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CP English 12

*Lincoln: A Photo biography*

1. “His friends agreed that he was one of the most ambitious people they had ever known” (author 4)

At the beginning of the book, the author told us generally who Lincoln was. Though he seemed like a common man, but he was ambitious.

Lincoln struggled hard to rise above his log cabin origins, and he finally became president. One of the reasons he could be so successful was that he had a dream or ambition which directed his life. So some great people like Lincoln had desire to become great when they were young.

1. “His greatest mission was to accomplish two things: first, to save his country from dismemberment and ruin; and, second, to free his country from the great crime of slavery… taking him for all in all, measuring the tremendous magnitude of the work before him, considering the necessary means to ends, and surveying the end from the beginning, infinite wisdom has seldom sent any man into this world better fitted for his mission than Abraham Lincoln.” (Frederick Douglass 5)

Several years after Civil War, this is told by Frederick Douglass, who was his rival in politics for many years. “No black leader was more critical of Lincoln than the fiery abolitionist writer and editor Frederick Douglass.(5)” But then he changed his mind and became to admire Lincoln.

First, this sentence described Lincoln’s missions and also achievements: saved his country from dismemberment and freed his country from slavery. Second, it was hard to change a rival into

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the person who admired you, but Lincoln made it! We could see that Lincoln was charm and highly respected.

1. “It is a short piece of folly to attempt to make anything out of my early life. It can all be condensed into a simple sentence, and that sentence you will find in Gray’s Elegy---‘the short and simple annals of the poor.’ That’s my life, and that’s all you and anyone else can make out of it.”(Lincoln 7)

Lincoln himself summarized his early life: simple and poor, and told us his feelings about early life: “anyone else can make out of it.”

No one can choose their family and growing circumstance, but everyone can make our life better even great by putting our effort to improve ourselves. External factors are not barriers to success at this point.

1. “I never saw Abe after he was twelve that he didn’t have a book in his hand or in his pocket. It didn’t seem natural to see a feller read like that.”(Dennis Hanks 14)

Dennis Hanks, one of his friends, described him.

Lincoln didn’t have formal education, but he could still be the president. The reason was that he read a lot himself. No formal education was one of the barriers on his way to success, but great people could always get over these difficulties by training themselves and improving themselves.

1. “Lincoln decided to study entirely on his own. He studied for nearly three years before passing his exams and being admitted to practice on March 1, 1837.”(author 24)

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After he was elected as state lawmaker, Lincoln still had to earn a living. “In those days, Illinois lawmakers were paid three dollars a day to cover their expenses, but only when the legislature was in session”(34). After one of his friends suggested him to be a lawyer, he said this.

Hardships in life can lead us to a better life and great people are also created by hardships. If there was enough money for Lincoln to have a good life, would he take up the study of law and gradually become president? Choosing to overcome obstacles is one of the qualities of great people.

1. “I was losing interest in politics, when the repeal of the Missouri Compromise aroused me again.” (Lincoln 50)

Lincoln’s old political rival, Stephen Douglas, introduced The Kansas-Nebraska Act, which overturned the Missouri Compromise. The compromise was to hold slavery in check. Lincoln was aroused by this event because he wanted to repeal slavery.

Lincoln was not interested in Politics, but he could still go so far on this road. The reason was that he had a strong feeling about freeing slaves. This belief kept him going. So the difference between winning and losing is not a lack in strength, not a lack in knowledge, but rather a lack in will.

1. “During the darkest moment of the war, Lincoln was able to throw off his fits of despair in the company of his two boys.”(author 80)

This sentence described that Lincoln could relief himself during the darkest moment. He was not only good in politics, but also good as a human being and a father.

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It was hard to relief ourselves from pressure, but Lincoln could do it! He could handle life and work well.

1. “I am a slow walker, but I never walk backward.”(Lincoln 93)

This sentence described Lincoln’s persistence to emancipation of slaves. Once the goal had been set, Lincoln would walk until he reached the goal. Because of the emancipation, he was criticized and satirized. However, no matter what happened, he never stopped. It was this persistence in heart made him strong enough to keep completing his goal.

1. “In all my interviews with Mr. Lincoln, I was impressed with his entire freedom from popular prejudice against the colored race. He was the first great man that I talked with in the United Stated freely, who in no single instance reminded me of the difference between himself and myself, of the difference of color, and I thought that all the more remarkable because he came from a state where there were black laws.” (Frederick Douglass 103)

“Being a slave, Frederick Douglass escaped to freedom and became the most influential black leader of his time (104)”. “Though he differed with Lincoln on many issues, he had come to respect the president and like him personally (102)”.

“The best way eliminating an enemy is to be friend with him”. Lincoln had this charm to change an enemy into friend. And he could jump out of the discrimination towards Black and fight for their freedom, which would be respected by everyone.

1. “All those who believe that Slavery weakens America’s power and tarnishes your good name throughout the world, and who regard the restoration of your Union as a thing to be desired…

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are heartily longing for the reelection of Mr. Lincoln… they think they have observed in his career a grand simplicity of purpose and a patriotism which knows no change and does not falter.”(Bright 130)

Shortly before the presidential election of 1864, Bright wrote to the American newspaper publisher Horace Greeley to support Lincoln.

As the president, Lincoln focused on two simple things: to restore the union and to free the slaves, he used all his efforts to achieve that and never stopped. People trusted him and he deserved to be American president.

Summary:

From a backwoods boy to American president was a long way, it was not hard to imagine how much obstacles Lincoln had ever met. He didn’t have formal education; his couldn’t speak Standard English; he was in deep debt……but he got over all of these difficulties and made great achievement after becoming president. By restoring union and freeing slaves, he left a better world behind him. He was a great man and he will be remembered by all of us for not only for his achievements but also for his spirit which encourage everyone to keep going.