

THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS
By U.S. President Abraham Lincoln
November 19, 1863

[Editor's Note: The Gettysburg National Cemetery was dedicated by President Abraham Lincoln on November 19, 1863, approximately four months after the Civil War's Battle of Gettysburg. Lincoln's speech that day, now known as the Gettysburg Address, lasted only about two minutes, but it is considered one of the greatest speeches in the English language. Following is the text from one of the five known existing manuscript copies of the speech.]

"Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation: conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war. . . testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated. . . can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war.

We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate. . . we cannot consecrate. . . we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced.

It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us. . .that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion. . . that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain. . . that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom. . . and that government of the people. . . by the people. . . for the people. . . shall not perish from the earth. "

--U.S. President Abraham Lincoln

(Review Questions begin on page 2.)

ADVANCE ORGANIZER AND REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

Adapted from <http://www.panhandlepbs.org/gettysburg-address/discussion-questions/>

INSTRUCTIONS: Read Lincoln's speech entirely (p. 1), and then answer the following questions:

1. What happened "four score and seven years ago"? Why does Lincoln start with this?

2. In the first sentence, what does Lincoln tell us about this new nation?

3. What is being tested by this war?

4. What impact does starting the second paragraph with "now" have on its meaning?

5. When Lincoln says the nation was "so conceived and so dedicated" what is he referring to?

6. What is the point of including the phrase "or any nation so conceived and so dedicated" - what would the sentence mean without it?

7. What if Lincoln had used the verb "start" instead of "conceive"?

8. What are the people who are assembled at Gettysburg there to do?

9. What did those who fought at Gettysburg do that those who have gathered cannot?

10. What is the impact of starting the third paragraph with "but"?

11. What does Lincoln describe as the impact of those who fought at Gettysburg?

12. What does Lincoln mean by "the great task remaining"?

13. What is the unfinished work that those listening to the speech are asked to achieve?

14. How does Lincoln use the idea of "unfinished work" to assign responsibility to his listeners?

15. What specific ideas does Lincoln ask his listeners to commit themselves to at the end of his speech?

16. What is the cause Lincoln refers to in the phrase "increased devotion to that cause"?

17. How does the meaning of "dedicate" change over the course of the text? What does it reveal about the speech?
