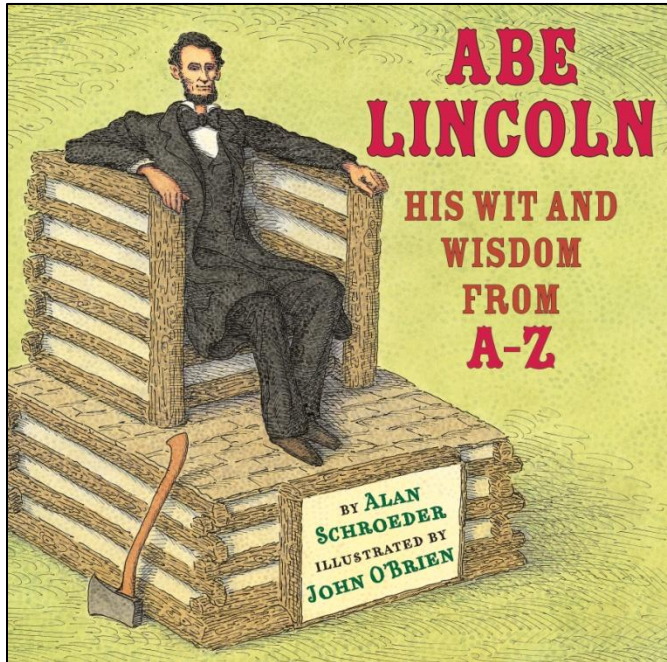


Abe Lincoln

His Wit and Wisdom from A-Z



Ages 6-10 • \$17.95 • 978-0-8234-2420-7 • E-book available

A conversation with illustrator **John O'Brien**

Abe Lincoln is known for his many memorable adages. As the sixteenth president he needed all the wisdom he could muster to guide the country through the Civil War, preserve the union and end slavery. This nontraditional tribute to the president who brought the homespun humor of his humble beginnings to the White House uses the alphabet to organize a wealth of information about his life and accomplishments.

John, tell us about your new book, ABE LINCOLN: His Wit and Wisdom from A-Z.

ABE LINCOLN: His Wit and Wisdom from A-Z was a follow-up to another Alan Schroeder book that I illustrated called BEN FRANKLIN: His Wit and Wisdom from A-Z. It was a perfect fit for my style of illustrating, where there's lots of material to draw from and contribute to my brand of humor. As with BEN FRANKLIN, I laid out the pages in an almanac-like format so that I could fit plenty of material in.

In a starred review, Kirkus Reviews said your illustrations "lend the tableaux enormous flair, humor and zing. Comical tiny details are mischievous and clever." Can you speak about your creative process and how you went about illustrating this book?

I'm an illustrator/cartoonist. From the cartoonist side, I sift through the text over and over until I find an element that I can play on that's humorous or droll. This always helps to offer a little comic relief to things that might seem too technical or serious. From the illustrator side, I try to project these ideas as simply and clearly as possible.

Did you do any research or special work to make sure your illustrations were accurate according to historical details?

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I try to research everything, particularly when dealing with history. I have a ton of research books that I surround myself with while I'm working. I always use the library. I also dig up image references on the Internet.

What were some of your favorite letters to draw illustrations for in this book?

J, O and *B* were my favorite letters to work with, or maybe they're my favorite because they're my initials.

When did you decide you wanted to become an illustrator?

I was always drawing as a kid, even in class sometimes when I should have been paying better attention. By the time I was almost done with high school, I realized that since drawing was what I did best, I should pursue a career as an artist, so I went to Philadelphia College of Art and studied illustration.

What advice would you give to young illustrators?

My advice to future illustrators is to draw all the time and look at lots of great art and artists that you like. It will rub off.



Credit: Hannah Hoogerwoerd

JOHN O'BRIEN's cartoons appear in the *New Yorker* and other publications. He lives in New Jersey.

Praise for *Abe Lincoln: His Wit and Wisdom from A-Z*

★ "This team goes beyond good; they excel at making history real, enjoyable and memorable."
— *Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

"An amusing and educational portrait of Honest Abe." — *Publishers Weekly*

"Each page is brimming with text and drawings, and readers are sure to linger over the details."
— *School Library Journal*

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