

## Be a virtual volunteer on [crowd.loc.gov](https://crowd.loc.gov) Join the Library of Congress for the Letters to Lincoln Challenge Monday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 10:00am to 1:30pm

### What is crowd.loc.gov?

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Crowd invites you to transcribe, review, and tag digitized images of manuscripts and typed materials in the Library of Congress collection. Your transcriptions will be returned the Library's website (loc.gov) to improve search and discovery of rare materials for people all over the world including those who use screen readers or cannot see or read the original documents.

### Students and teachers will gain new skills

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Practice reading handwriting and parsing primary sources. Anyone can take part—you don't even need to create an account! Anonymous volunteers can transcribe and read other people's transcriptions. Create an account to add tags or review.

### Event timeline

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View talks about the Gettysburg Address on our YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/loc>

- 10:00 am Remarks by Dr. Carla Hayden, 14th Librarian of Congress
- 10:05 am Talk by historian and curator Michelle Krowl
- 10:15 am Gettysburg Address delivered by student orator
- 10:30 am - 1:30 pm #LettersToLincoln Challenge transcribe-a-thon on site and online

### Want to make history? Join in the #LettersToLincoln Challenge

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Letters to Lincoln challenges volunteers to transcribe all 28,000 pages of the Abraham Lincoln papers on crowd.loc.gov by the end of 2018! Can you help transcribe and review documents sent to and from Abraham Lincoln in 1860, 1861 and 1862 during the lead up to the American Civil War and early years of his presidency? What did friends, colleagues and average Americans write to President Lincoln?

### Getting started

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Read instructions in the crowd.loc.gov [Help Center](#), also available from every transcription page.

Contact us if you get stuck:

- Twitter - @Crowd\_LOC and #LettersToLincoln
- History Hub forum – <https://historyhub.history.gov/community/crowd-loc>
- Email – [Crowd@loc.gov](mailto:Crowd@loc.gov)

## Practice reading handwriting

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1. **Explore the Timeline** of Abraham Lincoln's life: <https://www.loc.gov/collections/abraham-lincoln-papers/articles-and-essays/abraham-lincoln-and-emancipation/timeline/>
2. **One of the best ways to start to get familiar with handwriting is to read it!** Find a completed page in Letters to Lincoln. Develop your transcription muscles by reading the transcribed words as you look at the handwritten version. A good practice item to pick is an envelope or a short letter.

## Start transcribing – Try with a partner

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1. **Pick a project**, which are organized by years based on the Timeline
2. **Once you're in a project, pick a letter and then a page.** Some letters are brief and some are several pages. Look at the thumbnail to help you choose.
3. **Partner 1 reads the text aloud word-by-word as the other partner types** the transcription. Try switching off duties between lines.
4. Are you able to figure out some of the more difficult words using **context clues**?
5. **Look at the item title by clicking "View on loc.gov". Look at the previous and next pages.** What additional historical context do these give? Can you decipher any additional words now?
6. **Save your transcript.** If you're confident that you transcribed it all, submit it so another volunteer can review.

## Review and tag

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**Register for an account to review or tag** - both great ways to practice reading and synthesizing handwritten materials.

**To review:** Select a page to review. Carefully check the transcriber(s) have followed the instructions above. If yes, click "Accept". If there are edits to make click "Edit" and make any changes. Save and submit the transcription.

**To tag:** Find a page that has been completely or partly transcribed. Come up with words or short phrases (2-3 words) to describe elements of a page that are not already recorded in the transcription. **What research questions would this item help answer? What tags would help a student researching those topics to find this item on the Library's website?**

## Quick Tips

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- Type what you see. Preserve original spelling, punctuation, and line breaks
- Use brackets [ ] around deleted, illegible or partially legible text
- Transcribe any words or letters you can't identify as ?
- Include insertions or text in the margins where you would read it in the text
- Save your work before you leave a page. Click "Submit" if you have transcribed everything on the page. Another volunteer will then analyze the transcription