

Gettysburg Address Summary

Writer: Abraham Lincoln | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

America's History of Independence: At the beginning of his speech, Abraham Lincoln says that eighty-seven years ago, in 1776, America became independent. After gaining independence, the nation created new laws and formed a constitution based on liberty and equality. According to this constitution, every person in the country was to be free and enjoy equal rights. However, because of the system of slavery, African Americans were deprived of those rights.

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Honoring the Heroes Who Sacrificed Their Lives at Gettysburg: Lincoln then says that a Civil War is going on in America, and for a new nation, it is a great challenge to survive such a war. He adds that those who gave their lives in the Battle of Gettysburg to end slavery will be honored by dedicating a portion of the battlefield as a cemetery. In this way, their supreme sacrifice will be remembered and respected.

Remembering the Sacrifice of the Brave Soldiers: Lincoln further says that dedicating this small piece of land is nothing compared to the great sacrifice made by the soldiers who fought in Gettysburg to end slavery. Their sacrifice has already made the land sacred; no one can add to or diminish their glory. Yet, he wants to dedicate the land so that people will remember and honor their devotion. Lincoln also says that the speech he is giving today may soon be forgotten, but the sacrifice of these brave men will never be forgotten. He reminds the nation that the dream for which these soldiers died, the dream of freedom and equality for all Americans, must not go in vain.

Abraham Lincoln's Ideal of Government: Finally, Lincoln declares that he wants to build a form of government that will be "of the people, by the people, and for the people." This means a government elected by the people, working for the welfare of the people, and guided by the people's will. He expresses his faith that the dream of those who gave their lives for freedom, the dream of a truly free and equal nation, will never be in vain.

