

# THE ADDRESS

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## Classroom Tips for Memorizing the *Gettysburg Address*

### Introduction:

Reciting the entire *Gettysburg Address* is a challenging task for anyone, but recent studies have also shown that memorization of facts, or memorizing speeches or poetry, provide important benefits to students' brain function and development and serve as the basis for higher level thinking. Here are some tips for helping students, in school or at home, memorize the *Address*.

### Pronunciation and Vocabulary

As you begin, work with students to clarify any issues surrounding vocabulary words in the *Address*. Help students understand these words using synonyms, i.e. *liberty/freedom*, *conceived/created*, *proposition/belief*, *hallow/holy*, *endure/last*.

Also, work on articulation of multi-syllable words such as “dedicated”, “proposition”, “battlefield”, “conceived”, “consecrate”, and “devotion.”

Look for potential problem in using pronouns:

- *those who here gave their lives* [the soldiers]
- *rather for us* [Lincoln and his audience; the American public] *to be here*.
- *The world will little note nor long remember what we* [Lincoln and his audience] *say here, but it* [the world] *can never forget what they* [the soldiers] *did here.*”

### Memorization Activities

Break the *Address* into small sections. In the original text there were three basic paragraphs but these can be broken down further. You can also break the speech down into individual sentences on small strips of paper. Put the slips in an envelope. Have students lay the slips on a desk top and arrange in order.

Ask students to memorize the last section first, beginning with “It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us...” It’s the longest and most complex section. It presents Lincoln’s wish for the country and brings together many of the concepts introduced in the first paragraph. Having students memorize this section firsts will give them confidence in knowing they’ve mastered the longest passage.

### Practicing the Presentation

Have students incorporate subtle hand or body gestures to accentuate the meaning of various parts of the text. Doing the same gesture at the same place in the speech every time they recite it will help with memorization.

During practice, students can record themselves using audio and video recorders. Audio recording can help form students' voice, tone, volume, and pronunciation. Video recording can help students with their physical presence—stance, gestures, eye contact, and facial expressions.

**Presenting the Address and Uploading to [learntheaddress.org](http://learntheaddress.org)**

When students feel they have mastered memorizing the *Address* well enough for presentation, have them do a “dry run” in front of a small group and then in front of the larger class. Have one student act as prompter if they get stuck on a word or verse.

Students can video record their speeches informally or make their formal presentations to a live audience of parents, staff and students during an assembly or special event.

For uploading instructions, [click here](#).