

Gettysburg Address Characters

Writer: Abraham Lincoln | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

Major Characters Abraham Lincoln: The speaker and central figure of the speech. He was the 16th President of the United States. During the Civil War, he led the nation in defense of unity, freedom, and humanity. In the Gettysburg Address, Lincoln spoke not only as a statesman but also as the moral conscience of the nation. He transformed the soldiers' sacrifice into a call for national rebirth. In his voice, we hear the deep commitment to humanity and democracy, "that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." In this speech, Lincoln stands as a symbol of moral and spiritual leadership.

Characters (Real & Personified Characters)

Major Characters

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- **The Soldiers**: They were the brave men who gave their lives on the battlefield of Gettysburg for the unity and freedom of the United States. Lincoln refers to them as "brave men, living and dead." Their sacrifice gives the nation new inspiration to live and move forward. They are the true heroes of the speech, symbols of selfless patriotism and human courage. Lincoln says, "We can not dedicate, we can not consecrate, we can not hallow this ground," because their sacrifice has already sanctified the land.
- **The People of the United States**: They are the moral strength and unseen audience of the speech. Lincoln calls upon them to complete the unfinished work of the fallen soldiers and to preserve the nation's unity. They represent hope for the future and the spirit of democracy. It is to them that Lincoln says, "It is for us the living to be dedicated here to the unfinished work." The people symbolize the rebirth of the nation and the soul of democracy.

Minor Characters

- **The Founding Fathers:** At the beginning of his speech, Lincoln says, “Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation.” These Founding Fathers, such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and others, laid the foundation of American freedom, equality, and democracy. They symbolize the dream of liberty, and Lincoln, through his speech, calls upon the new generation to protect and uphold that dream.
- **Jefferson Davis:** Jefferson Davis (1808–1889) was the President of the Confederate States of America, the group of Southern states that seceded from the Union during the Civil War. He led the South, which sought to preserve slavery and maintain the right of states to govern themselves, including the right to own slaves. Under his leadership, the Southern states separated from the United States. However, his government was eventually defeated by Lincoln’s Union Army. In history, Davis stands as a symbol of division, a leader who represented the conflict between freedom and oppression.
- **General Robert E. Lee:** General Robert Edward Lee (1807–1870) was the Commander of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia and one of the most brilliant military strategists of the Civil War. He was known for his exceptional leadership, courage, and discipline. In the Battle of Gettysburg (1863), his army fought fiercely against the Union forces in one of the bloodiest battles of the war, which ultimately became a disastrous defeat for the South. After the war, Lee accepted defeat and pledged loyalty to Lincoln’s government. In history, he is seen as a complex figure, on one hand, a symbol of military excellence, and on the other, a representative of a society that defended slavery. Nevertheless, his humility and message of national reconciliation after the war made him a respected historical figure.
- **General George G. Meade:** General George Gordon Meade (1815–1872) was the Commander of the Union Army of the North who led his forces to victory at the Battle of Gettysburg. In July 1863, under his leadership, the Army of the Potomac defeated Lee’s Confederate army in one of the most decisive turning points of the Civil War. Meade was a disciplined, just, and effective military leader, though he was not as popular as Lincoln. His strategic decisions were the main reason behind the Union’s success at Gettysburg. In history, he stands as a symbol of steadfast leadership, guided by determination, patriotism, and a commitment to the defense of democracy.