

The gettysburg address



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On November 19, 1863 at the Gettysburg battlefield, president Abraham Lincoln gave a concise speech that would leave a long-lasting impression on the many Americans that lived during the Civil War period. From July 1 to July 3, an estimated 7, 500 American soldiers died in the Battle of Gettysburg. Residents of Gettysburg first had the idea of creating a National Cemetery and holding a ceremony in honor of both the soldiers of the Union army, and those of the Confederacy that died on the battlefield. A man of opulence and leading resident of the ceremony named David Wills wrote a letter to Lincoln inviting him to participate in the event.

President Lincoln willingly accepted even though he had only a short amount of time to prepare. Although the North and South were at odds with each other during the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln creates unity among Americans by using many rhetorical strategies such as parallelism, juxtaposition, repetition, and strong diction in his speech full of reverence and dedication to the brave soldiers that perished in the Battle of Gettysburg. The purpose of president Lincoln's speech is to honor the soldiers and bring the North and South together with his central goal of unity.

He bestows a farewell to the deceased soldiers with a remorseful tone by encouraging the audience to believe that they have not " died in vain. " This shows that they died for a purpose, and should receive great honor for their bravery. Lincoln's diction along with repetition such as " devotion" and " dedicated" expresses honor by stating that the grave site is specifically for those that died on the battlefield. He uses three words with the same meaning, including " dedicate," " consecrate," and " hallow," all in one sentence.

By using these words and separating them with dashes, Lincoln is putting emphasis on the idea of reverence. As his tone changes from mourning to encouraging, Lincoln uses the juxtaposition “ living and dead” to create a sense of unity. He reminds the audience not only of the soldiers that died fighting, but of the ones that fought courageously and are still alive. As the president speaks in 3rd person point of view, he refers to those that were killed as “ they,” making it un mindful whether they were a Union soldier or a Confederate.

The final sentence of the speech is the most significant for Abraham Lincoln’s purpose of unity. While using parallelism, he quotes part of the Preamble of the Constitution by saying “ of the people, by the people, for the people. ” His quoting is the main example of unity because the Constitution is responsible for originally bringing the nation together. Our founding fathers were divided at the time the Constitution was written, however, they still came together as one on a single piece of paper. President Abraham Lincoln’s speech only lasted a short amount over two minutes, but the impression it made could last a lifetime.

The estimated 15, 000 people who attended the ceremony thought highly of the words that he had to say, since they are still quoted and talked about to this day. It is ironic how Lincoln states, “ the world will little note, nor long remember what we say here,” because we have noted and remembered his words for almost 148 years. As he sanctifies the battlefield to many courageous soldiers, Lincoln unifies Americans and encourages them to help him with the devotion while using effective rhetorical strategies and compelling diction in his speech known as The Gettysburg Address.

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