

BOOK STATS

Grade Level Equivalent: 6–8

Ages: 11+

Lexile Measure: 980L

Pages: 196

Genre: Biography, Informational

Subject/Theme: Primary Sources, Abraham Lincoln, the Presidency

Common Core Standards	Reading	Writing	Listening & Speaking	Language
Grade 6	RI.6.3, RI.6.4, RI.6.5, RI.6.6	W.6.3, W.6.7	SL.6.1, SL.6.2	L.6.4, L.6.6
Grade 7	RI.7.3, RI.7.4, RI.7.5, RI.7.6	W.7.3, W.7.7	SL.7.1, SL.7.2	L.7.4, L.7.6
Grade 8	RI.8.3, RI.8.4, RI.8.5, RI.8.6	W.8.3, W.8.7	SL.8.1, SL.8.2	L.8.4, L.8.6

Teaching the Book

This fast-paced thriller tells the story of the pursuit and capture of John Wilkes Booth after he assassinates President Abraham Lincoln. The book provides an opportunity to teach the use of primary sources in historical research and the skill of making connections in a sequence of events. Activities engage students in mapping, researching photographs, and taking a virtual tour of Ford's Theater.

Theme Focus: Primary Sources

Comprehension Focus: Sequence of Events

Language Focus: Word Families

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Swanson is the Edgar Award–winning author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Manhunt: The 12-Day Chase for Lincoln's Killer*. Swanson was born on Lincoln's birthday. "My fascination with our sixteenth president began when I was a young boy," Swanson explains. "On my tenth birthday, my grandmother gave me an unusual present: an engraving of the Derringer pistol John Wilkes Booth used to assassinate Abraham Lincoln, framed by a newspaper article published on the day after the assassination . . . I knew I had to find the rest of the story."

Swanson lives in Washington, D.C., with his wife and two sons. He serves on the advisory council of the Ford's Theater Society, and is a member of the advisory committee of the national Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission. For more information about him, visit <http://www.jameslswanson.com/> For an interview with the author, visit <http://bit.ly/RCP1ld>.

OVERVIEW

Book Summary

"This story is true. All the characters are real and were alive during the great manhunt of April 1865." With those words, James Swanson begins his account of the twelve days that followed the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. As Swanson notes, what happened "is far too incredible to have been made up."

Based on the author's best-selling adult book *Manhunt: The 12-Day Chase for Lincoln's Killer*, this version for young readers tells the heart-pounding narrative of the assassination of President Lincoln and the escape of John Wilkes Booth and his co-conspirators. Beginning in Washington, D.C., the action shifts to the swamps, rivers, forests, and fields of Maryland and Virginia as Booth tries to reach sanctuary in the states of the defeated Confederacy. Swanson tells what happened, day-by-day, in the country's capital stunned by Lincoln's death, and in the hideouts of the assassins. The text is supported by reproductions of a variety of primary sources from the time including photographs, letters, newspapers, pamphlets, and engravings. The book is not only a compelling read for students but also an excellent example of historical scholarship.

Get Ready to Read

Pre-Reading Activities

The Gun That Killed Lincoln Engage students in the author’s compelling story about why he wrote this best-selling book. Project the print of Booth’s Derringer pistol, framed by a newspaper of the time, onto a whiteboard or screen. Read aloud from the beginning pages of the book to learn why James L. Swanson was captivated by the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.

Preview Primary Sources Read aloud the paragraph above the author’s photo beginning, “All this is true.” Explain that James Swanson researched primary sources to write the book. These are sources of information that provide first-hand accounts or direct evidence concerning Lincoln’s assassination. Primary sources are created by witnesses or recorders who actually experienced the event or the manhunt of John Wilkes Booth. Ask students to go through the book to find the pages that show photographs or written records that the author used as primary sources. The sources include manuscripts, transcripts, documents, engravings, pamphlets, and photographs.

STORIA ENRICHMENTS

This Storia e-book has the following enrichments to enhance students’ comprehension of the book.

- Author Video



BIG QUESTION

Critical Thinking Ask students to think about this question as they read. Write the question on chart paper or the whiteboard.

Did John Wilkes Booth accomplish his goal?

Vocabulary

Word Families Introduce students to the words below that occur frequently in the description of Lincoln’s assassination. Explain that each word belongs to a word family that includes other words with the same base word. These other words have different meanings determined by the addition of word endings or affixes. Model how word endings change the meanings of the words *assassinate*, *assassination*, and *assassin*. Remind students to look for clues in the text for word meanings as they read.

Use **Resource #1: Vocabulary Cards** on page 7 and distribute copies to students.

conspirator (p. 8)	assassinate (p. 26)
avenge (p. 43)	accomplice (p. 73)
investigate (p. 81)	detective (p. 91)
sympathizer (p. 96)	execution (p. 187)

As You Read

Reading the Book

Modeled Reading Read aloud to students from pages titled “From 1801 Through 1805” found in the beginning pages of the book. Encourage students to ask questions to clarify their understanding. Consider reading aloud the “Prologue” on pages 1–8 that introduces the two main historical figures in the book.

Independent Reading Guide students who can read this book independently to pace their reading by chunking the book into three to six reading sessions, depending on the allotted reading time per session. Prompt students to work with partners at the end of a section by asking clarifying questions and sharing reactions about the text.

Comprehension Focus

Sequence of Events Remind students that the book covers only 12 days in the history of the United States. The author goes deep into the events of each day to tell the story of the manhunt that led to the apprehension of Lincoln’s assassin. The events of each day are told in the sequence, or order in time,

that they happened. Explain that it is important to identify the relationship of events that follow one another to see why and how they happened.

Use **Resource #2: Sequence of Events** to help students identify the relationship between the historical events in the book. Pass out copies of the organizer and model for students how to identify the connection between the first and second event on the night of the assassination.

Have students volunteer the connections between the remaining sequence of events.

Model: This sequence of events begins with Booth entering the outer part of Lincoln's theater box. The next event is that he waits for the right moment to shoot Lincoln. What is the connection between these events? I know Booth is able to take his time and wait because there is no one guarding the President! Booth even puts a rod through the doors to keep other people out of the box.

After You Read

Questions to Discuss

Lead students in a discussion of these focus story elements.

1. Primary Sources What different kinds of information are given by a diary entry and a newspaper article? (*The diary entry has more personal information, including emotions; the newspaper article contains facts.*) Which do you think is a better historical source? (*Answers will vary.*)

2. Sequence of Events How might the sequence of events been changed if John Wilkes Booth had not broken his leg? (*He may have been able to move more quickly and escape into the South before being caught.*)

3. Word Families What did John Wilkes Booth decide about how he wanted to die? Answer using the word family for *execute*. (*He decided he wanted to die right away rather than be **executed** by hanging. He did not want his **execution** to be a public spectacle.*)

Questions to Share

Encourage students to share their responses with a partner or small group.

1. Text to Self If you had been alive at the time of Lincoln's assassination, how do you think you would have felt? How would you have felt about John Wilkes Booth? How would you have felt about his end? (*Answers will vary.*)

2. Text to World What historical event which occurred in your lifetime reminds you of something that happened in *Chasing Lincoln's Killer*? How are they the same and different? (*Answers will vary.*)

WORDS TO KNOW

Word Families

Give students the following meanings for the vocabulary words, one at a time. Have them hold up the vocabulary card that matches each meaning. Then discuss the other words that belong to that word family and what they mean.

1. to murder someone, often an important or famous person (*assassinate, assassination, assassin*)
2. to inflict punishment on behalf of someone (*avenge, avenger, vengeance*)
3. member of a group planning an illegal act (*conspirator, conspire, conspiracy*)
4. to search for evidence of a crime (*detect, detection, detective*)
5. to put to death (*execute, execution, executioner*)
6. to carry out an inquiry or questioning (*investigate, investigation, investigator*)
7. to be of the same opinion (*sympathize, sympathy, sympathizer*)
8. someone who helps a wrongdoer (*accomplice, accomplish, accomplishment*)

3. Text to Text Compare *Chasing Lincoln's Killer* with your history books in school. Describe two ways that they are different. (*Answers will vary.*)

Extension Activities

Reading/Writing Connection

Rewrite History Ask students to use their imaginations to change one historical event that would save Abraham Lincoln's life from John Wilkes Booth's assassination. Encourage students to reread the assassination scene beginning on page 35. Have them use Swanson's style of writing and change one circumstance that would prevent the assassination. Encourage students to exchange papers to share their historical revisions, or project responses and share several examples on the whiteboard.

Don't forget the



BIG QUESTION

Critical Thinking Give each student an opportunity to answer the big question. Encourage students to support their answers with details and evidence from the text. Tell them there is no one right answer.

Did John Wilkes Booth accomplish his goal?

Content Area Connections

Geography **The Assassin's Route** On the last page of the book, a drawing shows the route that John Wilkes Booth traveled on for 12 days after the assassination. Challenge students to trace the same route on a contemporary map of the area or using Google Maps. Point out that names of places have changed, but the geography of the Potomac River and its environs remains more or less the same.

Social Studies **Primary Sources** Ask students to choose ten primary sources that would tell about their lives for a future generation. Remind students that a primary source includes items such as videos, photographs, songs, letters, clothing, and newspaper articles. After they choose the ten primary sources, ask students to explain what information the sources reveal.

History **A Virtual Tour of Ford's Theater** Guide students to <http://bit.ly/SyUYFF> to access a virtual tour of Ford's Theater. It includes photos of the theater today as well as many artifacts and primary sources from the time of President Lincoln's assassination.

Arts **Slideshow of Abraham Lincoln** Guide students to <http://1.usa.gov/Upp1Pg>, to view a slideshow of famous photographs on the Library of Congress website. Encourage them to take notes about the photos from the descriptions they can access by clicking the button in the upper right hand corner. Then have students present the slideshow to the rest of the class while narrating the photos from their notes.

BIG ACTIVITY

A Timeline of the Manhunt Have the class or group create an illustrated time line of the important events in the 12 days of the assassination and manhunt. Divide students into pairs or groups and provide copies of the **Big Activity: A Timeline of the Manhunt**. Assign each pair or group one of the 12 days. Ask students to illustrate and describe the events of the day including the actions in Washington and the manhunters as well as the actions of Booth and his co-conspirators. Have students combine their organizers into a 12-day visual timeline of the events.

Name: _____ Date: _____

BIG ACTIVITY: A Timeline of the Manhunt

Fill in the main actions for your assigned day. Draw visuals of the primary sources.

DAY _____

Action in Washington, D.C. or with man hunters:

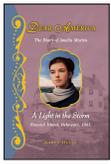
Visual:

Action with John Wilkes Booth or co-conspirators:

READ MORE AND LEARN MORE

Use these books and other resources to expand your students' study of the book or theme.

Theme Connections



Dear America: A Light in the Storm

Karen Hesse

Ages: 9–13

Grades: 4–7

Lexile Level: 850L

Pages: 208

Guided Reading Level: T

It's 1861, the first year of the Civil War, and Amelia helps her family run a lighthouse off the coast of Delaware, a state wedged between the warring North and South. Her father used to command his own ship, but he was stripped of its command for knowingly transporting a rebel slave. Now, Mother and Father argue constantly—and Amelia feels that only she can light the way for her family.

Available as a Storia e-book



The Mostly True Adventures of Homer P. Figg

Rodman Philbrick

Ages: 11–13

Grades: 5–7

Lexile Level: 950L

Pages: 240

Guided Reading Level: X

Homer P. Figg's beloved older brother, Harold, is illegally sold into the Union Army by their ruthless guardian. Now Homer must run away from his wretched Maine home to follow his brother into the thick of the Civil War and save him! Award-winning novelist Rodman Philbrick recreates the turbulent times of the Civil War through the observant eyes of a backwoods boy who is both courageous and funny—and always willing to stretch the truth.

Available as a Storia e-book



Antarctica

Walter Dean Myers

Ages: 11–14

Grades: 6–8

Lexile Level: 1100L

Pages: 144

Exploring the treacherous South Pole was

never easy, but a few brave men, such as James Cook, Richard Byrd, and Ernest Shackleton, were determined to do it. The author describes their journeys in riveting detail and really helps the reader understand the courage it took to face such unforgiving conditions. The book also explains the contributions these expeditions made to science. Later, it goes on to look at Antarctica as it is today and what the land means to the rest of the world. Adventure and science lovers will find much to enjoy in this dramatic and fascinating look at this beautiful but brutal place.

Available as a Storia e-book



Ten True Tales: World War II Heroes

Alan Zullo

Ages: 11–14

Grades: 6–9

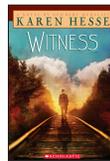
Lexile Level: 850L

Pages: 160

Guided Reading Level: Z

During World War II, everyday citizens fought to protect and preserve the values that made America great. Many of them found incredible courage they didn't know they had—in firefights in the bombed-out fields of France, in dogfights over the flak-filled skies of Belgium, and in hand-to-hand combat on the bloody beaches of Okinawa.

Available as a Storia e-book



Witness

Karen Hesse

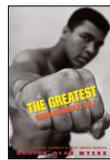
Ages: 11–14

Grades: 6–9

Guided Reading Level: W **Pages:** 288

Witness tells the story of the Ku Klux Klan's attempt to recruit members in a small Vermont town in 1924. The pressure builds in the small community, until it finally erupts in shocking violence. The voices of 11 town residents speak directly to the reader about hate and love, violence and peace, terror and kindness; they illuminate the full range of human strengths and weaknesses in one small town.

Available as a Storia e-book



The Greatest: Muhammad Ali

Walter Dean Myers

Ages: 12–15

Grades: 6–10

Lexile Level: 1030L

Pages: 192

Guided Reading Level: T

Muhammad Ali is known not only for his bold personality and amazing skills in the boxing ring, but also for the way he took a stand against injustice and racism at great personal cost. This book tells the amazing story of his life—from his childhood in Louisville, Kentucky, through his illustrious career as the greatest boxer in the world, all the way up to his courageous struggle with Parkinson's disease in his older years. **Available as a Storia e-book**

Go to <http://teacher.scholastic.com/reading-resources/> to find PDF versions of the Storia teacher guides and links to purchase the related books.

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Name: _____ Date: _____

RESOURCE #2: Sequence of Events

Think about how each of these events from the night of the assassination is connected with the next. Describe the connection in the space between events.

EVENT	John Wilkes Booth enters the outer vestibule of the President's box at Ford's Theater.
Connection	
EVENT	Booth waits in the darkness and then shoots Lincoln at a certain moment in the play.
Connection	
EVENT	Major Rathbone jumps up to defend Lincoln.
Connection	
EVENT	Booth breaks his leg as he jumps from the President's box.