

## Speech #6 Lincoln's Gettysburg Address

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**READ CLOSELY AND SHOW EVIDENCE OF THINKING BY ANNOTATING. Annotate all readings by highlighting the main idea in yellow; the best evidence supporting in blue, and any interesting phrases in green.**

### November 19, 1863; Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

272 words. 3 minutes long. Yet, the Gettysburg Address is unarguably one of the greatest pieces of rhetoric in American history. Dr. J Rufus Fears (one of the great modern orators) argues that the Gettysburg Address, along with the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, form the three founding documents of American freedom. And I have to agree.

The Battle of Gettysburg left 8,000 men dead. The bodies were too numerous to bury properly and many were at first placed in shallow graves. Weeks after the battle, heads and arms were sticking up through the ground and the smell of rotting flesh was sickening.

Money was raised for a proper reburial, and it was decided that the new cemetery should be dedicated, to sweeten the air of Gettysburg, to solemnize this place of death. As was traditional, a great orator, in this case, Edward Everett, was asked to give a solemn and grand speech as a memorial to the fallen men. Lincoln was asked 2 months later, almost as a causal afterthought. He was to add a few remarks to Everett's, a function much like the man with the ceremonial scissors who cuts the ribbon. Legends has it that Lincoln's remarks were the product of pure inspiration, penned on the back of an envelope on the train chugging its way to the soon-to-be hallowed grounds of Gettysburg.

On the day of the dedication, Everett kept the crowd enthralled for a full two hours. Lincoln got up, gave his speech, and sat down even before the photographer had finished setting up for a picture. There was a long pause before anyone applauded, and then the applause was scattered and polite.

Not everyone immediately realized the magnificence of Lincoln's address. But some did. In a letter to Lincoln, Everett praised the President for his eloquent and concise speech,

## Speech #6 Lincoln's Gettysburg Address

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."*

And of course, in time, we have come to fully appreciate the genius and beauty of the words spoken that day. Dr. Fears argues that Lincoln's address did more than memorialize the fallen soldiers at Gettysburg; it accomplished nothing short of transforming the entire meaning of the Civil War. There were no details of the battle mentioned in the speech, no mentioning of soldier's names, of Gettysburg itself, of the South nor the Union, states rights nor secession. Rather, Lincoln meant the speech to be something far larger, a discourse on the experiment testing whether government can maintain the proposition of equality. At Gettysburg, the Constitution experienced a transformation. The first birth has been tainted by slavery. The men, of both North and South, lying in the graves at Gettysburg had made an atoning sacrifice for this great evil. And the Constitution would be reborn, this time living up to its promises of freedom and equality for all.

### **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

## Speech #6 Lincoln's Gettysburg Address

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.

**WRITE A REFLECTION-(3 paragraphs-5 sentences each)-This needs to be submitted through google classroom.**

**One paragraph that reflects on what the writer said**

- **Here's where you summarize the main points of the story**

**One paragraph that reflects on the writer's style**

- **How does the author use rhetorical devices (similes, metaphors, symbols etc.)**
- **What is the theme/author's message**

**One paragraph that reflects the reader's thoughts on the content of the Story**

- **Here's where you can discuss your reaction to the story, did it speak to you? Did you like it, why or why not?**