

★ The Gettysburg Address ★

Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to teach students about the important ideas that President Lincoln expressed in the Gettysburg Address. Students will become familiar with the speech by putting together a puzzle of the text. A vocabulary and comprehension activity focuses on the Gettysburg Address.

Objective

1. The student will examine and discuss the history and text of the Gettysburg Address.
2. The student will list President Lincoln's ideas about liberty and equality.
3. The student will locate and list early America's founding documents and Presidents Lincoln's other Civil War speeches that contain the ideology presented in the Gettysburg Address.

Theme-Responsibility

We have a responsibility to honor those who have given their lives to protect the ideas on which our nation was established. We have a responsibility as individuals to support the ideas we have agreed to provide to all citizens through the passage of laws, and a responsibility to communicate our disagreement to our legislators.

NCSS Standards

Vla. examine persistent issues involving the rights, roles, and status of the individual in relation to the general welfare.

IXf. demonstrate understanding of concerns, standards, issues, and conflicts related to...human rights.

Xf. identify and explain the roles of formal and informal political actors in influencing and shaping public policy and decision-making.

Xh. analyze the effectiveness of selected public policies and citizen behaviors in realizing the stated ideals of a democratic republican form of government.

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- ★ "The Gettysburg Address" text handout, puzzle, pocket cards (optional), and activity sheet
- ★ Dictionaries
- ★ Website - www.americanheritage.org

Preparation

- ★ Copy and cut the Gettysburg Address puzzle for pairs or groups of students.
- ★ Copy the Gettysburg Address activity sheets for each student.
- ★ Copy and cut the Gettysburg Address pocket cards (optional) for students.

Focus

Ask students to name famous speeches. Have students tell what they know about these speeches (e.g., speaker, occasion, significance, quotes, etc.). Tell students that President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address is one of the most famous speeches in American history.

Activity

1. Students read “The Context of The Gettysburg Address” and the Gettysburg Address original document. Discuss the main points, content, context, and other observations. (See Links page on www.americanheritage.org for additional resources on the Gettysburg Address.)
2. Have students complete the vocabulary and comprehension activity sheet on the Gettysburg Address. Discuss.
3. Provide students with a copy of the text of the Gettysburg Address. Give copies of the Gettysburg Address text scramble to pairs or small groups of students. Students should use the text of the Gettysburg Address to put the puzzle in the correct order.
4. Give students pocket cards for further study or memorization of the Gettysburg Address (optional).

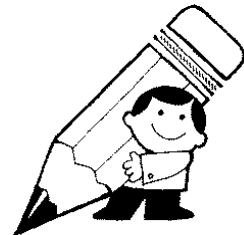
Closure

Review President Lincoln’s ideas about liberty and equality contained in the Gettysburg Address.

Assessment

Students will:

1. Rewrite the Gettysburg Address in their own words.
2. List two founding American documents that contain the ideas President Lincoln uses in the Gettysburg Address.
3. Locate other Civil War speeches made by President Lincoln that contain the same ideas.



The Context of The Gettysburg Address

About 620,000 men died in the Civil War (1861-1865)—more American deaths than in any other war in United States history. Over 360,000 of these men died fighting in the Union army to achieve President Abraham Lincoln’s goals of saving the Union and ending slavery.

In 1863, a Confederate invasion into Pennsylvania resulted in a battle at Gettysburg. The Battle of Gettysburg was fought July 1-3, 1863. The Union victory at Gettysburg forced the Confederates to retreat back to Virginia and became a major turning point in the Civil War. More than 40,000 men were killed or wounded in the fighting. The rows of graves of the soldiers who were buried there seemed to go on forever. Today, the site of the Battle of Gettysburg is one of ten designated National Military Parks in the United States. The cemetery at Gettysburg is named the Soldiers National Cemetery.

On November 19, 1863, thousands of people gathered for a ceremony to dedicate the cemetery at Gettysburg. The

organizers of the event asked another man, Edward Everett, to be the main speaker. President Lincoln was invited to make only “a few appropriate remarks.” Lincoln sat as Everett gave a *two-hour* speech. The President then stood and delivered a speech that lasted only a few minutes.

President Lincoln was very disappointed with his speech. A friend remembered hearing Lincoln say that the speech was “a flat failure.” However, generations of Americans have honored Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address as a profound, eloquent statement of American beliefs and ideals. The address is one of two speeches inscribed on the walls of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.

In the Gettysburg Address, Lincoln said that the Civil War was a test of whether or not a nation based on democratic principles could survive. On a battlefield of a war fought largely over the issue of slavery, Lincoln reminded Americans that their nation was born in freedom and dedicated to the idea that “all men are created equal.”

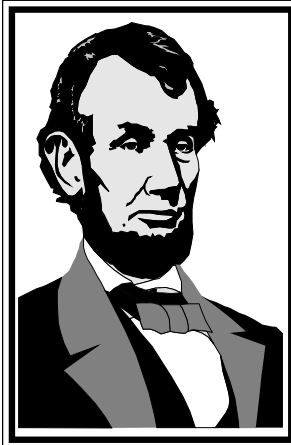
Abraham Lincoln's
Gettysburg Address
November 19, 1863

Fourscore 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 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.

The Gettysburg Address



Define these words on the back of this sheet.

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| 1. conceived | 7. consecrate |
| 2. liberty | 8. hallow |
| 3. dedicated | 9. devotion |
| 4. proposition | 10. resolve |
| 5. engaged | 11. vain |
| 6. endure | 12. perish |

When was the battle of Gettysburg?

What is name of the cemetery at Gettysburg?

When was the cemetery at Gettysburg dedicated?

A *decade* is ten years. A *score* is twenty years. How many years is “fourscore and seven”?

What year was “fourscore and seven years ago”?

What important American document was written in that year?

What does “conceived in liberty” mean?

Why did Lincoln include the phrase “all men are created equal”?

What do you think it means to have a government that is “of the people, by the people, and for the people”?

Gettysburg Address

Text Scramble

Directions: Cut each line of the speech into separate strips and have students, individually or in groups, arrange them in order.

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continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the

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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 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

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Gettysburg Address Pocket Cards

Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address

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