Questions/Notes for the Gettysburg Address (1863) Socratic Seminar:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Of the 266 words contained in this version of the Gettysburg Address, which ONE do you think is most significant? Why? (round robin discussion...all speakers respond to this question)
 |  |
| 1. Lincoln opens the address by saying that America is a nation “conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.” He follows by describing the Civil War as “testing whether…any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure.” What does he mean? What forces would prevent a nation dedicated to equality from surviving?
 |  |
| 1. Why does Lincoln say that they “cannot dedicate…cannot consecrate…cannot hallow this ground” when that is precisely the purpose of the ceremony?
 |  |
| 1. Lincoln knew that, if popular, his speech would be reprinted in countless newspapers across America, in both the North and South. Beyond those who were physically present at Gettysburg on November 19, 1863, to whom do you think he was speaking? Why?
 |  |
| 1. Based on the text, what do you think Lincoln wanted his audience to believe or do as a result of his speech?
 |  |
| 1. Lincoln closes the Gettysburg Address by challenging his audience “it is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us.” Were he alive today, what “great task” do you think Lincoln would challenge us with? In what ways could we rise to the challenge?
 |  |