference in the use of primary documents allow students to peruse the Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress (www.Memory.loc.gov/ammem/alhtml/malhome.html).

DRAMA

In pairs, have students create an interview with one of the key players from the assassination of Lincoln. Students should develop the questions and answers together and then perform their interview after they've rehearsed enough to sound convincing.

ART

Have students create portions of a time line of events depicted in the book. Together they can create a collage that best represents an overview of the period. Display the time line collage in a hallway for an interactive, informative bulletin board.

HEALTH/SCIENCE

Review the pages that depict Lincoln in a series of photographs from 1858 to 1865, showing the impact of stress on his appearance (pages 264–265). Research the latest findings about stress and the body, and create a poster, pamphlet, or PowerPoint about what you learned. Be sure to answer the following questions: **What is stress? What impact does it have on the body? How can stress be counteracted? Are there any good components to stress?**

Tracie Vaughn Zimmer teaches English at Lakota West High in West Chester, Ohio, and is the author of several books for young people.