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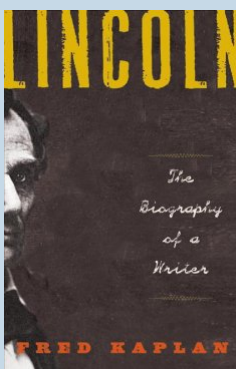
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## Lincoln : the biography of a writer / Fred Kaplan.



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## Reviews

### Booklist Reviews 2008 June #1

Has Lincoln been done to death? Not hardly. Distinguished biographer Kaplan takes a new, solid, meaningful, even moving approach to the sixteenth president. Considerable previous attention has been paid to Lincoln's articulateness in both oral and written word. The question is always, then, how did this woefully undereducated man become so good with words? It is Kaplan's and his reader's pleasure to follow an extensive chronological survey of the books and other writings Lincoln studied, from his boyhood (he "was born into a national culture in which language was the most widely available key to individual growth and achievement. . . . It was the tool by which he explored and defined himself") to the presidential years ("lifelong development as a writer had brought the country a president with the capacity to express himself and the national concerns more effectively than any president ever had, with the exception of Thomas Jefferson"). Consequently, we witness the admirable growth—flowering—of an amazingly accomplished autodidact. This book is not an introduction to Lincoln's life, to be sure; it is for readers who know the essentials. Copyright 2008 Booklist Reviews.

### LJ Reviews 2008 September #1

Kaplan (Distinguished Professor Emeritus, English, Queens Coll. & Graduate Ctr., CUNY; Henry James ) argues that Lincoln's devotion to the integrity of language gave him a rare credibility as lawyer, legislator, public figure, and President and that Lincoln worked assiduously to master writing as a means of thought as well as expression. To track Lincoln's trajectory as a writer, Kaplan scours what Lincoln read and wrote to discover the roots of his ideas and style variously in scripture, Shakespeare, Byron, other English poets, Burns, historians, satirists, Aesop's fables, American folktales, speeches, etc. Lincoln came to prize clear, common speech as vital to conveying moral vision and democratic principles. His genius for the telling detail and for storytelling itself ensured that his listeners and readers would take hold of his argument. His purpose, says Kaplan, was to persuade rather than to stir emotion. In light of today's political subversion of language, Kaplan's work points the way to our own resetting of the democratic compass thus to direct our path as a free people. For all libraries that serve the public interest.—RMM

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### LJ Reviews 2015 January #1

Kaplan examines Lincoln's writings to consider how the politician drew on his gifts as a storyteller—along with his mastery of American vernacular and his extensive knowledge of the Bible, Shakespeare, and other popular sources—to exercise rhetorical power almost unmatched in his day and beyond. (LJ 9/1/08)

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### PW Reviews 2008 July #4

In this intriguing biography, English professor and literary biographer Kaplan (The Singular Mark Twain ) analyzes Abraham Lincoln's writings, from the great civic anthems of his presidency to love letters, legal briefs, poems and notebook jottings, and finds a first-rate literary talent—a master storyteller with an earthy wit, sharp logic and an ear for poetic phrasing. From wide reading, Kaplan contends, Lincoln gleaned influences—an Aesopian moralism, a biblical sense of providence, a Byronic melancholy, a Shakespearean understanding of human complexity—that shaped his approach to issues and, through his words, the nation's attitude toward slavery and war. Kaplan sometimes overdoes his critical exegeses of Lincoln's more forgettable efforts ("[Lincoln's] comic depiction of what happens when two people of the same sex are bedded has a heterodox clarity that reveals his familiarity with bodily realities") but many of these readings, like his recasting as free verse a speech on agricultural improvements, are eye-opening. The result is a fresh, revealing study of both Lincoln's language and character. (Nov. 3)

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In a brief autobiography written for a political campaign, Lincoln said that his father "even in childhood was a wandering labor boy, and grew up literally without education. He never did more in the way of writing than to bunglingly sign his own name." Despite Thomas Lincoln's apparent shiftlessness, he became a skilled carpenter, and he never lacked the basic necessities of life. At one time he owned title to two farms. He always possessed one or more horses. That year, Lincoln attended a political rally and was persuaded to speak on behalf of a local candidate. It was his first political speech. A witness recalled that Lincoln "was frightened but got warmed up and made the best speech of the day." In 1831 Lincoln made a second trip to New Orleans. Indian Child - Biography of Abraham Lincoln. National Museum of American History - Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation. Social Studies for Kids - Biography of Abraham Lincoln. Britannica Websites. Articles from Britannica Encyclopedias for elementary and high school students. Abraham Lincoln - Children's Encyclopedia (Ages 8-11). Abraham Lincoln - Student Encyclopedia (Ages 11 and up). WRITTEN BY. Richard N. Current. His father, Thomas Lincoln, was the descendant of a weaver's apprentice who had migrated from England to Massachusetts in 1637. Though much less prosperous than some of his Lincoln forebears, Thomas was a sturdy pioneer. On June 12, 1806, he married Nancy Hanks. A brief biography of abraham lincoln. By Tim Lambert. His Early Life. Abraham Lincoln was born on 12 February 1809 on a farm near Hodgenville, Kentucky. His parents were Thomas and Nancy Lincoln. They had 3 children, Sarah, Abraham and Thomas. Abraham Lincoln (/ˈlɪŋkən/; February 12, 1809 – April 15, 1865) was an American statesman and lawyer who served as the 16th president of the United States from 1861 to 1865. Lincoln led the nation through the American Civil War, the country's greatest moral, constitutional, and political crisis. He succeeded in preserving the Union, abolishing slavery, bolstering the federal government, and modernizing the U.S. economy.

And Lincoln received support from a broad base of Americans, from factory workers to farmers to New England intellectuals who opposed the institution of slavery. Opposed by: In the election of 1860, Lincoln had three opponents, the most prominent of whom was Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois. Lincoln had run for the senate seat held by Douglas two years previously, and that election campaign featured the seven Lincoln-Douglas Debates.Â Later career: Lincoln died while in office. It is a loss to history that he was never able to write a memoir. Facts to Know About Lincoln. Nickname: Lincoln was often called "Honest Abe." In the 1860 campaign, his history of having worked with an ax prompted him to be called the "Rail Candidate" and "The Rail Splitter." Lincoln's son, Robert Todd Lincoln, was saved from getting hit by a train by Edwin Booth, John Wilkes Booth's brother. Did You Know? Lincoln was an accomplished wrestler: He was defeated only once in about 300 matches, and is enshrined in the Wrestling Hall of Fame. Place of Birth. Hodgenville, Kentucky. Place of Death. Washington, D.C. Who Was Abraham Lincoln? Cite This Page. Abraham Lincoln is on of the greatest souls to have been born in America. The single person responsible for abolishing slavery was this great human being.Â Abraham Lincoln was the 16th President of the United States of America. He is regarded by many as the most influential president of America. He is known for abolishing slavery from the united states. Lincoln led the nation through the American Civil War, the country's greatest moral, constitutional, and political crisis. A brief biography of abraham lincoln. 1809. On the morning of Sunday, February 12, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, wife of Thomas, gave birth to a boy. He was born on a bed of poles covered with cornhusks. The baby was named Abraham after his grandfather. The birth took place in the Lincolns' rough-hewn cabin on Nolin Creek near Hodgenville, Kentucky.Â He had roped his trunks himself and labeled them, "A. Lincoln, The White House, Washington, D.C." Jefferson Davis was inaugurated as the provisional president of the Confederate States of America on February 18th. Lincoln arrived in Washington on February 23rd and was inaugurated as the 16th president of the United States on March 4th. The MY HERO Project | Library. Lincoln: The Biography of a Writer. By Fred Kaplan. Publisher: HarperCollins Publishers, October 2008.Â Like the other great canonical writers of American literature" a status he is gradually attaining" Lincoln had a literary career that is inseparable from his life story. An admirer and avid reader of Burns, Byron, Shakespeare, and the Old Testament, Lincoln was the most literary of our presidents. His views on love, liberty, and human nature were shaped by his reading and knowledge of literature. Since Lincoln, no president has written his own words and addressed his audience with equal and enduring effectiveness.

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