Abraham Lincoln's 'Gettysburg Address' on the 150th Anniversary -- Full Text

Abraham Lincoln (1809 - 1865), the 16th President of the United States of America.

Of the five known copies of the "Gettysburg Address" in Abraham Lincoln's handwriting (all a little different), this version named after Col. Alexander Bliss has been the most often produced in the 150 years since Lincoln signed and dated it, according to abrahamlincolnonline.org.

Here is the full text:

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 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.

- Abraham Lincoln

Nov. 19, 1863

An analysis of Abraham Lincoln's poetic Gettysburg Address

Overview

President Abraham Lincoln wrote and delivered the Gettysburg address on Nov. 19, 1863.

The Gettysburg Address was delivered by President Abraham Lincoln at the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery in Gettysburg, Penn., on the afternoon of Thursday, Nov. 19, 1863, during the American Civil War, four and a half months after the Union armies defeated the Confederacy at the Battle of Gettysburg.

What made the speech immediately notable was its brevity — 10 sentences and 271 words — Lincoln spoke for fewer than three minutes. Coincidentally, the Gettysburg Address as a slam poem.

The address is rich with allusions to the Bible and the Declaration of Independence and filled with poetic and rhetorical constructs so that it is more of a poem than a political speech. While the address contains a political aim, mainly that of preserving the Union, it served as a stirring and moving speech that could metaphorically speak for all the dead soldiers in the war.

The war served as a brutal purification, an inevitable struggle to rectify the major error made by the Founding Fathers: in a nation where all men are created equal, how can one man be another man's slave?

For 87 years, slavery divided the nation politically until the civil war divided it militarily. The war purged the nation of this crime, allowing it to be reborn at Gettysburg.

Background

Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee

The American Civil War began in 1861 with South Carolina rebellious forces firing on Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor. By 1863, the war was stumbling forward without many gains in the east, although Union forces in the west fared better.

After the Union announced an official blockade of Southern ports, foreign powers began to recognize the Confederacy as a "belligerent" in the Civil War, the British Empire on May 13, 1861, the Spanish Empire on June 17 and the ethnically Portuguese Dom Pedro II of the Empire of Brazil on Aug. 1.

Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia invaded Pennsylvania in 1863 to seize a major city, Harrisburg, or even Philadelphia to bring Lincoln and the North to the negotiating table. Had the gambit succeeded, politicians in Great Britain and France may have recognized the South as a sovereign power in North America rather than as a belligerent power or an internal rebellion.

However, Union Gen. Gordon Meade and his Army of the Potomac defeated Lee at the Battle Gettysburg (July 1-3, 1863), which marked the turning point of the war and the beginning of the slow demise of Lee's forces and the South with it.

Although the war dragged on until 1865, the battle and Gen. George Pickett's failed infantry charge on the third day of Gettysburg marked the psychological end of the Confederacy.

What made Lincoln's speech culturally significant in terms of the war itself was that there were no specific mentions of the battle itself, nor its location, nor the commanders. The "generic" nature of the speech could honestly have been spoken over any battlefield at any time during the war [illegible] having to change a word.

The fact that the address was spoken after the most significant battle of the war — a fact no one at the time could have known until after the war's conclusion — coincidentally adds to its political importance in American history.

The schedule of the day

The official schedule of events on that date included:

Music, by Birgfield's Band
Prayer, by the Rev. T.H. Stockton
Music, by the United States Marine Corps Band
Oration, by Edward Everett (Former Massachusetts Whig party representative [1825-35] governor [1836-1840] secretary of state under president Millard Fillmore [1852-53], U.S. senator [1853-54], and educator). By many scholars at the time, Everett was considered the nation's greatest orator.
Music, Hymn composed by B.B. French
Dedicatory Remarks, by U.S. President Abraham Lincoln
Dirge, sung by a choir selected for the occasion
Benediction, by Rev. H.L. Baugher, D.D

Edward Everett

In the 1850s and 1860s, American oratory was at its modern peak. Everett was invited to give the main speech at the dedication at the cemetery on Sept. 23, 1863. Everett reportedly told the organizing committee that he would be unable to prepare an appropriate speech in such a short period of time, and requested a postponement. The committee agreed and the dedication was postponed until Nov.19.

David Wills, the president of the committee, asked Lincoln to make a "few appropriate remarks," almost as an afterthought.

The 1860 presidential election was divisive. Everett ran as vice presidential candidate against Lincoln.

Republican Abraham Lincoln, from Illinois, ran with Hannibal Hamlin, taking 180 electoral votes, 18 states and 1,865,908 (39.8%) votes.

Lincoln defeated three other tickets: **Northern Democratic candidate Stephen A. Douglas,** of Illinois, of the Lincoln-Douglas debates, running with Herschel Vespasian Johnson, with 12 electoral votes and 1,380,202 (29.5%) votes, the **Southern Democratic candidate John C. Breckinridge,** from Kentucky, running with Joseph Lane, who won 72 electoral votes, 11 states, and 848,019 (18.1%) voters; and the**Constitutional Union candidate John Bell,** of Tennessee, **running with Edward Everett,** who won 39 electoral votes, 12 states, 590,901 (12.6%) votes.

Still a Northerner, Everett was a political contemporary who carried as much weight as a political figure on the national scene as Lincoln did. His Constitutional Union Party had a simple platform based on compromise over slavery or its expansion into the territories, valuing union over potential succession if an anti-slavery ticket was elected.

Everett spoke for two hours. Contemporary reports praised his oration, which was peppered with classical references and was frequently punctuated by applause.

Lincoln's two-minute follow-up speech, however, become one of the most famous speeches in the

Lincoln invoked the principles of human equality espoused by [illegible] and redefined the Civil War as a struggle not merely for the Union of the American states, but as "a new birth of freedom" that would bring true equality.

Everett's speech was the day's planned "Gettysburg address." His 13,607-word oration began:

Standing beneath this serene sky, overlooking these broad fields now reposing from the labors of the waning year, the mighty Alleghenies dimly towering before us, the graves of our brethren beneath our feet, it is with hesitation that I raise my poor voice to break the eloquent silence of God and Nature. But the duty to which you have called me must be performed; — grant me, I pray you, your indulgence and your sympathy.

And ended with:

But they, I am sure, will join us in saying, as we bid farewell to the dust of these martyr-heroes, that wheresoever throughout the civilized world the accounts of this great warfare are read, and down to the latest period of recorded time, in the glorious annals of our common country, there will be no brighter page than that which relates the Battles of Gettysburg.

Although deemed brilliant by those in the crowd and contemporary journalists, Everett's speech is now rarely read in favor by Lincoln's shorter and more poetic speech.

3 minutes → time duration 10 Sentences → 271 words

Lincoln's 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 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.

Thematic analysis

Lincoln employed many rhetorical devices (persuasive) in his artistry with words, but his mature speeches are especially characterized by:

- grammatical parallelism ✓
- antithesis ✓ (a thing that is direct opposite of someone or something else)
- alliteration (the repetition of the same sound.)
- repetition ✓

He would use all four strategies in his Nov. 19 address.

10 times → We, 3 times → us.

Notably, the voice in the Gettysburg Address is not a first-person singular individual. The address is full of first-person references, but everyone is plural. Ten times Lincoln uses the plural "we," and three times "us." The "speaker" is, in effect, Americans and Unionists, not the president.

It focuses on everyone, not individual.

Without naming the South or the Confederates, the speech makes no reference of the rebels as enemies. Their dead are not omitted from the speech, as though Southerns could look back after the abolition of slavery on the Battle of Gettysburg, the Civil War and the address as a dedication [illegible] as well, the cost in blood had to be paid to remake a free nation.

...ber coincidence of the battle's cost — estimated at just over 23,000 on each side — ...ongly suggests both sides paid almost equally, rather than a rout like Fredericksburg the first ...econd battles of Bull Run, or the bloodbaths Union Gen. Ulysses S Grant would use to win ...n of attrition toward the end of the war.

...Paragraph

...score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, ...ceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

All men are created equally.

...time and place to establish the scene and directly references the Declaration of ...endence, considered a sacred document to both the Unionists of the North and Secessionists ...e South. Confederates referred to the Civil War as the second war of independence.

(1861–65)

...r score and seven" was not a simple way to say 87. Lincoln was asking his audience to ...culate backward to discover that the nation's starting point was not the Constitution in 1787 ...the election of Gen. George Washington in 1789 as the first president, but the signing of the ...laration of Independence in 1776, and its sine qua non declaration of equality:

indespensable/essential.

...hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by ...r Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit ...Happiness."

not tranferable

...e main overt reference is the "all men are created equal" line in both.

...ores, i.e., 20 years, are also a shorthand way of measuring generations. While stating 87 years ...uld have been felt an a long time to people whose life expectancy was an average of around 60 ...rs, Lincoln's reference shows that only a short time in human terms had passed; assuming that ...st people in the 1860s became parents in their late teens or early 20s, a 40-year-old listener or ...der could have a grandparent who lived at the time of the county's birth, a relatively short ...e, in which to create a new nation based on a social experiment in liberty and equality. The ...rtness of time also pointed to the fragility of the nation.

...etically, the cadence began with two rhyming words: "four score." The line also contains a ...ythm of alliteration, "fathers ... forth" and "new nation."

rhyming

Repetition of the same sound.

...he Hebrew cadence, rendered in Elizabethan English, would have been stated slowly: "Four ... ...core." The biblical ring of his opening words was rooted in Psalm 90: "The days of our years are ...hreescore years and ten; And if by reason of strength they be fourscore years."

Score = 20

4Score = 4X20 = 80

70 years.

religious book: 80

...Lincoln never named verse or quoted directly from the Bible in his speeches, although he did do ...so in his Second Inaugural Address, when his speech included allusions to Matthew 18:7, Luke ...17:1 and Psalm 19:9. Lincoln's whole address was suffused with both biblical content and ...cadence.

rhyme of sounds/metres

...Lincoln built the Gettysburg Address upon a structure of past, present, and future. The three parts ...of the speech, broken into their composite parts, relate a brief summation of history, a reflection ...on the current struggle and how the choices of the present dictate the future course.

...Thematically, Lincoln started in the past by placing the battlefield at Gettysburg and the ...insignificance" of the dedication in the context of American history. His opening words ...highlighted historical continuity. His biblical allusion accented permanence — keep in mind that ...the people ...was a nation of believers. a concept most Americans accepted without question — ...these people ...ssed on the ...s are unassailable document, but the wisdom of God and God's ...while noting that the continuity of ... United States had surpassed the biblical time frame of life

Discourse: Media Conversation, Each communication.
Dinning table, WatsApp chat.

and death, in turn making the United States and its constitution a sacred document ordained by God as part of a divine plan for both Americans specifically and humanity in general.

In speaking of "our fathers," Lincoln invoked the common heritage of the Founding Fathers for both Northerners and Southerners. At the same time identified himself, not with the "leaders of the American people," but with his audience as children of their great experiment. The trajectory of the crucial, first sentence underscored the timeless American truth that "all men are created equal," which, although had been controversial among the landed leaders of the republic in 1776, had been accepted as common fact by the 1860s.

Whether a man — women and blacks still had no voting rights in most electorates — owned thousands of acres or merely worked a farm as a hired hand, in the American social landscape, they were equal both before the law as they were before God. All white men had been given the right to vote regardless of property ownership beginning in 1820 and by 1850, this right was almost universal. Free blacks in the North also had sufferage. When Lincoln reaffirmed this truth he asserted that the war was about both liberty and union.

Difference b/w Lincoln and Jefferson's speach.

(Lincoln began by invoking the Declaration of Independence, but his use of the word "proposition" — theory — spoke to a different certainty than Thomas Jefferson's "truths," which were "self-evident." Through the address, Lincoln emphasized at Gettysburg that the United States was not a completed entity at the time of the Declaration, but still an experiment still in process. He implied through "proposition" that Jefferson's language had to be proved as fact through the country's minor and major struggles. The Civil War (1861–65) and Gettysburg specifically were tests of that proposition, tests which had to be overcome to prove them as true as Jefferson had "theorized" with the Declaration. Because of the war, Lincoln had understood the fragility of the Union and sought to expose them through the architecture of his speech.)

p.s. idea/thought

"Proposition" was the turning point of the speech wherein Lincoln shifted his from past ideas to present realities.

Second paragraph (1861–65).

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation, so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure.

Conceived and dedicated has same synonym meaning brief

The first line of the second paragraph establishes the moment of the speech in its precise political context. At the beginning of the body of his address he used two perfect parallels: "that nation so conceived" and "any nation so dedicated." سرشار/وقف

devoted to a cause./zealous

Lincoln directly references the aforementioned "proposition" as being tested by "a great civil war." Its success or failure, i.e., reunification or division after the war, will prove or disprove Jefferson's proposal.

As Lincoln spoke about the dimensions of the past, he constructed the content of his political purposes by repeating key words: "great civil war," "great battlefield," "so dedicated," and "come to dedicate." Lincoln's use of repetition allowed him to underscore his rhetorical purpose.

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.

...n has longstanding tradition. Funerary orations date back to ancient Greece, ...wn is Pericles' Funeral Oration spoken in 410 B.C.E. during the

...ponnesian War and recorded in Thucydides' (460-395 B.C.E.) "History of the Peloponnesian

...cles's speech acknowledges Athens' predecessors: *"I shall begin with our ancestors: it is both ...and proper that they should have the honor of the first mention on an occasion like the ...ent"*, then praises Athens' commitment to democracy: *"If we look to the laws, they afford ...ual justice to all in their private differences"*; honors the dead and their sacrifices, *"Thus ...osing to die resisting, rather than to live submitting, they fled only from dishonor, but met ...gger face to face"*; and turns to the living to continue the struggle: *"You, their survivors, must ...termine to have as unfaltering a resolution in the field, though you may pray that it may have a ...ppier issue."*

Later accounts of Lincoln's life strongly suggest that he had not read that part of Thucydides' history. Battlefield dedications have been visited by leaders throughout history. Lincoln's statement that he, as the nation's leader, should perform this duty was more of an accepted fact among the political leaders of the time. The unusual nature of this specific dedication was that it was happening during active wartime and the battle had happened so recently.
Another point was that Everett, as a classicist, not Lincoln, would have been more likely to impart Pericles' sentiments. Lincoln's references lean toward Biblical ones, as his speeches often drew on scripture for allusions.

It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

The line establishes the justification for the audience to be at the event, while the following sentence immediately contradicts the importance by shifting the emphasis on the dead.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate — we can not consecrate — we can not hallow — this ground.

broader sense

His words, "But in a larger sense," were his clue to the audience that he was about to expand the parameters of his intentions. He was announcing his purpose to speak to a "larger" subject.

Stating the negative "but" served to first prepare the audience to agree with his evocation of what each person in the audience could do, both following the speech, in the larger scope of the war, and in the larger sense of America's history years and decades after the war became just a memory. These three parallel clauses focused on the present space: "this ground."

The importance of "hallow"

dedicate

"... We can not dedicate — we can not consecrate — we can not hallow ..."

What is most notable in a poetic sense is the use of two Latinate root words, — "consecrate" and "dedicate" — contained in parallel with a distinctly English root, "hallow."

Most native English speakers invariably attribute more weight to words with inherent ...ishness" to them, be they original words, imported word with an "English sound" or more

recent portmanteaus. The structure of the English language was slowly re-ordered and restructured after the Norman invasion of 1066 by using a Latinate languages, specifically French, but the lexicon of English remained based with the roots of Old English.

As a linguistic aside, for instance, veal, beef, venison and poultry are the common names for prepared dishes, names imported from the Norman French, whose French-speaking lords dined on meat from animals tended to by Old English-speaking farmers who used the words calves, cows, deer, ducks, chickens and turkeys. Playwrights and poets, such William Shakespeare and his contemporaries, often used this fact to make characters seem "lower" on the social strata by having them speak more "English" words while kings and nobles spoke with more Latinate-root words.

Lincoln used this linguistic abnormality as a parallel. While "consecrate" and "dedicate" are synonyms, "hallow" carries more weight because it is more "English" and more "emotionally sincere" for the mood. The structure of the sentence itself subtly suggests that Lincoln is perhaps searching for the "right" word for the moment. "Consecrate" and "dedicate" are not sufficient, but as he hits on the third word, it seems as though he has found the exact word for the moment, one that "consecrate" and "dedicate" are too formal, too lofty, too unemotional to properly express the emotional mood. It also seems as though Lincoln is actively thinking of synonyms to properly express his emotional connection to his duty, a scratching out "consecrate" and "dedicate" before committing to "hallow."

The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract.

Note that the audience of the speech is at the event to consecrate the battlefield, but trivialized by the actions of those who died on the field. Coincidentally, this is also the theme of Pericles' funeral oration, which draws the comparison.

At this point, Lincoln employed a dramatic antithesis. He contrasted "the brave men" with "our poor power." He simultaneously framed "living and dead" at the beginning of the sentence, and "add or detract" at the end of the sentence, in another parallelism.

The Final Paragraph He talks about present, past as well as future.

In the last three sentences of the address, Lincoln shifted the focus a final time. In the architecture of his address, Lincoln had recalled the past and what the nation did at its beginning, recited what the soldiers did in the near present, and now prepared to open out the future and speak to the responsibility of the listeners.

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

The line trivializes his own importance while again adding to the emphasis of the dead. Lincoln pointed away from words to deeds. He contrasts "what we say here" with "what they did here" in another antithesis. Lincoln also speaks in the plural, which places his identity among the audience, not as the leaders of the nation or speakers at the event.

"The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here ...." The irony is that Gettysburg Address is engraved in stone on the south wall of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.

In his speech, he focuses on audience, not leaders or speakers individually.

Of course the irony is that Gettysburg Address is engraved in stone on the south wall of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.

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.

The in this work of the sentence achieved energy from contrasts: "It is for us the living," contrasted with "those who gave their lives here";

unfinished work which they who fought here," was an invitation to finish the work. (45)
line continues to empowers the audience to take inspiration from the deeds of the dead and
tinue the struggle for union.

ough the "work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced," Lincoln's
ole point is that the dead gave all they had but can go no further. The emphasis shifts from
at they did to the audience to continue to struggle with all they have — that is the true way,
coln argues, to honor their sacrifice, not simply in winning the war, but in rebuilding the
on in the Declaration of Independence's proposed vision afterward.

final line
coln's closing sentience, in a speech ironically known for its brevity, is a long, complex
tence of 82 words.

is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us — that from these
nored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full
easure of devotion —

his part of the sentence emphasizes the passion of the dead to have fought and died for a mere
use. Lincoln continued repetition: "to be dedicated we take increased devotion," and "to be here
dicated the last full measure of devotion." His repetition rhetorically reiterated the
countability of the audience.

Dedicate" and "devotion" are both religious words which conjured the call to commitment in the
vival services of the Second Great Awakening and in the churches Lincoln attended in
ashington during the war.

The last full measure of devotion" is far more poetic than simply"death,"as it immediately,
oquently and metaphorically postulates that the dead died for a purpose, struggling toward a
al which they failed to reach but which we must continue to pursue. Lincoln seems to suggest
at the died knew their purpose was not to take a hill or prevent a charge, but to reunite the
ation and remake the country as it should have been,almost as though the soldiers had heard the
Gettysburg Address before the battle and knew the costs they would have to pay.
at 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 —

Note the use of "in vain" which in the context of "under God" has Biblical implications. The line
"under God" is only found in three of the five original manuscripts, but in neither of the two first
drafts. Lincoln most likely used the second draft at the speech itself. The other three manuscripts
were written later at the request of contemporary historians and "under God" may have been
added even though it was not spoken at Gettysburg.
Regardless of the reference, poetically, "under God" continues the theme of past, and future.
Lincoln felt the United States and its special place as the birth of democracy had both religious
and political parents. He consistently invoked God in most of his major speeches as president.
"Under God" also aims at the future in "shall have a new birth of freedom." Without the twin
guidance of God and the liberty and unity of the nation, Lincoln argues that freedom isn't
possible. In the first years of the Civil War, Lincoln found himself wrestling in new ways with the
purposes of God in history. The death of so many soldiers brought him face to face with the
meaning of life.
"A new birth of freedom" was layered with political and religious definitions.
The metaphor first contrasts with the old. The "new birth" which emerged in the context of the
war and Lincoln's leadership meant at Gettysburg he was no longer defending an old Union, like
he did in his First Inaugural Address in 1861, but proclaiming a new Union. The old Union tried
to deal with the contradiction of slavery and the ideal that "all men are created equal" by ignoring
slavery in the interest of national unity and survival. Now with the country at war, maintaining

that duality was politically pointless and metaphorically dead as it hadn't keep the country together peacefully, but driven it to civil war. Lincoln was declaring that the new Union would fulfill the Jefferson's promise of liberty for all, the crucial step the founders were too afraid to take in 1776.

The "new birth" in Christianity and evangelical movements was a spiritual birth made by the choice of the believer. In essence, through the horrors of war the United States is "born again" as it should have been. In this context, the cost to make an America a nation of liberty and equality was paid at Gettysburg in 1863, not Lexington and Concord in 1776 nor at Yorktown in 1781. The "new birth" was a paradox in both politics and religion. Lincoln and scholars since had come to see the Civil War as a ritual of purification. The old Union had to die just as the old man had to die. In death there was preparation for a new Union and a new humanity.

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

"Government of the people, by the people, for the people," is a perfectly parallel structure that essentially sums up the American democracy in 10 words. These 10 words have been used by Americans and American politicians ever since as the justification for the United States' existence and the moral rightness in its cause — the inherent "rightness" of representative democracy.

It also forms an if-then summary conclusion for the entire address: If we honor the dead here by fighting to preserve the union at all costs, like they did, and if we ensure liberty for all, our experiment — then democracy — will be born again — in the way it should have been, without slavery — and never die.

While it inspires certain inevitability in victory and immortality in the United States as a nation, the use of a negative in the last line demonstrates the threat of annihilation if they fail. Lincoln was putting fate of the war in his listeners' hands. They weren't putting down a small rebellion that could have been won or lost with little consequence — they were fighting for their very survival. The grand experiment of representative democracy, universal liberty and the nation's existence were on the line.

In peacetime, Lincoln could said "will live forever," or "flourish for all time," but the struggle of the Civil War put the importance on victory. If the Union failed to defeat the Confederacy, the United States could have Balkanized and broken up over time, so the use of "shall not perish" implied that the nation was potentially on its deathbed.

Lincoln's opposition to slavery was not overtly stated in the address. In his 1860 presidential campaign, he was willing to accept slavery for the sake of union. However, as the Civil War became less of a issue of a state's right to secede and more about liberty and freedom of all the country's citizens, Lincoln turned his attention toward emancipation, in as much as its morality as its ability to hurt a rebellious South. In 1862, after the Battle of Antietam, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which went into effect in January 1863.

In turning the war against an political contention and into a issue of morality, he galvanized the North and drummed up support for the effort on moral grounds, even as the war was stalled.

Although the wording of "Government of the people, by the people, for the people," was Lincoln's, the sentiment was not.

Lincoln's law partner William Herndon had given him sermons of abolitionist minister Theodore Parker, who had written in "The Effect of Slavery on the American People:" *"Democracy is*

government, over all the people, for all the people, by all the people," a line which later wrote Lincoln had especially liked. Lincoln pared the wording down to its constituent words into a more succinct and poetic rendition.

In the immediate aftermath of the speech, Lincoln was uncertain about how it was received. He reportedly turned to another person on the platform and commented, in effect, that the speech fell on its face. Journalists were mixed, some complaining the the speech was too short, so short they had thought the address was only an opening remark before a larger and more political speech. Other journalists commented on its poetry, eloquence and brilliance. The address has become one of the best known, most repeated, and beloved speeches in American history, so the latter group eventually won out.

As proof, Everett, the great orator, wrote a note to Lincoln the next day: *"I should be glad, if I could flatter myself that I came as near the central idea of the occasion in two hours, as you did in two minutes."*

Through the address, Lincoln created the idea of a unified nation in which states' rights were subject to the rights of the nation as a whole. The issue of states' rights valued over national common good had were a determent to military capacity in the war.

The South, which placed the value of individual states over the central government of the Confederacy stayed true to this cause and often refused to allow their brigades and regiments to be commanded by colonels and generals from other states, which contributed to inefficiency in movement and on the battlefield, and the occasional military blunder.

The North, which valued union over all, didn't suffer from this single-mindedness. The North's blunders were due to the general incompetence of some of it's leaders alone.

After the war ended, the idea of national unity expressed in the address also contributed to a dramatic shift from provincial to national political identity.

No longer would citizens refer to themselves as a "Virginian in America" or a "New Yorker in America" but "an American from Virginia" or "an American from New York." Before the American Civil War and the Gettysburg Address, we were *A* **united states of America,** but afterward, we were ***The United States* of America.**

The Gettysburg Address

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania
November 19, 1863

On June 1, 1865, Senator Charles Sumner referred to the most famous speech ever given by President Abraham Lincoln. In his eulogy on the slain president, he called the Gettysburg Address a "monumental act." He said Lincoln was mistaken that "the world will little note, nor long remember what we say here." Rather, the Bostonian remarked, "The world noted at once what he said, and will never cease to remember it. The battle itself was less important than the speech."

There are five known copies of the speech in Lincoln's handwriting, each with a slightly different text, and named for the people who first received them: Nicolay, Hay, Everett, Bancroft and Bliss. Two copies apparently were written before delivering the speech; the remaining ones were produced months later for soldier benefit events. Despite widely-circulated stories to the contrary, the president did not dash off a copy aboard a train to Gettysburg. Lincoln carefully prepared his major speeches in advance; his steady, even script in every manuscript is consistent with a firm writing surface, unlikely bumpy Civil War-era trains. Additional versions of the speech appeared in newspapers of th

both sides paid almost equally, rather than a rout like Fredericksburg the first
of Bull Run, or the bloodbaths Union Gen. Ulysses S Grant would use to win
toward the end of the war.

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

All men are created equally.

place to establish the scene and directly references the Declaration of
considered a sacred document to both the Unionists of the North and Secessionists
South. Confederates referred to the Civil War as the second war of independence.

(1861-65)

score and seven" was not a simple way to say 87. Lincoln was asking his audience to
backward to discover that the nation's starting point was not the Constitution in 1787
election of Gen. George Washington in 1789 as the first president, but the signing of the
laration of Independence in 1776, and its sine qua non declaration of equality:

indespensable/essential.

hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by
Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit
Happiness."

not transferable

main overt reference is the "all men are created equal" line in both.

ores, i.e., 20 years, are also a shorthand way of measuring generations. While stating 87 years
uld have been felt an a long time to people whose life expectancy was an average of around 60
ars. Lincoln's reference shows that only a short time in human terms had passed; assuming that
st people in the 1860s became parents in their late teens or early 20s, a 40-year-old listener or
ader could have a grandparent who lived at the time of the county's birth, a relatively short
me, in which to create a new nation based on a social experiment in liberty and equality. The
ortness of time also pointed to the fragility of the nation.

rhyming

etically, the cadence began with two rhyming words: "four score." The line also contains a
ythm of alliteration, "fathers … forth" and "new nation."

repetition of the same sound.

The Hebrew cadence, rendered in Elizabethan English, would have been stated slowly: "Four . . .
core." The biblical ring of his opening words was rooted in Psalm 90: "The days of our years are
hreescore years and ten; And if by reason of strength they be fourscore years."

Score = 20
4Score = 4X20 = 80.
religious book. 80
10 years.

Lincoln never named verse or quoted directly from the Bible in his speeches, although he did do
so in his Second Inaugural Address, when his speech included allusions to Matthew 18:7, Luke
17:1 and Psalm 19:9. Lincoln's whole address was suffused with both biblical content and
cadence.

rhyme of sounds/metres

Lincoln built the Gettysburg Address upon a structure of past, present, and future. The three parts
of the speech, broken into their composite parts, relate a brief summation of history, a reflection
on the current struggle and how the choices of the present dictate the future course.

Thematically, Lincoln started in the past by placing the battlefield at Gettysburg and the
"insignificance" of the dedication in the context of American history. His opening words
highlighted historical continuity. His biblical allusion accented permanence — keep in mind that
the Bible was a not merely seen as an unassailable document, but the wisdom of God and God's
chosen people to believers, a concept most Americans accepted without question —
while at that point the continuity of the United States had surpassed the biblical time frame of life