



Social Studies Exemplary Text Student Handout

Fourscore and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We are met to dedicate a portion of it as the final resting-place of those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But in a large sense we cannot dedicate,—we cannot consecrate,—we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work that they have thus far so nobly carried on. It is, rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that Government of the people, by the people and for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Lincoln, Abraham. (1863). "Gettysburg Address."

This is an example of exemplary text found in *Common Core Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects: Appendix B Text Exemplars and Sample Performance Tasks*. Retrieved from http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf

Social Studies Exemplary Text Teacher Resource

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EFL 5
Word Count 264

Teacher introduces the text with minimal commentary and students read it independently. Teacher then reads passage aloud. Give a brief definition to words students would likely not be able to define from context (underlined in text). Teacher guides the students through a series of text-dependent questions. Complete the performance task as a cumulative evaluation of the close-reading.

Text-Dependent Questions

1. What does Lincoln mean by "four score and seven years ago"?
2. What does **conceived** mean? What does **proposition** mean?
3. What is he saying is significant about America? Is he saying that no one has been free or equal before? So what is new?
4. Who are "our fathers"? What can we know about "our fathers" from this sentence?
5. What impact does starting the sentence with "now" have on its meaning?
6. When Lincoln says the nation was "so conceived and so dedicated" what is he referring to?
7. What is the point including the phrase "or any nation so conceived and so dedicated" – what would the sentence mean without it?
8. What if Lincoln had used the verb "start" instead of "conceive"?
9. What larger war is this battle a part of?
10. What is the impact of starting the paragraph with "but"?

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11. What does Lincoln describe as the impact of those who fought at Gettysburg?
12. Which verb does Lincoln use the most (sometimes in the past tense)? What does the word “dedicate” mean the first two times Lincoln uses it? How is “dedicate” used the next two times and how does it relate to the word consecrate? Who is now doing the dedicating? How does Lincoln use “dedicate” the final two times, and how does it relate to devotion?

Performance Tasks for Informational Texts

In the last paragraph of the *Gettysburg Address*, Lincoln shifts the focus of his speech away from what he says is its purpose at the end of the second paragraph. What reasons does he give for the shift in focus? What does Lincoln think is the task left to those listening to his speech? Use evidence from the text to support your analysis. Formulate an answer to these questions in a thoughtful brief essay. [RI.9-10.3]

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