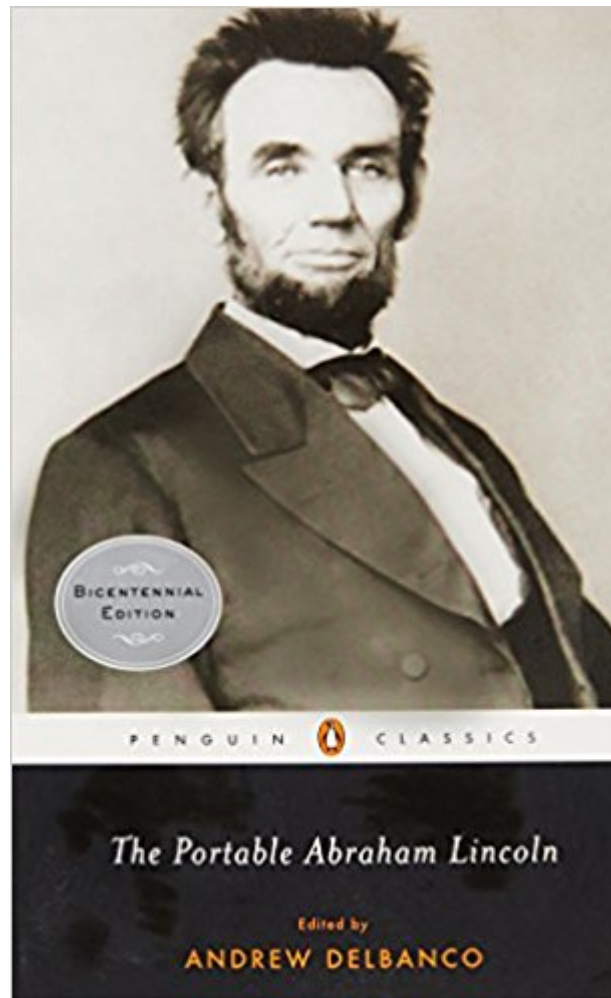




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# The Portable Abraham Lincoln (Penguin Classics)



## Synopsis

Celebrate the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth with this new edition of his greatest speeches and writings. Abraham Lincoln endowed the American language with a vigor and moral energy that has all but disappeared from today's public rhetoric. Lincoln's writings are testaments of our history, windows into his enigmatic personality, and resonant examples of the writer's art. The Portable Abraham Lincoln contains the great public speeches - the first debate with Stephen Douglas, the "House Divided" speech, the Gettysburg Address, the Second Inaugural Address - along with less familiar letters and memoranda that chart Lincoln's political career, his evolving stand against slavery, and his day-to-day conduct of the Civil War. This edition includes a revised introduction, updated notes on the text, a chronology of Lincoln's life, and four new selections of his writing. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This abbreviated edition of Lincoln speeches, letters, and notes brings the man ready to hand.

Drawn from the fuller Library of America collection (1989), this collection shows Lincoln at work in

law, politics, and war. All the great Lincoln works are here, with the added bonus of several personal memos that show Lincoln's humor. Reviled in life but revered in death, Lincoln has become the singlemost important American public writer: his words recalling those "mystic chords of memory" that bind Americans to the Declaration of Independence as the seedbed for all definitions of freedom ring true today in a post-Cold War World. Larger libraries will prefer the fuller Lincoln editions for their shelves, and general readers will find much the same fare in the recent collection, *Lincoln on Democracy* ( LJ 10/15/91), compiled by Mario Cuomo, but Delbanco's intelligent selection will also help us "get right with Lincoln" and appreciate how the prairie lawyer became the poet of American democracy.- Randall M. Miller, St. Joseph's Univ., PhiladelphiaCopyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"[An] excellent, thoughtfully presented selection . . . The ironic intelligence and sharp sense of purpose, the wit, lucidity, and emotional force come through with an undiminished and chastening power to make us think and feel." -Ric Burns, co-producer of PBS's *The Civil War*

Pretty much an essential for any presidential or Lincoln library. There's much more to say about Lincoln but you have to leave something out to make it more "portable."

Good price and condition.

How could a collection of Abraham Lincoln's writings fail to please anyone except Jeff Davis and his admirers? My only criticism is that it is not a longer book.

Great book I had to read it for a class.

A fine collection of Lincoln's writings. He's overshadowed too often by his myth, but the reader can meet Lincoln on the page. Excellent selection.

There are several anthologies of selections from Abraham Lincoln's writings available. But *The Portable Lincoln* is my favorite among them. My copy is dog-eared, underlined, and scribbled on to such an extent that it now looks quite shabby. But this is as much a tribute to the wisdom of Lincoln's words and the judicious editorship of Andrew Delbanco as it is a sad monument to my hard treatment of books. There are two main reasons why I find *The Portable Lincoln* so

pleasing. First, editor Delbanco (who's best known for his insightful work on American Puritans) prefaces the collection with an elegant and informative intellectual biography of Lincoln that prepares the way for a more informed reading of the selections. He also provides a useful chronology of Lincoln's life, and he introduces each of the book's six sections with prefatory remarks that put the selections in context. Second, the selections themselves are carefully chosen and genuinely representative of Lincoln's thoughts in each of the six periods of his life from which they're drawn: his early years up to 1850; the pivotal "republican" years of 1854-1859; the presidential campaign, 1860; the early days of the war, 1860-1861; Lincoln the war president, late 1861-1864; and the reflective Lincoln, 1864-1865. Within each section are to be found exactly what one wants in a collection such as this: for example, Lincoln's early Address to the Springfield Young Men's Lyceum; his Handbill Replying to Charges of Infidelity; his House Divided speech; the first (and possibly best) Lincoln-Douglas Debate; the not-so-good Lecture on Discoveries and Inventions; the Cooper Institute speech; the too-neglected great First Inaugural and the justly-praised Second; the July 4 Message to Congress in Special Session; the Final Emancipation Proclamation; and assorted letters, private memoranda, and speeches. Taken together, these selections give the finest overall impression of Lincoln the private man, politician, thinker, and statesman that one's likely to glean from reading his own words. I might add that even long-time readers of Lincoln are likely to find one or two pleasant surprises in this collection. Let me mention but one. Everybody's familiar with Lincoln's barbed quip, when McClellan failed to pursue Lee after Antietam, that he'd like to borrow the army if McClellan wasn't going to use it. But Delbanco quotes an even more barbed (and delicious!) zinger from Lincoln to McClellan, written on 24 October 1862: "I have just read your despatch about sore tongued and fatigued [sic] horses. Will you pardon me for asking what the horses of your army have done since the battle of Antietam that fatigue anything?" (p. 244) Ouch!! Highly recommended, not only for its historical interest but because of the fact, which becomes more obvious to me each time I reread Lincoln, that his words are just as timely today as they were 150 years ago. \_\_\_\_\_ \* From Lincoln's First Inaugural Address, p. 203.

This collection of documents in a sense tells the life-story of Lincoln. It consists primarily of letters but also contains communications of other kinds, including his great speeches. Lincoln's immense power with language, the depth of his feeling and insight, his quiet humor and his great imaginative sympathy are all on display here. Also of course his political wisdom, his detailed knowledge of local and national political affairs, his struggle in conducting the great Civil War. There are certain people it simply an honor and uplifting to be in the presence of. Lincoln is such a person, and so these

words of his inform and most often, inspire.

The Portable Abraham Lincoln is just that, a small book packed with nothing but Lincoln's words and ideas, from the famous debates with Stephen Douglas to his immortal 2nd Inaugural Address. Mixed throughout the speeches are letters, both public and private, which reveal his inner thoughts and animating philosophy. Included is his short and moving letter to Mrs. Lydia Bixby, featured in the movie Saving Private Ryan, which is the most eloquent expression of patriotic grief I have ever read. The book is organized in themes, from his emergence of a politician to his writings as Chief Executive and as Commander-in-Chief, and ending up with Fate. This book is for people who want to go beyond the soundbytes featured in documentaries; it places those famous phrases in the context of the entire speech and the commentary is kept to a minimum, showing respect for the reader.

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