

Why is abraham
lincoln's and socrates
speech is worth
studying



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Abraham Lincoln's 1863CE speech "The Gettysburg Address" and Socrates's 399BCE speech "No Evil can happen to a good man" have withstood the test of time and has given the present and future generations with a speech worth studying. Although both speeches were given at different times, in different contexts and to different audiences, it has both been momentarily delivered and the studies carried out on these speeches help the modern generations to understand the morals, values and historical contexts of the past. The purpose is a vital aspect of a speech. Without a well-defined purpose, a speech would merely be used to entertain. But speeches as memorable as Abraham Lincoln's and Socrates's were not. Lincoln's speech affected a whole nation, Socrates's speech affected his life, so they used their addresses as arguments to persuade. The social and political context that these speeches were delivered into also affected the way their audiences perceived it. Today, we may see the same issue in a completely different manner. Lincoln's 1863CE speech, "The Gettysburg Address" was definitely of a political foundation. Abraham Lincoln was the President of the United States from 1861 to 1865. This was during the period of the American Civil War. In the aftermath of the Battle of Gettysburg (July 1st — 3rd, 1863), a dedication ceremony was held to honour the fifty-one thousand casualties. Lincoln's speech's aim was to redefine the purpose of the Union in fighting the Civil War. Socrates's 399BCE speech, "No Evil can happen to a Good Man", was a defence speech to the jury in his trial in Athens where he was accused of denying the Athenian gods, corrupting the social fabric of the city, and turning the city's young men against their fathers. Socrates was a philosopher who did all his teachings orally. One of his famous pupils was Plato, who recorded this address as his master, instead of emotionally <https://assignbuster.com/why-is-abraham-lincolns-and-socrates-speech-is-worth-studying/>

pleading to spare his life, calmly used it as an occasion to explain himself to his peers and to his descendants. The morals and values presented in Lincoln's and Socrates's speeches are significant as they have shaped the way their audiences reacted. Both Lincoln and Socrates are men of high rank and high intelligence, their deep insight into their respective issues makes them seem different to other people of their time. However it is their morals and values that we, the modern audience would have agreed and also comply with. Lincoln, in just over two minutes was able to reveal his thoughts and feelings on the principles of human equality advocated by the Declaration of Independence and how the Civil War was a struggle not only for the Union but also the "new birth of Freedom". Lincoln's encouragement through "government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth" also sums up his views on morals and values of politics and shows how he is a righteous President who cares for his fellow citizens. Socrates was a man of deep thoughts and philosophy. His way of thinking was different to others and his method of testing the truth of allegations and beliefs in society was to speak out about it. Socrates's morals and values brought him under great scrutiny from more conservative minds and he was made a scapegoat after the Peloponnesian War, where Athens was humiliated by its enemies. Socrates boldly criticised the Athenians, especially those who thought wealth and power were the attributes most worth having. Abraham Lincoln and Socrates are both exceptional orators. Lincoln's carefully crafted address used plenty of literary techniques which had come quite useful in getting his point across and in the quickest manner possible. Socrates, who did all his teachings orally, was naturally a powerful orator. Even as he spoke, his words were brought together through clever

<https://assignbuster.com/why-is-abraham-lincolns-and-socrates-speech-is-worth-studying/>

techniques which made it long and detailed; after all it is his last words. In the Gettysburg address, Lincoln used inclusive language. His use of first person helped identify him as a fellow human being who lives in the same country as them thus they should trust and believe in his words as it affects them as well as him, e. g. “ Fellow countrymen..., Now we are engaged in a great civil war... ”. Lincoln also carefully uses juxtaposition of themes to contrast between the dedication of the living and those of the dead. This helps him express his ideas of the current crisis in respect to everyone, e. g. “ The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here... ”. Lastly, Lincoln’s use of repetition and accumulation of thoughts is an effective way to portray his beliefs and is a straightforward way to let his audience understand. E. g. “.. we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow & ... government of the people, by the people, for the people... ”. In Socrates’s address, he played on his words a lot, e. g. “ Virtue springs not from possessions, but from virtue springs possessions... ”. In this example, Socrates simply rearranged the words to a popular belief to completely change the meaning that is to what Socrates believed. Socrates also used an unusual metaphor to compare himself to the city of Athens, e. g. “... am attached by God to the State, as a kind of gadfly to a big generous horse... ”. Socrates then goes on to explain what the fly does to the horse like what he would do to the city i. e. “... everywhere I fasten on you, rousing and persuading and admonishing you... ”. Being gifted with a clever tongue, Socrates was able to alliterate with ease, e. g. “ I being slow and stricken in years am caught by the slower... ” The ‘ s ’ sound is emphasised in this sentence and shows his tired and slow pace. These speeches both have elements of a well-presented speech. But after all, it is the reception of these <https://assignbuster.com/why-is-abraham-lincolns-and-socrates-speech-is-worth-studying/>

speeches that proved its effectiveness. At time of delivery it was not seen as such a significant speech, as in it Lincoln essentially tried to explain to the people why the bloodletting must go on. The speech was mostly forgotten until the 1880s when the Gettysburg Address took on the role as one of America's " sacred scriptures", as Gettysburg became a symbol of reunion for the North and South. Civil War scholar, Boritt believes it is the speech's poetic language that helped the speech live on and the message of " sacrificial redemption" that speaks to Americans today. The audience of Socrate's speech was a court jury made up of a possible 500 people. Many were old and war-wounded and found it hard to stay awake during Socrate's address. Although, the speech wasn't persuasive enough, to save his life, it definitely gave him a bit more votes for being innocent. However, after his death, Athens realised they had done wrong to Socrates, the amended it by building a bronze statue of Socrates. Today's audience, judging by the speech, would perceive Socrates as a wise philosopher, who stood by his words, even in the face of death. Abraham Lincoln's and Socrate's speeches were one of the most quoted and memorable speeches of all time. They are excellent examples of good rhetoric and logic as well as gave great insight into the political, social and historical context of the times. They are examples of speeches that changed a nation. And for these reasons, Abraham Lincoln's 1863CE speech " The Gettysburg Address" and Socrate's 399BCE speech " No Evil can happen to a good man" have withstood the test of time and has given the present and future generations with a speech worth studying.