

THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS: A CLOSE READING

Close Reading Instructions

- Highlight any words or phrases you feel are important to understanding the meaning of the text
- Underline any repeated words (excluding 'the,' 'and,' etc.)
- Circle all words relating to place and time

Discuss as a Group

Questions will be posted on the projector. You will discuss as a group, and then we will share ideas as a class. **DO NOT** move on to the analysis questions until the group discussion is finished.

Analysis Questions

1. What is Lincoln's understanding of 'freedom' and 'equality,' as shown in the speech? Why does he call human equality a 'proposition,' as something meant to be proven? Give specific examples from the text.
2. Explain how the theme of birth and rebirth are illustrated in the speech. How does the "new birth of freedom" differ from the nation's original birth? Why do you think Lincoln focused on this theme within the Address?
3. Explain how Lincoln illustrates the idea of war as a test for the United States. What exactly is being tested? What are the benefits of such a test? What are the costs?
4. What do you believe is Lincoln's larger purpose for this speech? What specific elements of the speech led you to that conclusion?
5. In your opinion, what is the significance of this speech today, over 150 years after it was given? Do you agree with Senator Sumner's assertion that "The battle itself was less important than the speech?" Explain your decision.

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