

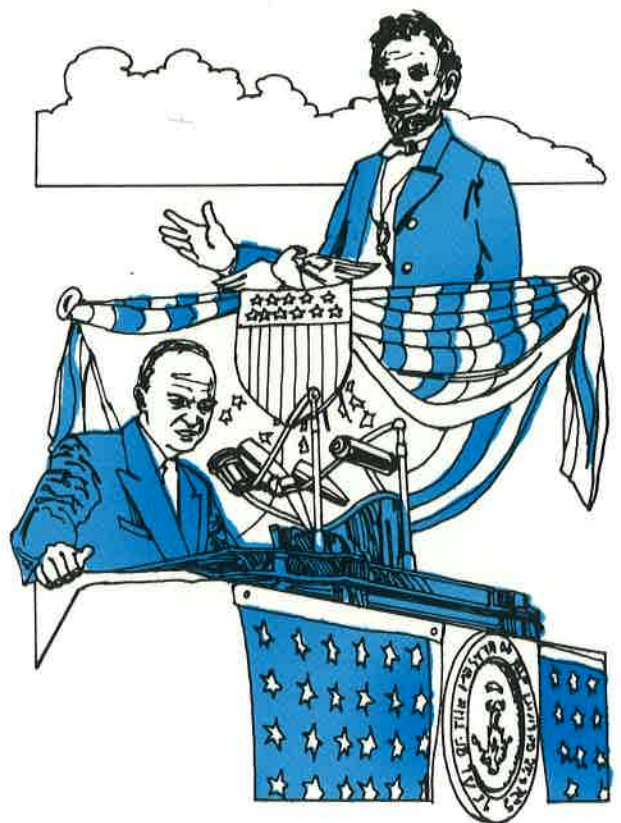
# Eloquence and Everyday Speech

- 1 Men and women with an eloquent command of language can speak in ways that the world remembers long after their time. Such a person was Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth president of the United States. A short speech he gave in 1863 became one of the most famous speeches in history—not simply for its ideas, but for the grace and power of its language.
- 2 Most Americans recognize the opening words of the Gettysburg Address, “Four score and seven years ago” and its ringing conclusion—that classic description of the American system as “government of the people, by the people, for the people.”
- 3 Lincoln wrote this speech during America’s Civil War. Eleven southern states had rebelled against the federal government. They intended to withdraw from the Union (that is, from the United States) and form a separate nation. Lincoln’s Union Army fought to prevent this withdrawal and keep all the states together.
- 4 In the midst of this war, Lincoln was called upon to dedicate a portion of the battlefield at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, as a cemetery for Union soldiers who had died there.
- 5 It had been eighty-seven years since 1776, when the nation was born. That was the year of the Declaration of Independence, which proclaimed that “all men are created equal.” Lincoln was determined that this young nation should not be broken up. Nothing was more important than holding the nation together under one government.
- 6 Planning his speech, Lincoln chose to remind his listeners of what America stood for. He would say that it was right to dedicate this cemetery for the men who died defending the Union, but that their bravery had already made that ground holy. What was more important was for the people still living to carry on the cause for which those soldiers had died. Those still alive needed to preserve a nation whose highest value was the idea that all people are born equal.
- 7 According to one story, Lincoln scribbled his speech on the back of an envelope while travelling to the dedication. The speech was only ten sentences long, yet it

has never been forgotten. Its solemn dignity and inspiring phrases seem exactly right for the occasion and for the important ideas they express.

- 8 Years later, in 1957, a magazine editor named Oliver Jensen expressed his disappointment that the White House no longer produced such inspiring language. The president then was Dwight D. Eisenhower. Eisenhower had been a great military leader, and he was a capable president, but no one would ever praise his talent for self-expression. In press conferences he rambled, fumbled, used too many words, and chose his expressions badly. He had none of Lincoln’s noble and eloquent tone.

- 9 Jensen asked himself what kind of Gettysburg Address Eisenhower might give. He rewrote the speech in the language of the current president. The result is a parody—a comic imitation of Eisenhower’s style. Here are Lincoln’s original Gettysburg Address and a slightly shortened version of Jensen’s parody.



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## Lincoln's Gettysburg Address

- 10 *Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.*
- 11 *Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure.*
- 12 *We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live.*
- 13 *It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men living and dead who struggled here have*

*consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.*

- 14 *It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.*



## "Eisenhower's Gettysburg Address"

- 15 *I haven't checked these figures but eighty-seven years ago, I think it was, a number of individuals organized a governmental set-up here in this country . . . with this idea that they were following up based on a sort of national independence arrangement and the program that every individual is just as good as every other individual.*
- 16 *Well, now, of course, we are dealing with this big difference of opinion, civil disturbance you might say, . . . and the point is naturally to check up . . . to see whether any governmental set-up with a basis like the one I was mentioning has any validity and find out whether that dedication by those early individuals will pay off in lasting values and things of that kind.*
- 17 *Well, here we are at the scene where one of these disturbances between different sides got going. We want to pay our tribute to those loved ones, those departed individuals who made the supreme sacrifice here on the basis of their opinions about how this thing ought to be handled.*
- 18 *And I would say this. It is absolutely in order to do this. But if you look at the overall picture of this, we*

*can't pay any tribute—we can't sanctify this area, you might say. . . . It was those individuals themselves, including the enlisted men, very brave individuals, who have given this religious character to the area. The way I see it, the rest of the world will not remember any statements issued here but it will never forget how these men put their shoulders to the wheel and carried this idea down the fairway.*

- 19 *Now frankly, our job, the living individuals' job here, is to pick up the burden . . . they made these big efforts here for. It is our job to get on with the assignment—and from these deceased fine individuals to take extra inspiration, you could call it, for the same theories about the set-up for which they made such a big contribution. We have to make up our minds right here and now, as I see it, that they didn't . . .—well—that they didn't just make a dry run here, and that all of us here, under God, that is, the God of our choice, shall beef up this idea about freedom and liberty and those kind of arrangements, and that government of all individuals, by all individuals, and for the individuals, shall not pass out of the world-picture.*



- 20 *While the world has cherished few of Eisenhower's own words, Jensen's imitation of Eisenhower's style has become a minor classic of parody. Apart from its value as humor, it vividly illustrates the difference between eloquent speech and the clumsy everyday variety that most of us speak.*

## How Well Did You Read?

Did you understand the ideas that the writer of this article was trying to get across? Read the statements below. If a statement expresses one of the writer's ideas, write *W*. If it does not, write *No*.

- 1 Men and women with a good command of language are more likely to have their words remembered than those who speak clumsily.
- 2 A person cannot be a good president or general unless that person can make polished public speeches.
- 3 Lincoln's Gettysburg Address is remembered not just for its ideas, but also for the way in which those ideas are expressed.
- 4 "Eisenhower's Gettysburg Address" is a speech that President Eisenhower gave in 1957.
- 5 The two speeches quoted here prove that two different people can say the same thing equally well in two different ways.
- 6 In reading the two speeches, we can see the difference between a memorable expression of ideas and a poor expression of the same ideas.
- 7 The word *parody* means the same as *classic*. This explains why Oliver Jensen's parody of Eisenhower is still remembered years after it was written.
- 8 Eisenhower would probably have been just as good a speaker as Lincoln, if he had only put an equal amount of time into preparing his speeches.
- 9 In our everyday lives, most of us speak in a somewhat clumsy, not an eloquent, manner.

Write the letter of the phrase that completes the sentence best.

- 10 The writer of this article believes that some of the qualities of a fine speech are
  - a inspiring phrases and a tone that suits the occasion
  - b a sincere desire to impress the listener
  - c a scattering of well-chosen jokes

## Learn about Words

### Vocabulary

A You can often tell the meaning of a word by reading the words around it.

Look at each number in parentheses. Find the paragraph in the story with the same number. Then find the word that fits the given meaning. Write the word.

- 1 forceful and graceful (1)
- 2 publicly declared (5)
- 3 talked at length with no clear focus (8)
- 4 created or invented (10)
- 5 belief; statement of belief (10)
- 6 promise; firmly decide (14)
- 7 sound reason to exist; justification (16)
- 8 treasured; valued highly (20)

B A word may have more than one meaning.

Look at each number in parentheses. Find the paragraph in the story with the same number. See how the word in **heavy type** below is used in the paragraph. Decide whether it has meaning *a*, *b*, or *c*. Write *a*, *b*, or *c*.

- 9 **classic** (2)
  - a made in a traditional style
  - b well-known and recognized as excellent
  - c following the artistic styles of ancient Greece and Rome
- 10 **fumbled** (8)
  - a lost hold of something
  - b felt around awkwardly with the hands
  - c did something clumsily or poorly

## Word Study

**C** Many English words come from the Latin language and contain Latin roots. For example:

**scribe** = to write (as in *subscribe*)

**sect** = to divide (as in *section*)

**fer** = to bring, carry (as in *transfer*)

Knowledge of Latin roots will sometimes help you unlock the meanings of new words. Read the sentences below. The word in **heavy type** is a clue. It will help you find the right Latin root to complete the partial word. Complete the word and write it in full.

- 11 The biology instructor **divided** the plant in half by bi\_\_\_\_\_ing the stem.
- 12 "Please de\_\_\_\_\_ your car accident carefully, so that I may **write** my report," the insurance agent said.
- 13 Your voice **carries** a harsh tone, so I in\_\_\_\_\_ that you are angry.
- 14 As he **wrote**, Dr. Difazio said, "I have pre\_\_\_\_\_ some vitamins for you."
- 15 We have a \_\_\_\_\_ional couch. We can **divide** it into four parts.
- 16 "I'll gladly **bring** you another cup of coffee, Agatha," Sid of\_\_\_\_\_ed.
- 17 Isaac Morgenstern gave his son a watch with his name **written**, or in\_\_\_\_\_d, on it.
- 18 **Bring** the dictionary here; we can settle this argument by re\_\_\_\_\_ing to it.

**D** Many English words also contain Latin word parts. For example:

**sol** = sun (as in *solar*)

**son** = sound (as in *sonar*)

**per** = through (as in *pervade*)

The word in **heavy type** in the sentences below is a clue. It will help you find the right Latin word part to complete the partial word. Write the completed word.

- 19 Jack loved sitting in the \_\_\_\_\_arium, where he could relax and soak up the **sun's** rays.
- 20 John quickly searched **through** the newspaper, so that he might \_\_\_\_\_use the job ads.
- 21 The \_\_\_\_\_forations on the top of the box went clear **through** the lid.

22 As she changed radio stations, she recognized the **sound** of a Beethoven \_\_\_\_\_ata.

23 To get **through** this extremely cold winter, we must \_\_\_\_\_severe.

24 On December 22, the **sun** had passed into winter \_\_\_\_\_stice.

25 The **sound** of the \_\_\_\_\_ic boom was deafening.

26 The smell of cigar smoke was **throughout** the conference room; it \_\_\_\_\_meated the air.

**E** I've been feeling **weak** this **week**.

Words that have the same sound but different spellings and meanings are sometimes called homonyms. For example: *weak* and *week*. Each sentence below contains a pair of homonyms in parentheses. Write the word that makes sense in the sentence.

27 The television drama was one of the children's favorite (cereals, serials).

28 Nothing will (alter, altar) my decision.

29 The glow from the lamp produced an (arc, ark) across the ceiling of the room.

30 The town council decided to restore the old library building rather than (raise, raze) it to build a new one in its place.

31 This land is completely (baron, barren)—not a plant or a tree growing anywhere!

32 The new bank alarm system had extremely delicate (censors, sensors) that would react to the slightest movement.

33 The old woman had a (cache, cash) for her valuables that couldn't possibly be found by anyone else.

## Use Your Imagination

Make a list of three or four phrases or other aspects of "Eisenhower's Gettysburg Address" that you find weak or inappropriate. Can you figure out why each of them is a poor choice for such a speech?