

Unit 8: The Gettysburg Address

About the Unit

Thousands of Union soldiers were buried at the site of the Battle of Gettysburg. At the dedication of the cemetery, President Lincoln gave a short speech that became one of the most well-known speeches in US History.

In this unit, you will read Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and analyze his ideas about liberty, equality, and union.



Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills Grade 8 ... addressed by content in this unit

(8) History. The student understands individuals, issues, and events of the Civil War. The student is expected to: (C) analyze Abraham Lincoln's ideas about liberty, equality, union, and government as contained in ... the Gettysburg Address

National Council of Social Studies Standards ... addressed by content in this unit

TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE The study of the past provides a representation of the history of communities, nations, and the world.

TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE The contributions of key persons, groups, and events from the past and their influence on the present.

PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS Factors that contribute to cooperation and conflict among peoples of the nation and world, including language, religion, and political beliefs.

POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE Fundamental values of a constitutional democracy (e.g., the common good, liberty, justice, equality, and individual dignity).

AP Expectations ... addressed by content in this unit

Historical Thinking Skill Proficiency Expectations: Analyzing Historical Evidence and Sources:

A1—Explain the relevance of the author's point of view, author's purpose, audience, format or medium, and/or historical context as well as the interaction among these features, to demonstrate understanding of the significance of a primary source.

C3—Situate historical events, developments, or processes within the broader regional, national, or global context in which they occurred in order to draw conclusions about their relative significance.

American and National Identity

NAT-4.0 Analyze relationships among different regional, social, ethnic, and racial groups, and explain how these groups' experiences have related to U.S. national identity.

Culture and Society

CUL-4.0 Explain how different group identities, including racial, ethnic, class, and regional identities, have emerged and changed over time.

Building Background

The Civil War was fought from 1861 through 1865. The Union army wanted the United States to be one country and wanted an end to slavery. The Confederate army wanted to secede, or break away, from the United States to form a new country, and they wanted slavery to continue.

Over 600,000 men died in the American Civil War. That is more soldiers than died in World War I and World War II combined.

The Revolutionary War with Britain claimed just over 25,000 dead, 1/25 the number of lives lost in the Civil War. In fact, of every war or military conflict the United States has entered, half or just about half of the soldiers who have died, died in the Civil War.

In 1863, the Confederate army invaded Pennsylvania and met the Union army in a battle at Gettysburg. The Battle of Gettysburg raged for three days, from July 1 to July 3, 1863. The Union army won and pushed the Confederates back to Virginia. The victory became a major turning point in the Civil War.

More than 40,000 men were killed or wounded in the Battle of Gettysburg. Most of the soldiers who died there were buried there. On November 19, 1863, thousands of people gathered to dedicate the cemetery. Organizers asked Edward Everett to be the main speaker. They invited President Abraham Lincoln to make a few remarks as well. Everett spoke for two hours. Then President Lincoln stood and delivered a speech lasting a few short minutes.

Although Lincoln was disappointed with his speech, generations of Americans have honored it as a profound, eloquent statement of American beliefs and ideals. The speech is inscribed on the walls of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.

In the Gettysburg Address, Lincoln says 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."



Today, the site of the Battle of Gettysburg is a National Military Park.

Key Vocabulary

Key Words in the Gettysburg Address	Meaning	Examples
conceive kən • sēv	to think, imagine, invent or devise something	He <i>conceived</i> the idea for a series of short stories.
liberty li • bər • tē	basic right or freedom	The lawyer argued that the company took the <i>liberty</i> of his client away.
dedicate ded • i • kāt	to devote attention to something or to commit yourself to something	The nun <i>dedicated</i> her life to the service of God.
proposition pro • ə • zi • shən	a proposal or statement	The <i>proposition</i> that the two sides would not fight was supported by almost everyone.
engage in • gāj	to involve or fight	He tried to <i>engage</i> his opponent, but failed.
endure in • dyur	to bear, tolerate, or survive something	The parents <i>endured</i> years of uncertainty when their child went missing, but they did not lose hope.
consecrate kən • sə • krāt	to declare and dedicate a place as holy	The church we visited in France was <i>consecrated</i> by the Bishop in 1564.
hallowed ha • lō	made holy	The visitors respected the <i>hallowed</i> grounds as they thought about all that had happened there.
vain vān	unsuccessful or empty of substance	The doctor worked in <i>vain</i> to save the dying patient.

Work with Vocabulary → Pronounce • Explain • Discuss • Partner <Teacher Led>

Pronounce Say the word and have students repeat it.

Explain the meaning and discuss the example sentence.

Discuss Invite students to use the word in other sentences.

Partner Assign partners a word. Ask partners to locate each word in the Gettysburg Address, share the sentence with the group, and discuss its meaning.

Reading the Gettysburg Address

The Gettysburg Address includes 3 paragraphs:

- Look at the first paragraph on page 5.
Notice that it is the shortest of the three paragraphs. It is only 30 words long. Also notice that this paragraph talks about the past.

- Look at the second paragraph on page 5.
This paragraph is longer than the first but not as long as the last. Notice how this paragraph talks about the present.

- Look at the third paragraph on page 5.
This paragraph is the longest paragraph, almost twice as long as the second paragraph. Notice how this paragraph talks about the future and how the first two paragraphs have built to this paragraph, the purpose of the address.

Strategic Reading:

<Teacher Led>

- Listen to your teacher read The Gettysburg Address.
Then read The Gettysburg Address in unison as a choral reading.
Discuss each paragraph and any words or phrases that don't make sense.
Discuss the themes of the address. Talk about where Lincoln says we, as a country, have been and where we are going in the future.

★ 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 the 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 the 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.

Abraham Lincoln

November 19, 1863

Check Your Understanding

➤ Circle the letter of the correct answer or use what you've read to answer the question.

1. What does "four score and seven years ago" mean? Why do you think Lincoln used this phrase?

2. In the second paragraph, Lincoln questions whether the United States can long endure. Why do you think Lincoln is questioning whether the United States can make it?

3. In the second paragraph, Lincoln says, "for those who here gave their lives that the nation might live." In your own words, what does this mean?

Check Your Understanding, *continued*

4. In the third paragraph, Lincoln says, "we can not dedicate — we can not consecrate — we can not hallow — this ground." Why does he say this? Use details from the address to support your answer.

5. In your own words, what task did the nation face at the time of the Gettysburg Address? Why do you think that Lincoln refers to the task as "a new birth"?

Writing Workshop: Personal Narrative

Writing Prompt

READ the following quotation from the Gettysburg Address.

"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."

— Abraham Lincoln

Sometimes our dedication can make the difference between accomplishing a goal and failing to do so.

WRITE a personal narrative about a time when you were dedicated to achieving a goal. Be sure to write about your experience in detail and describe why it was important for you to succeed.

Be sure to —

- clearly describe your effort, why it was important to you, and how you achieved success
- organize and develop your narrative effectively
- choose your words carefully
- use correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and sentences

Prewriting

- Using a separate sheet of paper, brainstorm your narrative. Then organize your notes into an outline.

Personal Narrative, *continued*

Drafting

- Write a first draft of your personal narrative.

Writing Prompt
Write a personal narrative about a time when you were dedicated to achieving a goal.

Write a personal narrative about a time when you were dedicated to achieving a goal.

[illegible]

Be sure the opening of the narrative tells what goal you wanted to achieve and why you were dedicated to it.

The body of the narrative should be organized clearly, probably chronologically.

Be sure the end of the narrative explains what you learned about being dedicated to a goal.

Personal Narrative, *continued***Revising and Editing**

- Work with a partner to evaluate your personal narrative. Use the following questions and prompts to guide the evaluation.

Revising the draft:

- | | | |
|-------|---|---|
| _____ | ✓ | Does the narrative have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion? |
| _____ | ✓ | Does the introductory statement hook the reader? |
| _____ | ✓ | Do the body paragraphs explain what happened clearly? |
| _____ | ✓ | Does the concluding paragraph explain why dedication is important? |
| _____ | ✓ | Does the narrative flow? Are a variety of sentence types used? |
| _____ | ✓ | Are anecdotes or dialogue used effectively in the narrative? |
| _____ | ✓ | Are there effective transitions (linking words and phrases)? |
| _____ | ✓ | Does the writing include lively and descriptive word choices? |
| _____ | ✓ | What does the writer do best? |

- | | | |
|-------|---|---|
| _____ | ✓ | What suggestions for revisions do you have? |
|-------|---|---|

Editing the draft:

- Circle or highlight any specific spelling, grammar, or usage errors.

Personal Narrative, *continued*

Final Draft

- Write a final draft of your personal narrative.

Writing Prompt
Write a personal narrative about a time when you were dedicated to achieving a goal.

Write a personal narrative about a time when you were dedicated to achieving a goal.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Personal Narrative, *continued*

Writing Rubric

Read the rubric below. Reread your personal narrative and give yourself a grade. Then meet with your teacher to discuss the grade.

	Exceptional 5	Proficient 3	Inadequate 1
Organization: The narrative follows an organizational structure appropriate to the purpose.	The organizational structure of the narrative is appropriate and effective.	The organizational structure of the narrative is evident, but may not always be appropriate.	The organizational structure of the narrative is either inappropriate or ineffective.
Development: The narrative focuses on a specific personal experience and is engaging.	The narrative is well controlled, thoughtful, and engaging.	The narrative is adequately controlled and reflects some thoughtfulness.	The narrative is inconsistent and reflects little or no thoughtfulness.
Cohesion: The narrative includes details that contribute to the portrayal of the experience.	The narrative includes details that contribute to the portrayal of the experience.	Most details contribute to the portrayal of the experience, but the narrative may not always be unified.	Some details contribute to the portrayal of the experience, but the narrative does not sustain focus throughout.
Style: The word choice is vivid and expressive.	The word choice is vivid and expressive.	The word choice is specific and concrete.	The word choice may be general or imprecise.
Conventions: The narrative has been edited for grammar, mechanics, and usage.	There are few, if any, grammar, mechanics, and usage errors.	There are some grammar, mechanics, and usage errors.	There are many grammar, mechanics, and usage errors.

Additional Resources

- Pocket copies of the Gettysburg Address are available on the American Heritage website.
<http://www.americanheritage.org/index.php/en-us/>
- A text scramble of the Gettysburg Address is available on the American Heritage website.
<http://www.americanheritage.org/index.php/en-us/>
- Link to 1863 editorial about the Gettysburg Address. This editorial could be used to prompt a collaborative conversation about the viewpoints of the Gettysburg Address.
<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/the-president-at-gettysburg/>
- Link to Harvard Business Review article “Why the Gettysburg Address Is Still a Great Case Study in Persuasion.”
<https://hbr.org/2015/04/why-the-gettysburg-address-is-still-a-great-case-study-in-persuasion>

