

The Gettysburg Address Student Worksheet

Introduction:

Gettysburg was one of the most pivotal and bloody battles in American history, as nearly 40,000 soldiers were killed or wounded. Losses for the Southern forces were so staggering that they could not recover, and although the war continued more than a year, after Gettysburg the South had virtually no chance of winning. In November, 1863, plans were made to hold a ceremony dedicating the Gettysburg battlefield as a national cemetery. President Lincoln was invited to come to the ceremony and make a “few appropriate remarks.” Lincoln accepted the invitation, and the short speech he gave became one of the best-known in American history.

All Web links for this lesson can be found at: <http://www.socialstudies.com/uslinks.html>

Directions:

The Gettysburg Address Drafts

Go to <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/gadd/gadrft.html>

Answer the following questions about the sources:

1. To whom were the two copies of the speech given? What positions (jobs) did both hold?
2. What evidence is given that Nicolay’s version may have been the one Lincoln actually delivered? Why might the draft not be the one Lincoln actually used?
3. According to the Library of Congress Web page, three other copies of the speech were made by Lincoln and given to others. Who received them?
4. In your view, why is it important to have different versions of the same speech?

The Gettysburg Address

Go to http://www.socialstudies.com/article.html?article@lincoln_gettysburg

After reading the Gettysburg Address, answer the following questions:

5. How did Lincoln describe the creation of the nation in the speech? What reference in the opening paragraph does Lincoln make regarding the reason the nation was created?

6. What do you think Lincoln meant when he stated that the participants in the ceremony could not “consecrate” this ground?

7. How did Lincoln sum up the importance of the sacrifice of those who died in the battle?

8. Give two examples of phrases from the speech that were intended to unite the nation.

9. Many have said that the Gettysburg Address is one of the greatest speeches in American history. Do you agree? Give reasons to support or reject your position.