

## Project: Essay: Abraham Lincoln: Embodiment of an Ideal

Write an essay that answers the question: “What American ideal(s) does Abraham Lincoln embody?”

Use Lincoln’s “A House Divided” speech, Walt Whitman’s “O Captain! My Captain!” poem, and Jane Addams’s “Influence of Lincoln” memoir chapter.

### Abraham Lincoln and Ideals

In his “A House Divided” speech, Abraham Lincoln makes an argument against the political actions of others concerning the issue of a state’s right to allow or exclude slavery. His argument is based on his idealism—his practice of living according to universal principles. What are those ideals?

Reread Lincoln’s speech. Look for where he touches on ideals, and identify what those ideals are.

[Click here](#) to read “A House Divided.”

### Poetry and Ideals

Poets often embody ideals in their poems, not through writing sentences about them, but in vivid, concrete symbols in the words they use. Keep this in mind when rereading Walt Whitman’s “O Captain! My Captain!”

[Click here](#) to reread the second chapter of *Twenty Years at Hull-House*, by Jane Addams, titled “Influence of Lincoln.”

## Pre-Writing Activity:

“A House Divided”

- What American Ideals are presented?
- How does Lincoln embody them?

“O Captain! My Captain!”

- What American Ideals are presented?
- How does Lincoln embody them?

“Hull House”

- What American Ideals are presented?
- How does Lincoln embody them?

## Sample Outline

### Introduction-

Give some background about President Lincoln. Thesis: President Abraham Lincoln embodies the American ideals of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

### Body Paragraphs:

Lincoln embodies the ideal(s) of \_\_\_\_\_ in his "A House Divided" Speech.  
-Give and explain examples (at least 3?) of how he connects to this ideal in this speech.

Lincoln embodies the ideal(s) of \_\_\_\_\_ in the "O Captain! My Captain!" poem.  
-Give and explain examples (at least 3?) of how he connects to this ideal in this poem.

Lincoln embodies the ideal(s) of \_\_\_\_\_ in the "Hull House" memoir.  
-Give and explain examples (at least 3?) of how he connects to this ideal in this memoir.

### Conclusion:

Explain what you learned from Lincoln and these American Ideals that you can apply to your life.