

Lincoln's Speeches: Emancipation Proclamation and the Gettysburg Address

Emancipation Proclamation

Background:

Going into the third year of the bloodiest war in American history, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. It declared that all slaves in the "states in rebellion," would be freed. Although presented as a military order (it also allowed blacks to join the Union military for the first time), it also marked a notable shift in Lincoln's views on slavery. The focus of the war moved from preserving the Union to a moral necessity, ending slavery. Unfortunately, no slaves were actually freed under the Emancipation Proclamation. The document only applied to enslaved people in the Confederacy, not the border states in the Union, and the Confederacy was technically its own country. The Emancipation Proclamation did lay the foundation for the Thirteenth Amendment, which officially prohibited slavery in the United States.

Excerpts/Questions (Use the text provided to answer the questions. UNDERLINE only the parts of the text that help you answer the questions)

"That on the 1st day of January, A.D. 1863, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

Vocabulary:

whereof - which
thenceforward – from that time to the future
thereof – of what was just mentioned
repress – keep down/restrain by force

1. As of what date will the Emancipation Proclamation go into effect?
2. Who is being freed under the Emancipation Proclamation? (BE SPECIFIC)

"And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defense; and I recommend to them that, in all case when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

"And I further declare and make known that such persons of suitable condition will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

Vocabulary:

enjoin – urge/encourage
garrison – provided troops

3. What does he ask of the freed slaves? Why do you think he includes this? (What might people have been worried would happen?)
4. How did the Emancipation Proclamation help the Union military?

Gettysburg Address

Background:

In November, 1863, an official ceremony took place to dedicate the National Cemetery of Gettysburg, on the site of one of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War (which was still taking place). Even though President Lincoln was not the main speaker, his few words on Gettysburg would be remembered as one of the most important speeches in American history. Lincoln honored the Union dead and reminded the listeners of the purpose of the soldier's sacrifice: equality, freedom, and national unity. Lincoln's speech did not garner much attention during his lifetime; in many ways, it was forgotten and lost to popular memory until the U.S. Centennial in 1876, when its significance was reconsidered in light of the war's outcome and in the larger context of the country's history.

Excerpts/Questions (Use the text provided to answer the questions. **UNDERLINE** only the parts of the text that help you answer the questions)

"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 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.

Vocabulary:

score – twenty
conceived – formed/planned
endure – suffer
consecrate – make holy
hallow – honor as holy
detract – take away
devotion – strong loyalty/love
resolve – find a solution
vain – useless
perish – die

1. Do the math, what year is Lincoln referring to in his opening line?
2. What happened on that date? What other phrase in the opening sentence helps back up your answer?
3. How does Lincoln compare the Civil War and the American Revolution? (use context clues)
4. In Lincoln's view, what should be remembered about the Battle of Gettysburg? (Be detailed, but write in your own words – do not copy from the text)