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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? | 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."  |
| Why did Abraham Lincoln hesitate to speak of his early life? What did he learn from those experiences in his early life? | 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.  |
| It was 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.  |
| 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?  | Lincoln’s education was limited due to several reasons: transiency, illiterate parents, and lack of formal instruction. The story 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. 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?  | 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.” 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.  | 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.” 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?  | 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.” 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?  | The events that followed after Lincoln left New Salem was that “one of four men to be elected to the Illinois House of Representatives” 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.  |