

Gettysburg Address

Abraham Lincoln
November 19, 1863

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 dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field 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 can not dedicate -- we can not consecrate -- we can not 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.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Hour: _____

Analysis of the Gettysburg Address

Directions: Answer the following questions in detail using complete sentences.

Pre-reading Questions

What do you notice about the length of this address?

Why do you think Lincoln made it so short?

Post-reading Questions

1. What does “Four score and seven years ago” mean? [87 years, i.e. 1776]

2. What sort of language is this, and why might Lincoln have used it? [Biblical language, from **Psalms 90:10**; its usage is a way of stressing that the Founding—1776—is now beyond everyone’s living memory.]

3. What is Lincoln referring to in this first sentence? [Declaration of Independence, not the Constitution, is the birth of the nation.]

4. What is the purpose of the address that Lincoln is giving?

5. Why does Lincoln say that “**we** can not dedicate—**we** can not consecrate—**we** can not hallow—this ground?” Cite evidence from the text in your response.

6. What then can **we** do? What does Lincoln say is the task “for us the living?” Why?

7. What was “**that cause** for which they gave the last full measure of devotion?” Do you think all of the soldiers who died fighting at Gettysburg were fighting for the same cause? Why or why not? [Note: the cemetery was for the Union dead, only]

8. In the last clause, what is meant by government “**of** the people, **by** the people, **for** the people”?