

STUDENT ASSIGNMENT:

Your task is to rewrite President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address into modern language, sentence by sentence.

Here are examples of the first two sentences:

Eighty-seven years ago, our ancestors created the USA, a country based on the principles of freedom and equality for all citizens.

Now our country is going through a civil war to figure out if any country based on the principles of freedom and equality can last.

President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania; November 19, 1863

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 have come to dedicate a portion of it as the final resting-place of those who have given their lives that that nation might live.

It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger 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 to 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 shall, under God, have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania; November 19, 1863

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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.

READ

Read your sentence aloud, several times. Have each person in the group read it aloud. Pay attention to the punctuation when you read, and think about the words.

VOCABULARY

fourscore – 80 (a score is 20; therefore, fourscore is 80)

conceived – made up, thought of, created

liberty – freedom from control or rule by another

proposition – a plan or an idea proposed by someone

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. Abraham Lincoln gave this speech in 1863. What happened in America fourscore and seven years earlier?
2. Who does President Lincoln mean by “our fathers?”
3. Why do you think he used the words “fourscore and seven” rather than just giving the date?
4. Why was the United States a “new” nation? How was it different from the other nations existing at that time?
5. The United States may have been “conceived in liberty,” but did this mean liberty for all?