

## ACROSTIC (VERTICAL) POEMS

Ask students to consider what they have learned about the Civil War and Reconstruction as they listen to the poems you are about to read. Read Richard Armour's poems "Abraham Lincoln" and "Andrew Johnson" orally to the class. Discuss the pictures and how they relate to the poems. Ask students to share what they know about Presidents Lincoln and Johnson from their studies and how the poet, Richard Armour, used information about the subjects in his poems.

Discuss acrostic or vertical poems and the difference between acrostic poems and Richard Armour's poems. Provide students with a model of an acrostic poem. Have students choose a person from the Civil War or Reconstruction Period. After finding out about that person's life, have the student write an acrostic poem that captures the essence of the person. After the teacher checks the student's draft, the student should write the subject's name vertically in bright, bold letters down the side of a sheet of blank white paper. With a dark colored pen, the student can complete the poem and illustrate it appropriately.

**A**ble

**B**old

**R**allied Union forces

**A**ssassinated in 1865

**H**onest at all times

**A**ttorney at law

**M**arried Mary Todd

Lived in Kentucky as a boy

Illinois

**N**atural story teller

**C**ommander in Chief

**O**ffered command to Robert E. Lee

**L**ed the United States during the Civil War

**N**ever gave up

(Idea taken from *Our Country*, p. 452, teacher's edition.)

Students might use a computer to publish their poems using different fonts, size of text, and style—the first letter of the name in bold and the words that follow it in plain text. Have students print the poems from the computer and then illustrate them. The illustrations should appropriately reflect the person and the times.

Display poems on a bulletin board or add to students' portfolios. A class book can be made of the poems, a copy of which can be added to the school library.