

THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE

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Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum

INTRODUCTION

In July 1863, Union and Confederate forces met in battle outside the small market town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. For three days, under the hot summer sun, the bloodiest fight of the war raged on. In the end, 51,000 men died on the battlefield. On November 19, 1863, President Lincoln was invited to make a few remarks at the dedication of

the battlefield as a national cemetery. The main speaker, Edward Everett, spoke for two hours before Lincoln took the stage. His speech lasted only a few minutes. In it, he reminded the audience of the sacrifices made by America's forefathers; he honored the men who had died on the battle field at Gettysburg; he challenged America to continue to fight

for unity and equality as put forth in the Declaration of Independence; he painted the war in global and epic proportions; and he redirected the war's purpose as a battle to end slavery.



LESSON 1: UNDERSTANDING THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

GRADE 5-8

Objectives

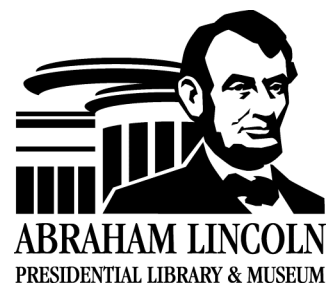
- *Name three important concepts Lincoln laid out in the Gettysburg Address.*
- *Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections.*
- *Define unfamiliar vocabulary using a dictionary or thesaurus.*
- *Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency.*
- *Classify information from primary sources to form generalizations about the Civil War and democracy.*
- *Hypothesize the primary theme of the Gettysburg Address.*

Materials

- *Gettysburg Address broken down into sentences (see Procedure)*
- *Translation Evaluation Worksheet (in this lesson plan)*
- *Understanding the Gettysburg Address Worksheet (in this lesson plan)*

PROCEDURE

1. Divide students into ten groups. Assign each group a sentence from the Gettysburg Address.
 - 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 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 GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

PROCEDURE (CONTINUED)

- 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.
2. Working together and using their own words, each group will create a “translation” of what Lincoln meant. Students will use dictionaries and/or a thesaurus to determine word meanings. Students will provide the teacher with their finished translation.
 3. Have each group read their translation to the class. The class will “grade” each group using the *Translation Evaluation Worksheet*.
 4. Create a “translation” of the entire Gettysburg Address to pass out to students.
 5. After students have had time to review the “translation,” ask them to complete the *Understanding the Gettysburg Address Worksheet*.
 6. Ask students to hypothesize on the main theme of the Gettysburg Address. Discuss as a class.

LESSON 2: THE LANGUAGE OF THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

GRADE 8-12

Objectives

- *Identify at least three key themes of the Gettysburg Address.*
- *Develop a persuasive speech that can be presented orally or in written format in 267 words or less.*
- *Identify the various literary devices including grammatical parallelism, antithesis, alliteration, and repetition and use them appropriately in an oral or written speech.*
- *Students will analyze the effectiveness of the literary devices employed in the Gettysburg Address.*

Materials

- *Gettysburg Address (in this lesson plan)*
- *Literary Tools Worksheet (in this lesson plan)*
- *Internet access*
- *Paper, pencils, pens*

INTRODUCTION

The Gettysburg Address has endured as one of the most important documents in U.S. history. What makes this speech so meaningful and why have the words endured long after Abraham Lincoln’s delivery?

Attending and listening to lengthy public speeches

was common entertainment during the nineteenth century and Edward Everett, keynote speaker at the dedication, was one of the most famous orators of the time. Abraham Lincoln, on the other hand, was invited only a few weeks before the ceremony, to deliver “a few appropriate remarks.” There are many leg-

ends regarding how Lincoln devised his address, but most modern scholars believe he researched his subject and wrote his thoughts, if not a first draft, before he left Washington. One misconception was that Lincoln wrote the address on the back of an envelope as he was traveling to Gettysburg. But Lincoln

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NAME: _____

TRANSLATION EVALUATION WORKSHEET

Use the form below to evaluate each translation written by your classmates.

1. **Read** the translation as written on the board.
2. **Copy** the translation below.
3. **Listen** to the translation as it is read to you.
4. **Record** your evaluation below.

Translation:

Circle the appropriate answer:

1. The group wrote the sentence on the board and:

I understand what was written on the board.

I do not understand what was written on the board

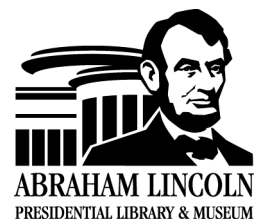
2. The group read the translation and:

It helped me understand it

It did not help me understand it

Questions I would like to ask the group or the teacher:

My comments:



NAME: _____

UNDERSTANDING THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS WORKSHEET

Multiple Choice: Circle the letter of the best answer to rewrite each group of words.

1. Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation,

- a. 27 years ago some people made a new country that brought us together
- b. 87 years ago some people made a new country that brought us together
- c. 27 years ago our relatives made a new country that brought us together

2. conceived in liberty,

- a. based on the idea of freedom
- b. born in a free country
- c. taken from a free country

3. and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

- a. and made sure the song was the same as all others
- b. and believed that all people are the same
- c. and written to make sure that everyone would get the same things.

4. Now we are engaged in a great civil war,

- a. Now we are fighting a war between the states
- b. Now we are planning a war
- c. No we are politely debating

5. testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure.

- a. Testing if any country can survive forever
- b. Trying to see if we or any country who believes in that idea can continue to exist

6. We are met on a great battlefield of that war.

- a. People are coming to meet us here.
- b. We are standing on an important battlefield of that war.
- c. People are coming to fight with us here.

7. 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.

- a. We have come to say that part of this field is holy because it is a final resting place for those who died here so that our country can continue to exist.
- b. We have come here to create a place where soldiers can rest because they fought so hard for our country.

8. 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.

- a. But in the bigger picture, we cannot make this place holy because the men who died here already did.
- b. But in the bigger picture we cannot build here because people died here and it would be disrespectful.
- c. But in a larger sense, we should not honor people who fight in wars.

9. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.

- a. The world doesn't care about this place but the men who fought here will always remember.
- b. People won't remember this ceremony but they will remember the men who fought and died here.

10. 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.

- a. We need to dedicate this cemetery and make it look nice to honor these men.
- b. We who are still alive need to promise to continue to fight for the ideas that these men died for.

11. 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

- a. We have to promise to make this cemetery nice and remember these men.
- b. We need to promise that we will work on the great job ahead of us--to remember the dead we will increase our effort to save the ideas that they died for.

12. that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain

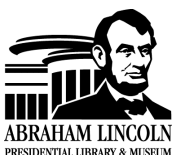
- a. that we promise that the men who died here died for a good reason
- b. that we find out if the dead died terrible deaths
- c. that we make sure other people don't die here

13. that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom

- a. that our country, under God's blessing, shall have a new form of government
- b. that our country, under God's blessing, shall be reborn in freedom
- c. that we will become a really religious country

14. and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

- a. and that one government of lots of people should spread all over the earth
- b. and that a government of people cannot exist on this earth
- c. and that the idea that all the people should be involved in making their own rules and laws for themselves won't be destroyed.



actually had had four and one half months to gather his thoughts and put pen to paper after the battle. Lincoln did not accept many public invitations to speak and he regarded this as a unique opportunity to explain the revolutionary transition he envisioned for the country—the new birth of freedom and equality under law.

Lincoln, careful writer and serious thinker, used this opportunity to redirect the nation’s attention toward the war’s long term goals. He

did not use the words "Gettysburg," "slavery," "Confederate," "South," "Battle," "Cemetery," or "Union." Instead of bringing up divisive issues and narrowly defining his speech, he spoke in abstract terms. Instead of delivering an angry diatribe against the Confederacy, as Everett had done, Lincoln emphasized healing the country and working toward the ideals laid out in the Declaration of Independence.

Lincoln’s address lasted only a few minutes. He

used only 267 words in ten sentences. Not strictly a poem, he nevertheless used poetic devices to increase the power of his words. So perfect was Lincoln’s speech, that the great orator Everett, requested a copy of it from Lincoln saying, “I should be glad if I could flatter myself that I came as near to the central idea of the occasion in two hours as you did in two minutes.”

Lincoln employed many rhetorical devices in his talent with words, but his

mature speeches are especially characterized by grammatical parallelism, antithesis, alliteration, and repetition, and he used all four strategies in his brief address at Gettysburg. Although public reaction to the speech was divided along partisan lines, eventually the Address was recognized for its greatness and poetry. Today, the Gettysburg Address is universally recognized as one of the most moving expressions of the democratic spirit ever spoken.

PROCEDURE

- Using the *Literary Tools Worksheet* have students identify the unifying structures of Lincoln’s speech.
- Discuss as a class, comparing the examples found.
- Working individually or in pairs, use one of the ideas in the Gettysburg Address to create a persuasive speech. The speech should be modeled on the **c o n c i s e** presentation of ideas found in Lincoln’s speech which are:
 - The enduring quality of our nation.
 - The idea that in the U.S. “All men are created equal.”
 - Bravery and sacrifice will be remembered forever.
 - “That this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom.”
 - “Government of the people by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth.”

Literary Tools Worksheet Answer Key (you may find more)

Parallelism	Antithesis	Alliteration	Repetition
Conceived in liberty, dedicated to the proposition That nation, that war, that field So conceived, so dedicated Can not dedicate, can not consecrate, can not hallow Little note, long remember What we say here, what they did here To the unfinished work, to the great task, to that cause That these dead, that this nation Of the people, by the people for the people	Living, dead Little note, long remember What we say here, what they did here Add, Detract Gave their lives, Nation might live	Fourscore, founding, fathers, forth New nation Continent, conceived World will Note nor We here highly Of the people, by the people, for the people, perish	New nation, that nation, any nation So conceived, so dedicated We are engaged, we are met, we have come We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow Of the people, by the people for the people

NAME: _____

LITERARY TOOLS WORKSHEET

Although Abraham Lincoln had less than one year of formal education, he possessed a logical and inquisitive mind enabling him to write one of the most eloquent speeches in our nation's history. A successful speech is one the audience remembers, repeats and responds to. Lincoln employed many rhetorical devices in his talent with words, but his mature speeches are especially characterized by the following literary tools:

Grammatical parallelism

Antithesis

Alliteration

Repetition

Lincoln used all four strategies in his brief address at Gettysburg. Today, the Gettysburg Address is universally recognized as one of the most moving expressions of the democratic spirit ever spoken.

Parallelism

Parallelism is a rhetorical technique in which a writer emphasizes the equal value or weight of two or more ideas by expressing them in the same grammatical form. Example, "that nation so conceived," and "any nation so dedicated."

List all the examples you can find:

Example: that nation	any nation	this nation

Antithesis

Antithesis is a rhetorical technique in which words, phrases, or ideas are strongly contrasted, often by means of a repetition of grammatical structure. In literature, the use of antithesis as a figure of speech, results in two statements that show a contrast through the balancing of two opposite ideas. Example, "the brave men," and "our poor power."

List all the examples you can find:

Example: Brave men	our poor power	

Alliteration

The repetition of the same sounds or of the same kinds of sounds at the beginning of words or in stressed syllables. Alliteration is fun to say and enjoyable to hear, and used to call attention to certain words. Alliteration is an important sound technique for making particular words stand out. It also connects the words to be emphasized. Example, "Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray."

List all the examples you can find.

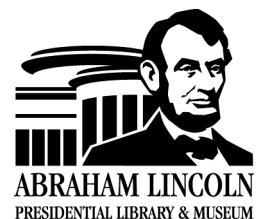
Example: Fondly do we hope	fervently do we pray	

Repetition

Repetition is a classic technique in presentation and speech making. It helps tie the theme together and it creates clarity for the listener. Additionally, we remember words and phrases more readily when they are packaged in threes. Example, "We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground."

List all the repetitive examples you can find:

Example: great civil war	great battlefield	



LESSON 3: A CIVIL CONVERSATION

GRADE 5-12

Objectives

- Identify Lincoln as the author of the Gettysburg Address.
- Identify the Gettysburg address as one of the most important speeches given in American history.
- Conduct a “Civil conversation” while discussing historical documents.
- Name at least two important points Lincoln made in the Gettysburg Address.

Materials

- *Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address* (in this lesson plan)
- *Civil Conversation Worksheet* (in this lesson plan)

INTRODUCTION

Our pluralistic democracy is based on a set of common principles such as justice, equality, and liberty—ideals set forth in Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address. Individuals often interpret these general principles quite differently given specific situations. Controversial legal and policy issues, as they are discussed in the public arena, often lead to polariza-

tion, not understanding. In this activity, students will engage in a “Civil Conversation” about the Gettysburg Address, a document still debated by scholars today. This civil conversation activity offers an alternative to the contentious debate formats we see today. In this structured discussion method, under the guidance of a facilitator, par-

ticipants are encouraged to engage intellectually with challenging materials, gain insight about their own point of view and strive for a shared understanding of issues. In addition, students develop their speaking, listening and analytical skills. The Civil Conversation was developed by the Constitutional Rights Foundation. Visit them at www.crf-usa.org

PROCEDURE

PART I: CONDUCTING A CIVIL CONVERSATION

1. Distribute the *Civil Conversation Worksheet* to each student and go over the rules of a Civil Conversation with your students.
2. The group will sit in a circle. If the group is too large, pair the students so that there is an inner and outer circle with students able to move back and forth into the inner circle if they have something to add.
3. Hand out copies of the Gettysburg Address to each student. Ask students to read the address and underline the words or phrases that they feel are most powerful or meaningful.
4. Ask students to respond in writing to questions 1-5 on their worksheet.
5. Begin the conversation, by asking every member of the group to respond to questions 2 and 4. Members should not just repeat what others say.
6. Then ask the entire group to respond to question 5 and jot down the issues raised.
7. Continue the conversation by discussing the questions raised.
8. The conversation will have a time limit of 15 to 45 minutes with an additional five minutes to reflect upon the effectiveness of the conversations.
9. Debrief the activity by having the class reflect on the effectiveness of the conversation. Begin by asking students to return to the worksheet and answer questions 6 and 7. Then ask:
 - What did you learn from the Civil Conversation?
 - What common ground did you find with other members of the group?
10. Then ask students who were not active in the conversation to comment on the things they learned or observed.
11. Conclude the debriefing by asking all participants

to suggest ways in which the conversation could be improved. If appropriate, have students add the suggestions to their list of conversation rules.

PART II: GROUP READING

1. Begin reading the Gettysburg Address out loud to the class.
2. When you come to words or phrases the students have underlined at the beginning of the lesson, ask them to join you by reading those underlined words or phrases out loud with you. All students who underlined those words should join in.

NAME: _____

CIVIL CONVERSATION WORKSHEET

RULES FOR CIVIL CONVERSATIONS

- Read the text as if it were written by someone you really respected.
- Everyone in the conversation group should participate in the conversation.
- Listen carefully to what others are saying.
- Ask clarifying questions if you do not understand a point raised.
- Be respectful of what others are saying.
- Refer to the text to support your ideas.
- Focus on ideas, not personalities.

CIVIL CONVERSATION READING GUIDE

Reading:

Read through the entire selection without stopping to think about any particular section. Pay attention to your first impression as to what the reading is about. Look for the main points, and then go back and re-read it. Briefly answer the following questions.

1. This selection is about:
2. The main points are:
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
3. In the reading, I agree with:
4. I disagree with:
5. What are two questions about this reading that you think need to be discussed? (The best questions are ones that have no simple answers and ones that can use materials in the text as evidence.)

The next two questions should be answered after you hold your civil conversation.

- 6) What did you learn from the civil conversation?
- 7) What common ground did you find with other members of the group?

Address delivered at the dedication of the cemetery at Gettysburg

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

4 Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any
5 nation so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great
6 battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final
7 resting place for those who here gave their lives so that that nation might live. It is
8 altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

9 But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate -we can not consecrate-- we can
10 not hallow-this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have
11 consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little
12 note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did
13 here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work
14 which they who fought here have thus far *sp* nobly advanced. It is rather for us to
15 be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us--that from these honored
16 dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full
17 measure of devotion--that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have
18 died in vain-that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom-and
19 that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from
20 the earth.

November 19, 1863.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

* "Bliss Copy," as it appears in Gary Wills, *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words that Remade America*. (1992: New York. Simon & Schuster). Appendix III. D. 2 .• "Final Text," p. 263.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS/WRITING PROMPTS

1. Who wrote the Gettysburg Address and why?
2. What is the main message of the address?
3. How does Lincoln describe the United States?
4. Why does Lincoln refer to the founding fathers?
5. What does the speech say the soldiers are fighting for?
6. What does Lincoln believe the purpose of war to be?
7. What lesson does Lincoln say we can learn from this battle?
8. What is Lincoln referring to when he says, "of the people, by the people, for the people"?
9. What does Lincoln mean by a "new birth of freedom"? Whose freedom is he talking about?
10. Why is the speech considered one of the most important in American History?
11. Lincoln never mentions Gettysburg in his Address. Why do you think that is?
12. What does Lincoln say may "perish from this earth"? Why does he think this might happen? What will prevent it from happening?
13. Why do you think the speech is so well loved?
14. Are all people created equal? Explain your answer.
15. Do you feel that the proposition "that all men are created equal" has been advanced or not since Lincoln gave the Gettysburg Address? If so, what impact did the Address have on these advances?
16. What did people of the time think of Lincoln's speech?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. Compose a song or create a dance about the speech.
2. Create a drawing or painting depicting the scene of the speech.
3. Create a sculpture of Lincoln making the speech.
4. Create a diorama of Lincoln at Gettysburg.
5. Pretend you were at the dedication. Write a letter to a friend, or a diary entry describing your experience.
6. Write a letter to President Lincoln telling him how you felt about the speech. Write from the point of view of a soldier, the parent of a fallen soldier, a northerner, a southerner or a child.
7. Memorize the speech and perform it for the class. Use props and costumes. Record or video-tape yourself giving the speech for a younger audience.
8. Create a Power Point presentation about the speech.
9. Compare the Declaration of Independence to the Gettysburg Address.
10. Visit some of the websites provided in the resource section or read some of the books listed there.

THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

RESOURCES

Books for Students

Sam Fink, *The Gettysburg Address* (2008)

Jean Fritz, *Just a Few Words Mr. Lincoln* (1993)

Books for Teachers

Gabor Boritt, *The Gettysburg Gospel* (2006)

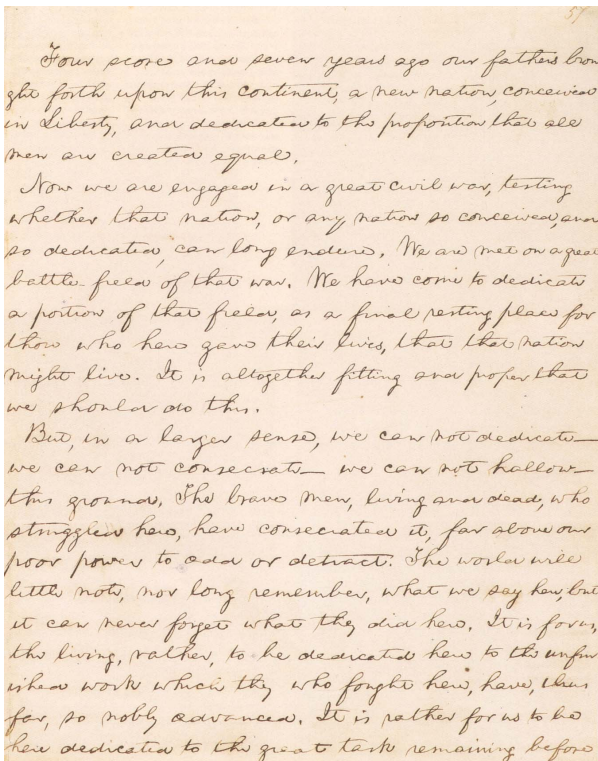
Garry Wills, *Lincoln at Gettysburg* (1992)

Online Resources

Library of Congress: The Gettysburg Address www.loc.gov/exhibits/gadd/

American Battlefield Trust: The Civil War in Four Minutes: The Gettysburg Address <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/videos/gettysburg-address>

Gettysburg National Park www.nps.gov/gett

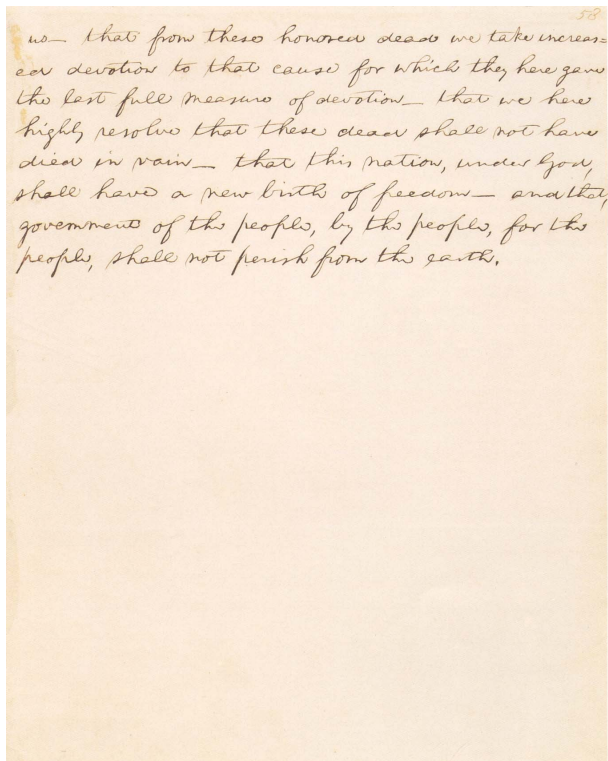


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How scarce and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

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 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



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us— that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here 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 Edward Everett copy of the Gettysburg Address is located in the collections of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

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