

**What does the life and legacy of Abraham Lincoln
mean to the people of the United States?**

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I am not keen on history very much but I really like literature. So my acquaintance with Civil War in the USA and of course Abraham Lincoln started with the novel "Gone with the wind", which I loved. When two women came to our college and told us about A. Lincoln, if to be honest, I was not interested in it. But soon these women told us about the time of Civil War and I remembered my favorite novel and thought that I didn't know much about the man, who ruled the country from that period. My decision was to read about him.

I read the biography written by Karl Sandberg. Lincoln was an unusual man.

I was surprised, when I saw the theme of essay. In my opinion Lincoln's life and legacy have great meaning not only for the USA but also all over the world. Lincoln's firmness and courage of soldiers from the North, who won a decisive victory, were one of reasons why the democracy started to spread in other countries.

When I read the biography, one of quotations amazed me. He said "I would save the Union. I would save it the shortest way under the Constitution...If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that. What I do about slavery, and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union..." Before I read it, I thought that the war started because the North wanted to free slaves. Now I understand that Lincoln had other goal, he wanted to save the Union. So, if there had not been Abraham Lincoln, may be we would not know the modern USA. Lincoln had unique talent, he could be between two fires: between confronting parties of northerners, between free people and slaves. He could understand anybody. One day he said that only time and people elect a president. And he is the best example.

At the same time Abraham Lincoln was the supporter of abolition of slavery. Some people disliked his haste, others – his sluggishness but he always had his own opinion. A man said to Lincoln that he must not change his point of view so fast. And Abraham Lincoln answered that he did not have "a high opinion about people who can't be more intelligent now

than yesterday." However, he remained adamant in the problem of slavery. I think that one of the most important events in the history of the USA is connected with the 13th constitutional amendment and Lincoln, who made every effort in order to do it. So he gave freedom for millions of slaves. I read some songs of slaves before emancipation was proclaimed. I saw sole pain of children and mothers, who were separated from each other in these songs. When I read the songs after emancipation, I understood that slaves had been waiting freedom very much, although they did not get complete liberty at first. It was written in the biography of Abraham Lincoln how former slaves treated him. Most of them couldn't hold back tears when they saw him. They were happy when could shake hands with their liberator. But Lincoln had never felt his superiority; he was kind and treated everybody as equals.

I'll say the known thought that the colour of skin isn't important. We can find talents in everybody! So can't we love Louis Armstrong because of the colour of skin? It's really ridiculous! Now Barack Obama is the president of the USA. It's great!

It is a well known fact that Lincoln was born in the farmer's family. He almost didn't have a chance to have good education and became a president. I read that he had a great craving for knowledge. He started self-education and got on in life. Lincoln really reflected the dream of many people to attain something in their lives. But what makes me happy most of all, is the fact that he became a president as a reward for his work and unselfishness with people.

I can't be writing about Lincoln and never say that he was so happy when people saw him as a usual man. Once, a girl said about Lincoln "He is a simple man!" Lincoln was flattered. He loved friends and enemies. He is a legend.

In 1865 Lincoln was killed. The killer said before the death "Useless! Useless!" What did it mean? That he couldn't return old America or that he did the assassination in vain. I hope that he repented of it because he killed one of the Greatest Man!