

WAYS TO PUBLICIZE ABE TO YOUR STUDENTS & STAFF

Booktalks
Student skits
Student reviews of Abe titles
Posters
Displays
Bookmarks
Annotated lists of nominees
Flyers
T-shirts
PA announcements
Ads/articles in school and local newspapers
Segments on school wide radio/TV and/or local cable TV
School/library websites
Cooperation with your public library youth services dept.
Cooperation with classroom teachers to incorporate Abe reading into assignments, extra credit, etc.
Abe book discussion groups
Student poster/bookmark/T-shirt design contests
Competition between classes/grades for highest Abe participation
Awards for participation at various levels (certificates, posters, T-shirts and book bags, copies of Abe titles, gift cards – possibly donated -- from local bookstores or other businesses, etc.)
Drawing for student participant(s) to attend the awards presentation at the ISLMA conference

Below are some ideas sent in by Abe participants which you might wish to use or adapt for your own students. (PLEASE NOTE THAT SOME OF THESE IDEAS WERE SENT TO US WHEN STUDENTS WERE REQUIRED TO READ 5 BOOKS TO VOTE. NOW THAT ONLY 4 BOOKS ARE REQUIRED, YOU MAY WISH TO ADJUST SOME OF THESE METHODS ACCORDINGLY.)

Read Five, Read Ten, Read All 22

We have three evaluation forms. One allows you to read five titles and vote. Another form is filled out by those who have already filled out the first, but have now read 10 of the titles. These students may re-vote (we destroy their first ballot). The last form is filled out by students who have filled out the first two, but now have read all 22. Again they

may re-vote (and again, previous ballots are destroyed). We schedule three lunches during the school year. We bring food in from a different (and better) place each time. Students who only read five and vote once only get lunch once, but students who want to keep reading and re-voting may get lunch up to three times. The ballots ask why students chose the book they did. These ballots are posted on our ALHSBA display.

Gayl Smith
Waubonsie Valley H.S.

Read-a-Lincoln, Win-a-Lincoln

Batavia High School's promotion focused on the theme, "**Read-a-Lincoln, Win-a-Lincoln**" and featured a \$5 bill on bookmarks, displays, and entry forms. Every time someone read a Lincoln nominee, the student could complete a very brief review of the book by giving it a rating of one 1 to 4 stars and by writing a one or two sentence review. We then had weekly drawings during the daily announcements for \$5 bills and \$5 gift certificates to the coffee shop at the Batavia Public Library.

This promotion sparked curiosity about the Lincolns and provided incentives for students who read even one of the Lincoln nominees.

Daniel Russo
LRC Director
Batavia High School
Batavia, IL 60510

Pizza Party

We did have a pizza party for all the registered Abe readers, as well as one for the class with the most registered Abe readers (administration paid for the food!).

April Johns, Librarian
Larkin High School
Elgin, IL

I just checked the circulation records here and find that no one from our school of 800+ yet qualifies to vote for the winner. One student has read four of the titles and most of the others have read only one or two. What kind of interest in the titles on the list have students from other schools shown? I have done promotions: book displays and bulletin boards in the library, a nice bulletin board display near the cafeteria and twice monthly drawings for a \$5.00 bill. Also made flyers to put in the English classrooms. Now I am wondering what has been successful elsewhere in promoting our book list.

Pat Martin, Library Media Specialist Woodruff High School 1800 NE Perry Ave. Peoria, IL 61603-3461

We didn't have great participation for voting purposes but all the kids (voters and nonvoters alike) love the books on the list. We kept the books on a special shelf with Abe stickers on the spine and an award nominee poster from Follett above it. For an activity, we held "Booked for Breakfast" discussion sessions on the first Thursday of each month before school. Our principal paid for the doughnuts, turnovers, etc. and we supplied the cocoa, coffee, tea, and milk. The Monday-Wednesday before the breakfast session, I hung a homemade poster on the library door as a reminder. It was a large photo of Pres. Lincoln with a cartoon "word balloon" that read "My fellow Americans, if Mr. Hickey [the principal] is buying breakfast, I'll be there!" It got a few chuckles and students began to recognize it each month. I had anywhere from 6-15 kids at these sessions. If students attended 3 breakfasts and read 10 books, they earned a trip to the Abe Lincoln Museum and Presidential Library in Springfield which I am now in the process of arranging. The early morning sessions were worthwhile for me because we discussed the books in a very casual atmosphere and I gleaned so much information about what they want from a library collection ("More manga, please!"). Keep up the good work. If you need a student from southern Illinois on the selection committee, drop me an e-mail. I had a student go last May and she loved the experience.

Janet Jenkins, Robinson High School, Robinson, IL

I, too, think maybe reading five books is too much. I don't really think that, but I think if it was lowered to three, we would have more participants. Our students are pretty overwhelmed w school, jobs, etc. There are so many things competing for their attention. I do appreciate all the work the committee has done to get this program going. Thank you!

Deb Young District Librarian Coordinator, Roanoke-Benson High School 208 W. High St. Roanoke, IL 61561

I have breakfast for everyone who reads the required number of books for Abe or Read for a Lifetime. I read a Harris Poll (I think it was Harris) that said the the two most common characteristics of honor roll students are: they eat breakfast everyday and they read for enjoyment. So I tell the kids if they read for enjoyment I'll give them breakfast. I usually get everything donated; bagels, donuts, fruit, muffins, etc. I have also started book discussion groups using these books. We meet once a month, the kids pick the books, they bring their lunch, and I make brownies. We've had some pretty good groups. I also have a drawing for prizes at the breakfast and a drawing for a student to have a READ poster made holding their favorite book from the list. They can pose in a uniform

if they want. I have a tennis player, a track athlete, a girl from our hip-hop squad. I love to get a band member or cheerleader. Andrea Banicki, Danville H.S., Danville

My co-librarian and I worked on this award program all year! We have a minimum of 3 copies of all the titles, and 5 or 6 on some of the more popular titles. We made an effort to read most all of the books ourselves so we are familiar with the genres, storylines, reading levels, etc. We have 50 "registered" readers, and of those, 33 are eligible to vote. Our numbers are up from last year, and we expect to grow again next year! We cribbed ideas from lots of schools to get our promotion together. Our "Abe" books are prominently displayed near the check out counter and we will encourage browsers, explain the program, and do mini-book talks right then and there to interested students. We happen to use stickers with the ALA "L" [reading a book] logo to designate the Abe books. It helps insure those books are always returned to the display rather than the shelves. Our teachers have been very supportive of the program. Most offer extra credit for reading "Abe" books and well as attending our book discussions (see below). At the beginning of the school year we spent a few minutes in every English class promoting the program and doing speed book talks on a few titles that we had with us, tailored to the age group. We encouraged whole classes to read by offering a whole class pizza party to the group with the most readers who had finished the 5 needed to vote. Most of readers are coming from 3 classes that got into the competition. The competition is great! When kids start reading, we encouraged them to register by filling out a review sheet with their name, English teacher and class period as well as the name of the book and what they thought of it. This way we keep track of who they are, and they keep track of their opinions about the books. We send out encouraging notes to keep them reading, and "come check out books for break" notes at Winter break. In January and February we hosted informal after school book discussions on three of the books from the list * one book per session. We advertised these with the teachers and to the students we knew (from our registration book) read the book. Of course, we had food to go with the lively discussions. Early Feb. we send invitations to an after school voting party with food and prizes. We sent out notes to the readers who were not at five yet to keep reading so they would get an invite. The voting party is a pizza party * separate from the class pizza party one class will win * so quite a few people will get 2 parties out of their reading. Our administration picks up the cost of the pizza parties. We have book prizes donated from a local book store. We have a large number of library pages, and have almost all of them reading "Abe" books. While another opportunity to discuss the books with book lovers, it also helps as they encourage their friends to get with the program. Most importantly, keep the program as personal as possible. We talk to those readers about what they read, what they liked, what to read next, and encourage them to finish the program. I have to say, while this has been a joint venture between my co-librarian and myself, she has been the driving force. Her enthusiasm and personal touch has contributed to our success. The whole library gets a chuckle out of her high five "YES!!" when another students gets their minimum five read and recorded. We are just crowing over our numbers as the party goers/voters are increasing by the period these days. We are confident of overwhelming numbers in the years to come as the program becomes established and better known * not to mention the great books on the list that are so easy to booktalk and push.

April Johns, Librarian Larkin High School, Elgin, IL apriljohns@u-46.org

Our highest percentage of students that qualified for the Caudill vote was through an afterschool student book club. The reason I'm bring this up was when I was at PHS-CC, Carol had a very active student book group. She did a great job with these kids. I could see this as a relatively easy way to get older students to read and qualify for the Abe vote. By coincidence, I just applied to our foundation for a grant to fund/supply our student book group, too. This year, we got a grant for a Caudill-nominated author's visit. Part of the grant is pizza party with the book group. The students are required to read 3 of the Caudills to participate in the pizza party (it's more than a coincident that it's the same number as the Caudill voting requirement).

Alan Holtz, Brooks Middle School, Bolingbrook

We are just under 700 students and currently have about 60 students in the program, I have 9 that have read five books. I think one of the best ways to get them to read the titles is to have them in a direct sight line when students enter the LRC. They seem to walk right over to them. Also, my aide and I talk the books and incentives up..so word of mouth. Students often turn books in to our circ desk not the book drop, so my aide will notice its an Abe book and ask the student if they want to report to me and get a pencil! I just have students do a quick oral report (of course, some students give you every detail) to check that they have read it. I give them a READ pencil for reading just one book...a rainbow READ, plastic slinky for 5 books (they really work for the slinkies!)...and if they read 11 I will buy them a hardback book of their choice (within a reasonable price) and my principal pays for pizza. Eventually this may get too spendy, but I only had to buy 4 bo! oks last year. I just applied for a grant from our local school foundation to purchase two sets of the books and money for incentives.

Renee Kozeal , Princeton High School, Princeton, IL

I would agree with Karen on offering extra credit as an incentive. I noticed a big increase when the teachers began providing extra credit points. Here's what I do throughout the year: Create a display, book rack located in a prominent place, detailed booklist, and critique form. I ask each English teacher to go over the program with their classes and pass out the overview handout to their students. I start booktalking the Abe books for any teacher who is interested. The first few months of school it is hard to keep any Abe book on the shelf. I would say that we have quite a few students who read 1-2 books (maybe 100) and then the numbers start to drop off. I will say that I had two students who (legitimately) read all 22 titles! I've noticed that the students are aware of where the books are in the library and even if they aren't interested in participating in the formal Abe program that I have, they may have heard something about an Abe book from a

classmate and will choose one anyway. Here are my incentives this year: " Read 2 books- Candy Bar " Read 5 books- Eligibility to vote & Entry into weekly Read a Lincoln, Win a Lincoln (drawing every Friday to win a \$5 gift card and a copy of your favorite Abe book). " Read 10 books- Two movie tickets " Read 15 books- Field Trip to the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum in Springfield, IL. " Read 22 books- \$25 gift card to Borders I've attached my handouts if anyone is interested in using. Hope this helps,

Annie Bergeron ,Bloom Trail High School, Chicago Hts. 708-758-7000 x3179

I'm having the same experience as Monica. I offer various rewards along the way and a pizza party at the end, but even so, there are many kids who read the books, but few who actually fill in the report.

Liz Lorz, Bartlett High School, Bartlett, Illinois

Since I have an inquiring mind, I decided to ask. Here is what many students told me. Five books are too many as a requirement to read to vote Not enough time--read too much for school Work-no extra time Do not like to read Not interested anymore Liked to read, do not care about voting :(

Nancy Kreft, Litchfield

I also have a hard time getting students to sign up for both RFL and Abe awards. However, I keep promoting the reading lists each year. This year I created a power point with all of the book covers and blurbs for book talks. This is my first year for doing the book talks and I have been pleased with the response. I believe my students are reading the books, but it is "not cool" to report what they have read back to the library. Part of that has to do with the reading culture and climate in our school and I believe high schools in general. It is improving, but it is a slow process to get teachers and administrators on board to make "reading cool." Each time my students read and report on a book, they get a book buck - we mark it down on their sign up sheet. Book bucks can be spent on prizes, school supplies, copies, and clearing fines. Next year I will have one sign up sheet with RFL books on one side and Abe books on the other. The students who do read them usually read from both lists. I would like to see RFL and Abe both have the same number of books to read instead of 4 and 5 respectively. My problem is that they usually gravitate to about 10 really popular books on each list and then I need 4-5 copies of each of those! I don't have the budget for that, but we do interlibrary loan them from other libraries. I also buy some of the audio versions of what I think will be

popular or that teachers might use in the class room. Listening counts just like reading. I sometimes get the "cheaper" abridged audio version and that counts, too. Most students don't realize that they are abridged anyway. Good discussion!

Kathryn White Librarian, United Township High School Library ,East Moline, IL 61244

We are having the same problem at our school. Many students are reading the books, but they don't want to take the next step and fill in the short report. We even offer pizza and prizes and still no takers.

Helen Rifkin Librarian/ Information Specialist ,Niles West High School, 5701 W. Oakton Street Skokie, Il 60077

Our district has really been promoting reading across the curriculum. So, we got many of our teachers to agree to giving students extra credit for reading and ABE book. When the student completes a book, we ask a few questions that prove the student really has read the book. We then give them an ABE bookmark (available to download on the website) and write on the back the students name, the name of the book and the date. (This keeps them from passing the bookmarks around or reusing the same bookmark.) They then show it to all their teachers who determine how many extra credit points they receive. The PE department has even worked out a way with us so that their students can read the ABE books to makeup missed point for a "no dress". We've found that the promise of extra credit is the most successful incentive of all the campaigns we've tried.

Karen Eldred ,Thornwood High School , South Holland

I have a lot of kids reading the books (thanks to many book talks, etc.) but few who are taking the next step to vote. I need the Abe committee to know that the titles are well-chosen and usually popular, but that the voting part may not be "cool" enough for teens.

Monica Tolva Library Media Center , Vernon Hills High School, Vernon Hills

Oddly enough, my promotion is incredibly simple. I create flyers in Publisher with their picture and the titles of the books they have completed on it and print them in color. They go on my reading wall of fame. Those have read 4 Read for a Lifetime books earn a spot. Those that have read 5 Abe Lincoln books earn a spot. It amazes me how much they love seeing their pictures up. Their parents love it also on parent conference night and during open house. I also enclose a copy of the flyer in with the certificate of completion I send

home. With Read, the state sends ones signed by Jessie. I get my superintendent to sign the Abe certs. Last year I did a "read a book, get the look" promotion. The booster club donated LP gear and I was able to give out two hoodies, 10 t-shirts, 10 baseball hats and 10 winter caps. I also had several lanyards. The faculty wanted a piece of the action and I had prizes for 7 that finished. The booster club was incredible. They had to read books from either list, tell me about the book then put their name in the drawing. That was quite successful but more so with the younger students. My biggest complaint from the kids is that Read is 4 books and Abe is 5. Funny how those that have finished Read are all close to finishing Abe.....

Carolyn Roys, Lake Park High School, Roselle

IF YOU HAVE OTHER BRIGHT IDEAS TO SHARE, PLEASE POST THEM TO ISLMANET FOR ALL TO SEE!!!!