

THE CIVIL WAR

What is the Historical Significance of Gettysburg?**LESSON OVERVIEW**

Students first examine the significance of the battle at Gettysburg as a turning point in the war and then prepare for and participate in a Socratic Seminar on Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address that engages them in analyzing the issues, ideas, and values of this significant historical speech.

OBJECTIVES

In this lesson, students will:

- Use the Socratic Seminar method to analyze President Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.
- Develop an understanding of the historical significance of the Gettysburg battle and address.
- Develop interpretation and discussion skills
- Develop an understanding of the issues, ideas, and values of an important historical text.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- Why was the Battle of Gettysburg historically significant?
- How does the speech reflect the Battle of Gettysburg and views of the war in the North?
- What was the purpose of this speech?

KEY CONCEPTS

- Democracy
- Consecration -- Honor -- Memorial

VOCABULARY

- dedicate
- consecrate
- hallow
- proposition

GROUPING

- Whole class
- Large group discussion circle(s)

MATERIALS**Teacher Resources**

- Powerpoint slide show about the Battle of Gettysburg
- 4.A: Discussion Norms and Discussion Phrases

Student Handouts




- 4.1: Gettysburg Address
- 4.2: Seminar "ticket"

Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5
Conflict	Democratic Citizenship	Historical Inquiry & Historiography	Historical Empathy	Discussion & Deliberation
			X	X

Procedures

INTRODUCTION/HOOK

Use the powerpoint presentation to introduce the Battle of Gettysburg to students.

   The first half of this presentation, like the one used in previous battle-related lessons, focuses on the facts related to the battle and will require students to discuss the impact of geography on the battle as well as note locations and dates on their maps and timelines. The second half of the presentation provides a more personal account of the events as told by a young girl who witnessed the battle. See the notes included in the powerpoint for more details.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Seminar Preparation:

Hand out copies of the Gettysburg Address. Explain to the students that Abraham Lincoln gave this speech on November 19, 1863, five months after the battle had ended. The occasion was the dedication of the battlefield as a memorial to those who had been killed. The main speaker at the event was Edward Everett, one of the country's best orators at the time. Everett spoke for two hours. Lincoln spoke directly after him and his speech only lasted two minutes. His task was to formally set apart the battlefield as a sacred site. The speech is still famous for its elegant simplicity.

Read through the address once out loud and then have students read in pairs.

Ask students to identify any vocabulary they didn't understand as they read it and help clarify commonly misunderstood words.

Model how to mark up the text with questions and notes. Ask the following questions as a think-pair-share. The purpose is to establish the context of the document and the perspective this context can provide. The focus is not on interpretation of the document yet – just using the context and use of the speech as historical evidence:

- *Who is the author of the document?*
- *What is this evidence of (e.g., what does this tell us about the*

Teacher Notes

Pacing Note:

- ✓ You may need to break this lesson into two days; having students take the Seminar ticket home to complete for homework to prepare for the Seminar the following day.

- ✓ The National Archives “Our Documents” site features a copy of Lincoln’s handwritten speech and some useful background information. <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=old&doc=36>

- ✓ Model marking up the text using a “think aloud” to demonstrate to students how you ask questions and note important parts of a text. Show students your own copy of the speech with annotations, questions, underlined passages, etc. as a model.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES (continued)

battle, views in the North about the war, and perspective of Lincoln)?

- *What can we learn from this evidence?*
- *What are the limitations of this evidence? What else do we want to learn / know?*

Let students know that the preparations they are making are for a seminar, and it is basically a group discussion of an important text with the goal of developing an understanding of the “issues, ideas, and values” in the text and what it tells us about the events in Gettysburg and Lincoln in 1863.

Explain that the seminar is an opportunity to learn from each other. There are no right or wrong answers. Each person’s comments and perspectives will lead to a deeper understanding. Emphasize that students are responsible for the discussion- you as the teacher are only facilitating the discussion. Thus, their complete and careful preparation for discussion is vital. Students who are not prepared with their “ticket” should not be allowed to participate in the seminar discussion. They may be given an alternate assignment to complete during seminar.

Distribute or project the “ticket” questions (4.2). Have students complete the ticket on their own.

TO BEGIN SEMINAR:

Introduction

Have students talk with the person next to them as a warm up for the discussion – share the questions with each other that they came up with on the ticket.

Focus Lesson

Ask each pair of students to share and discuss one of their vocabulary words, and share one of the questions from each pair of students. Go around to groups until all vocabulary terms are covered.

As a class, discuss what questions would be good seminar questions and put together a list on the board.

Socratic Seminar

Go over the norms for Socratic Seminar. These should be up in the classroom.

- ✓ If this is not the first seminar students have done, remind the students of their previous seminars and what they identified as areas for improvement in discussion skills. Or, if you had video of the previous discussion, you could use it to remind them of what they are trying to do in the discussion.
- ✓ Create large poster with Seminar Norms (or put up on whiteboard or smartboard) along with discussion phrases. These norms are the same as the ones used in the American Revolution Unit, so you may have already created a poster that you can re-use.
- ✓ Emphasize the purpose for the seminar – to develop good discussion skills and gain a better understanding of the issues, ideas and values of the text.
- ✓ It is also important to remind students that the skills they are developing are authentic for the roles outside of school as citizens.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES (continued)

Pose the opening question. Don't forget to provide wait time. Encourage participants to address the group and not just you. When discussion starts to taper off or you feel you have gone far enough on a particular topic, pose another question. Try to let students lead the direction of the discussion, though. At some point it may be helpful to invite others to participate if several students are dominating or to help summarize the students' main points before going on to your next question. See the "Basic Follow Up Questions" in for good questions to encourage participation and to facilitate good discussion.

Keep in mind that you are going for quality of responses, not quantity. Don't focus on getting through your list of questions, but do remain mindful of the time so you can slip in a closing question before the time runs out. Remember that the goal is to teach good analytical and discussion skills in addition to learning about the speech.

Seminar ends when time is up. A good seminar leaves students with more to say on the topic – and more ideas to include in the seminar response. Don't expect a neat closure- hopefully students will continue discussing these ideas on their own.

DEBRIEFING

Last Word: Have students turn to their partner and share any ideas or thoughts they did not get a chance to share.

Discussion Debrief: Ask students:

How do you think the seminar went today? What did we do well? How can we do better next time? (Students can pass if they wish)

Assign a seminar response activity (choose one or have students choose):

- How does Lincoln's speech emphasize the significance of the Battle of Gettysburg?
- How does Lincoln's speech reflect the views of people in the North regarding the war?

Emphasize that they should use evidence from the speech to support their answer.

HOMEWORK

Either of the response activities could be assigned as homework.

✓ **Opening Question:** Who is the audience for the speech? (If they only come up with the obvious - lead them with follow up questions to the fact that reporters were there and that the speech would be read by others who did not attend.)

✓ **Follow up Questions:**

- Why is Lincoln in Gettysburg?
- According to the speech, why is Gettysburg significant?
- What is the most important idea of the speech?
- What was Lincoln trying to accomplish with this speech?
- How does the speech reflect the views of Northerners toward the war?

✓ Remember to use questions that the students came up with to supplement.

✓ **Basic Follow-Up Questions:**

- Can you say more about that (or please explain)?
- Where do you see that in the text?
- What do other people think about that?