Unit 4

Title: *A Backwoods Boy*

Suggested Time: 5 days (45 minutes per day)

Common Core ELA Standards: RI.6.1, RI.6.3, RI.6.4, RI.6.6; W.6.2, W.6.4, W.6.7, W.6.8, W.6.9; SL.6.1, SL.6.5; L.6.1, L.6.2, L6.4

Teacher Instructions

**Preparing for Teaching**

1. Read the Big Ideas and Key Understandings and the Synopsis. Please do **not** read this to the students. This is a description for teachers about the big ideas and key understanding that students should take away **after** completing this task.

Big Ideas and Key Understandings

Success depends on inner drive, strength of character, support networks, and circumstances.

Synopsis

Lincoln’s life was filled with many relationships, events, challenges and decisions that shaped him from boy to politician. Abraham Lincoln’s early life and young adult hood is marked with events and people in places such as Kentucky, Indiana and Louisiana. As an adult, he continued to read, make relationships, and explore politics. His social interactions and self-education played critical roles in his development from a backwoods boy to a prominent leader of our nation.

1. Read the entire selection, keeping in mind the Big Ideas and Key Understandings.
2. Re-read the text while noting the stopping points for the Text Dependent Questions and teaching Tier II/academic vocabulary.

**During Teaching**

1. Students read the entire selection independently.
2. Teacher reads the text aloud while students follow along or students take turns reading aloud to each other. Depending on the text length and student need, the teacher may choose to read the full text or a passage aloud. For a particularly complex text, the teacher may choose to reverse the order of steps 1 and 2.
3. Students and teacher re-read the text while stopping to respond to and discuss the questions, continually returning to the text. A variety of methods can be used to structure the reading and discussion (i.e., whole class discussion, think-pair-share, independent written response, group work, etc.)

Text Dependent Questions

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| **Text-dependent Questions** | **Evidence-based Answers** |
| Using information from the text, describe Lincoln’s mother, Nancy. What did Lincoln’s mother teach him through her actions? (page 318) | Nancy Lincoln was a self-less woman. At her deathbed, Dennis Hanks, recalls that she told her children to "be good and kind to their father, to one another, and to the world." (318) |
| Why did Abraham Lincoln hesitate to speak of his early life? What did he learn from those experiences in his early life? (page 316) | It was a rough childhood. He considered himself, "a poor backwoods farm boy, swinging an ax on frontier homesteads..." He demonstrated resiliency and learned early on that hard work was a part of everyday life. (316) |
| On page 320, it stated that Lincoln “handed the money over to his father, according to law and custom.” What does this phrase show about Lincoln’s character? | This phrase implies that Lincoln had integrity and did the right thing. It must have been difficult to earn money by taking a long boat trip and then be faced with the decision to give the money to his father or spend it. His choice to give the money to his father shows that doing the right thing was more important to him than spending or having money for himself. (320) |
| Why did Lincoln have a limited education as a child? How did he continue his learning? What do Lincoln’s actions continuing his learning tell us about him? (page 319) | Lincoln’s education was limited due to several reasons: transiency, illiterate parents, and lack of formal instruction. Page 319 explains that his schooling, “did not amount to one year.” Lincoln would read books as he was plowing the fields with his horse and used his free time to read stories like Robinson Crusoe and Shakespeare. (319) Even taking time to read while he ate shows that he went to great lengths to read new books that he had borrowed because he didn’t have money for books.  Another example of his continued learning was how he practiced public speaking in front of his friends and used his experiences of watching politicians and preachers as role models to learn from. Lincoln’s inner drive was responsible for him finding resources like books and educated people to learn from.  His willingness to travel and get away from the backwoods showed his inner drive to learn new things. |
| Lincoln described himself as “friendless, uneducated, penniless boy” when he arrived in New Salem in July 1831. What evidence does the author include to counter Abraham’s quote about himself? (page 320) | The author counters Lincoln’s description of himself with the evidence that by the time Lincoln arrived at New Salem, he “had a reputation as a comic and storyteller.” (320) Moreover, there were people who liked Lincoln. Even though Lincoln didn’t attend proper schooling, he did read books and there are accounts that people never saw him without a book in his hand. Just shortly before he went to New Salem, he was earning money, so he really wasn’t penniless. |
| After trying his luck as a frontier merchant, in what ways did Lincoln’s life change in New Salem? Support your answer with evidence from the text. (page 323) | Lincoln’s life changed in New Salem in many different ways. For instance, “he worked at all sorts of odd jobs. He split fences, rails, hired himself out as a farmhand, helped at the local gristmill.” (323) He also built a reputation for himself and ran again for state legislature. |
| List one obstacle that Lincoln faced while in New Salem, and how he approached that situation. What does that say about his character? (page 322) | One of the obstacles that Lincoln faced in New Salem was that he took a huge debt when he partnered up with someone and tried “his luck as a frontier merchant.” (322) He spent the next fifteen years paying it back. The fact that Lincoln committed himself to pay back the debt, even if it took him a considerable amount of time (15 years), showed that he was very determined as human being. |
| What circumstances helped Lincoln land a political career after leaving New Salem? (page 323-324) | The events that followed after Lincoln left New Salem was that “one of four men to be elected to the Illinois House of Representatives” (323) and that one of his friends, John Todd Stuart, urges him to study law. Even though Lincoln didn’t have the tools, and hesitated in the beginning, he nonetheless decided to study by himself for “nearly three years before passing his exams and being admitted to practice on March 1, 1837, demonstrating his desire to succeed. (324) |

Tier II/Academic Vocabulary

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|  | **These words require less time to learn**  (They are concrete or describe an object/event/  process/characteristic that is familiar to students) | **These words require more time to learn**  (They are abstract, have multiple meanings, are a part  of a word family, or are likely to appear again in future texts) |
| **Meaning can be learned from context** | Page 316-hostile  Page 317-labored  Page 318-crude  Page 318-epidemic  Page 318-forlorn  Page 319-verse  Page 319-stirring  Page 319-spruced  Page 320-wiling to oblige  Page 320-auctioned  Page 321-intellectuals  Page 322-precinct  Page 322-enlisted  Page 324-ambitious | Page 317-barrel-chested  Page 319-fortunate  Page 319-spindly  Page 319-losing himself  Page 320-reputation  Page 320-navigate  Page321-tended  Page 321-appointed  Page 323-impassioned |
| **Meaning needs to be provided** | Page 317-blab school  Page 317-chums  Page 321-flourishing |  |

Culminating Writing Task

* Prompt

*The author of this selection wrote a historical account of a person he admired. Use what you have learned to write about Abraham Lincoln in another form to demonstrate how Abraham Lincoln overcame challenges to become a successful individual. Other forms could be a poem, essay, letter, video or comic. Use evidence (direct quotations, paraphrase, etc) from the text within your writing.*

* Teacher Instructions

1. Students identify their writing task from the prompt provided.
2. Students complete an evidence chart as a pre-writing activity. Teachers should guide students in gathering and using any relevant notes they compiled while reading and answering the text-dependent questions earlier. Some students will need a good deal of help gathering this evidence, especially when this process is new and/or the text is challenging!

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| ***Evidence***  ***Quote or paraphrase*** | ***Page number*** | ***Elaboration / explanation of how this evidence supports ideas or argument*** |
| “Abraham Lincoln never liked to talk much about his early life. A poor backwoods boy, he grew up swinging an ax on frontier homesteads in Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois.” | 316 | Lincoln must have always felt that people would view him differently based on the lack of opportunities that he had growing up in frontier lands. |
| He attended a “blab school” with his sister where he learned how to count to ten and was introduced to reading and writing. | 317 | He did not have an opportunity to really learn all that he could have when he attended school. He used what he was taught. |
| “Mostly, he educated himself by borrowing books and newspapers. There are many stories about Lincoln’s efforts to find enough books to satisfy him in that backwoods country.” | 319 | He was creative in finding ways to learn more even when he could not go to school. |
| “At the age of seventeen, Abraham had a chance to get away from the backwoods and see something of the world.” | 320 | Living in the backwoods kept Lincoln sheltered from what was going on outside of that setting. |
| “Lincoln was self-conscious about his meager education, and ambitious to improve himself.” | 321 | He was aware that there was so much to learn and he wanted to absorb as much as he could. |
| “To support himself, he worked at all sorts of odd jobs.” | 323 | He knew how to survive and was extremely resourceful and willing to work in any opportunity presented to him. |
| “Lincoln decided to study entirely on his own…He studied for nearly three years before passing his exams and being admitted into practice on March 1, 1837.” | 324 | He realized that if he dedicated his time and energy into learning the law, he could become a lawyer. He self-taught and began to practice law without having gone to law school. |

1. Once students have completed the evidence chart, they should look back at the writing prompt in order to remind themselves what kind of response they are writing (i.e. expository, analytical, argumentative) and think about the evidence they found. (Depending on the grade level, teachers may want to review students’ evidence charts in some way to ensure accuracy.) From here, students should develop a specific thesis statement. This could be done independently, with a partner, small group, or the entire class. Consider directing students to the following sites to learn more about thesis statements: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/545/01/ OR http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/ thesis\_statement.shtml.
2. Students compose a rough draft. With regard to grade level and student ability, teachers should decide how much scaffolding they will provide during this process (i.e. modeling, showing example pieces, sharing work as students go).
3. Students complete final draft.

* Sample Answer (Responses will vary depending on the format students select.)

Poem: I Am Template

I am a backwoods boy

I wonder if I will ever know enough about the world to make a difference

I hear my mother’s voice encouraging me

I want to accomplish so much more than I have

I am a backwoods boy

I pretend that I am a person of knowledge and power

I feel the weight of my family’s needs

I touch an uncertain future ahead

I worry that I am forever trapped in these woods

I cry that I hunger for more

I am a backwoods boy

I understand that opportunities bring challenges

I say that hard work and honesty always pay off

I dream that one day I will be a lawyer

I try to learn as much as I can from everyone and every situation I encounter

I hope that my parents are proud

I am a backwoods boy that became more than I ever imagined

Additional Tasks

* *Research images that depict the grit, ingenuity and tenacious spirit that embodies this biographical account of Abraham Lincoln’s early life and young adulthood. Construct a digital collage. You may either select a song to complement the spirit of the piece or construct a 200-word speech that is embedded in the presentation.* 
  + Responses will vary. See example through the following link: [http://animoto.com/play/m7QiEMtmSy7vlxQ7UCSB3Q](http://animoto.com/play/m7QiEMtmSy7vlxQ7UCSB3Q%20)
* *Compose a comparison to a contemporary public figure that demonstrates the same character qualities.*
  + *Students might individually, or as a group, and write about political figures like Barack Obama, Sonia Sotomayor, or Daniel Inouye.*
  + *Responses should include character traits/qualities, supporting evidence, and citations of sources.*

Supports for English Language Learners (ELLs) to use with Anthology Alignment Lessons

When teaching any lesson, it is important to make sure you are including supports to help all students. We have prepared some examples of different types of supports that you can use in conjunction with our Anthology Alignment Lessons to ensure ELLs can engage fully with the lesson. While these supports reflect research in how to support ELLs, these activities can help ALL students engage more deeply with these lessons. Note that some strategies should be used at multiple points within a lesson; we’ll point these out. It is also important to understand that these scaffolds represent options for teachers to select based on students’ needs; it is not the intention that teachers should do *all* of these things at every lesson.

**Before reading:**

* Read passages, watch videos, view photographs, discuss topics (e.g., using the [four corners strategy](http://www.theteachertoolkit.com/index.php/tool/four-corners)), or research topics that help provide context for what your students will be reading. This is especially true if the setting (e.g., 18th Century England) or topic (e.g., boats) is one that is unfamiliar to the students.
* Provide explicit instruction, using multiple modalities, on selected vocabulary words that are *central to understanding the text*. When looking at the lesson plan, you should note the Tier 2 words, particularly those words with high conceptual complexity (i.e., they are difficult to visualize, learn from context clues, and are abstract), and consider introducing them ahead of reading. For more information on selecting such words, go [here](https://achievethecore.org/page/3167/selecting-and-using-academic-vocabulary-in-instruction). **You should plan to continue to reinforce these words, and additional vocabulary, in the context of reading and working with the text. (See additional activities in the During Reading and After Reading sections.)**

**Examples of Activities:**

* Provide students with the definition of the words and then have students work together to create [Frayer models](http://www.theteachertoolkit.com/index.php/tool/frayer-model) or other kinds of word maps for the words.
* When a word contains a prefix or suffix that has been introduced before, highlight how the word part can be used to help determine word meaning.
* Keep a word wall or word bank where these new words can be added and that students can access later.
* Have students create visual glossaries for whenever they encounter new words. Then have your students add these words to their visual glossaries.
* Create pictures using the word. These can even be added to your word wall!
* Create lists of synonyms and antonyms for the word.
* Have students practice using the words in conversation. For newcomers, consider providing them with [sentence frames](https://achievethecore.org/page/3159/ell-supports-for-writing-and-discussion) to ensure they can participate in the conversation.
* Use graphic organizers to help introduce content.

**Examples of Activities:**

* Complete a [Know, Want to Learn, Learned (KWL) graphic organizer](http://www.nea.org/tools/k-w-l-know-want-to-know-learned.html) about the text.
* Have students research the setting or topic and fill in a chart about it. You could even have students work in groups where each group is assigned part of the topic.
* Fill in a bubble map where they write down anything that they find interesting about the topic while watching a video or reading a passage about the topic. Then students can discuss why they picked the information.

**During reading:**

* Allow ELLs to collaborate in their home languages to process content before participating in whole class discussions in English. Consider giving them the discussion questions to look over in advance (perhaps during the first read) and having them work with a partner to prepare.
* Allow ELLs to use English language that is still under development. Students should not be scored lower because of incorrect spelling or grammar (unless the goal of the assignment is to assess spelling or grammar skills specifically). When grading, be sure to focus on scoring your students only for that objective.
* Scaffold questions for discussions so that questioning sequences include a mix of factual and inferential questions and a mix of shorter and more extended responses. Questions should build on each other and toward inferential and higher order thinking questions. There are not many factual questions already listed in the lesson instructions, so you will need to build some in as you see fit. More information on this strategy can be found [here](https://achievethecore.org/aligned/creating-sequencing-text-dependent-questions-support-english-language-learners/).
* Provide explicit instruction, using multiple modalities, on selected vocabulary words (e.g., 5–8 for a given text) that are central to understanding the text. During reading, you should continue to draw attention to and discuss the words that you taught before the reading.

**Examples of Activities:**

* Have students include the example from the text in a student-created glossary.
* Create pictures that represent how the word was used in the passage.
* Create sentences using the word in the way it was used in the passage.
* Have students discuss the author’s word choice.
* Examine important sentences in the text that contribute to the overall meaning of the text.
* Examine sentence structure of a particular sentence. Break down the sentence to determine its meaning. Then determine how this sentence contributes to the overall meaning of the passage. Determine if there is any figurative language in the sentence and have students use context clues to determine the meaning of the figurative language.
* Use graphic organizers to help organize content and thinking.

**Examples of Activities:**

* While reading the text, have students fill in a story map to help summarize what has happened.
* Have students fill in an evidence chart while they read to use with the culminating writing activity. Make sure to model with the students how to fill in the evidence chart by filling in the first couple of rows together as a class. Go over the prompt that the evidence should support, making sure to break down what the prompt means before having the students get to work. If some of your students frequently struggle to understand directions, have the students explain the directions back to you.
* Provide somewhere for students to store new words that they encounter. Students could use a chart to keep track of these new words and their meanings as they read.
* If you had students start a KWL before reading, have them fill in the “L” section as they read the passage.

**After reading:**

* Reinforce new vocabulary using multiple modalities.

**Examples of activities:**

* Using the words that you had students work with before the reading, require students to include the words in the culminating writing task.
* Create Frayer models with the words. Then cut up the Frayer models and have the students put the Frayer models back together by matching the pieces for each word.
* After reading the passage, continue to examine important sentences (1–2) in the text that contribute to the overall meaning of the text. Guide students to break apart these sentences, analyze different elements, and determine meaning. More information on how to do this, including models of sentence deconstruction, can be found [here](https://achievethecore.org/page/3160/juicy-sentence-protocol).
* When completing the writing assignments after reading, consider using these scaffolds to support students depending on their English proficiency.

**Examples of Activities:**

* For all students, go over the prompt in detail making sure to break down what the prompt means before having the students get to work. Then have the students explain the directions back to you.
* Have students create an evidence tracking chart during reading, then direct them to look back over their evidence chart and work with a group to see if their evidence matches what the rest of the class wrote down. If some of the chart does not match, students should have a discussion about why.
* For students who need more support, model the proper writing format for your students and provide them with a properly formatted example for reference.
* For newcomers, you may consider creating sentence or paragraph frames to help them to write out their ideas.