

## The Gettysburg Address

**Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, November 19, 1863:**

“Four score and seven years ago (1) 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 (2) of that war. We have come together to dedicate a portion of that field as the final resting place for those who here gave their lives (3) that this nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do so.

But in a larger sense, we cannot 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 (4), 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 here to be 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 (5) shall not perish from the earth.”

### Notes

1) **Four Score:** A score is 20 years. Lincoln delivered the Gettysburg Address on November 19, 1863, 87 years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

2) **Battlefield:** The Battle of Gettysburg, fought from July 1-3, 1863, is regarded as the turning point of the Civil War. For the first time, Confederate forces mounted a major attack on Union territory. Even though it would take another two years for the Confederacy to surrender, after Gettysburg, it appeared that the Union would win the War.

3) **Gave Their Lives:** Gettysburg was a terrible slaughter. Each side suffered between 20,000 and 25,000 killed and wounded. Whole groups of men were obliterated by close range artillery and rifle fire.

4) **World Will Little Note:** Lincoln was wrong about this. The world will long remember the Gettysburg Address.

5) **Government Of, By and For the People:** This is the most famous passage in one of the most famous speeches of American history. In a simple phrase, Lincoln captured the essence of our democratic republic.

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