

A SPEECH FOR THE AGES

During a dark time for the nation, Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address inspired Americans.

President Abraham Lincoln stood before a crowd of about 15,000 people in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. It was November 19, 1863, and he was there to say a few words to help **dedicate** a new cemetery. Little did Lincoln know that his speech—called the Gettysburg Address—

would become a key moment in U.S. history.

“The Gettysburg Address is one of the greatest speeches of all time,” Jon Favreau told TFK. He is the former head speechwriter for President Barack Obama (see “A Guide for Great Speeches”). “Lincoln spoke of a vision of a more unified country, even during one of its worst, most **divisive** moments,” Favreau says.

The Nation Is Tested

In 1863, the U.S. was in the middle of the Civil War. Northern and Southern states were divided over many issues, including states' rights and slavery. By May 1861, 11 Southern states had seceded, or broken away. They formed a new nation, called the Confederate States of America, or the Confederacy, in which slavery would continue to exist.

Lincoln was determined to hold the country together—even if it led to war. He believed



Americans listen to Abraham Lincoln in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

slavery had to end. Two years after the war began, Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed all the slaves.

The Battle of Gettysburg took place from July 1 to 3, 1863. It left more than 50,000 soldiers dead or wounded. The cemetery at Gettysburg held the bodies of soldiers who had fought for the Union, or the Northern states.

In his speech, Lincoln said “four score and seven,” or 87, years earlier, the Declaration of Independence had set up a new nation. In this nation, “all men were created equal.” Lincoln described the Civil War as a test of whether a nation built on this belief could survive. He urged Americans to keep fighting for the cause for which so many soldiers had given their lives. “Government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth,” he promised the nation.

At a time before television or the Internet, news of the president's speech touched people across the nation. “The best American speeches tell a story about America, about our values, and what the founding of this country was all about,” says Favreau. “The Gettysburg Address does that.” —By Glenn Greenberg

Power Words

dedicate: to officially make something a place for remembering a person or an event

divisive: causing people to separate into different groups

OF WHOM THE SPEECH
IN MEMORY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN
IS ENSHRINED FOREVER

The Lincoln Memorial is in Washington, D.C.



THINK!

What does the phrase "of the people, by the people, for the people" mean?

PETE SOUZA—THE WHITE HOUSE



Jon Favreau (right) works with President Barack Obama on a speech.

A Guide for Great Speeches

For four years, Jon Favreau led the team that helped President Barack Obama write his speeches. Below, he offers tips for writing a successful speech—even if you are not the president.

★ **Keep it short and simple.**
"You can always find fewer words to use in a sentence."

★ **Be real.**
"Write a speech like you would have a talk—it should come from the heart."

★ **Know your audience.**
"Know what they care about and what will keep them interested."

★ **Tell a story.**
"Be sure it has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Storytelling is the heart of good speech writing."



To watch a video about the Battle of Gettysburg, go to timeforkids.com/gettysburg.