

## Gettysburg Address

### Benjamin Pritchard

For this week's discussion assignment, I chose to read the **Gettysburg Address**, which was delivered by Abraham Lincoln in November 1863. Lincoln delivered his now famous speech at the dedication of a new cemetery, the *Gettysburg National Cemetery*, which was created for union soldiers who died at the Battle of Gettysburg during the American Civil War (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2011).

The opening lines – “*four score, and seven years ago*” – are know to every American school child, and represent the amount of time (87 years) between the signing of the American Declaration of Independence and Lincoln's delivery of the speech in 1863 (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2011).

I chose the Gettysburg Address for this assignment because I have always been drawn to Abraham Lincoln, and I think he is one of the greatest leaders the United States has ever seen. He was a self-educated man, came from an impoverished background, and suffered from “melancholia” which today would probably be diagnosed as clinical depression. And yet despite these facts, Lincoln managed to lead the nascent United States towards the abolishment of slavery by successfully preventing the succession crisis the country was facing.

The main thing about Lincoln's speech that stood out to me was how short it was: it weights in at only 271 words. Yet despite it's brevity, Lincoln's words are very powerful, and manage in a succinct way to convey both the tragedy of the Union soldier's deaths and the necessity to continue fighting for what they died for: the preservation of the union, and the abolishment of slavery.

I do feel like I know the author better after studying this speech. I believe Abraham Lincoln was a straightforward and honest man who was deeply troubled by the war-time bloodshed that was occurring during his presidency. More than 150 years later, the authenticity of Lincoln's heart-felt words still ring true, and should serve as an example to the lying and self-serving politicians that are so typical of our day and age.

### References

**Gettysburg Address.** (2011). Encyclopædia Britannica. *Encyclopædia Britannica Ultimate Reference Suite*. Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica.