Lesson Plan: The Gettysburg Address

Grade: 5th
Subject: Social Studies, English/Language Arts
Time Required: 2 50-minute class periods
Author: Suzanne Costner, Fairview Elementary, Blount County Schools

Overview
This lesson focuses on the drafting of the Gettysburg Address in Pennsylvania, November 1863. Students will analyze a historical document and draw conclusions about what this document was for, who created it, and why. Students will compare the two drafts to each other and discuss the significance of differences in wording. Students will then read the standard version which is inscribed in the Lincoln Memorial.

Understanding Goal
Students will be able to understand and explain the meaning and significance of the Gettysburg Address.

Objectives
The learner will:
- Examine documents as primary sources;
- Analyze and compare drafts;
- Describe the significance of changes to the document’s text.

Materials
- Nicolay Copy of Gettysburg Address
- "Hay Draft" of Gettysburg Address
- Standard Copy Inscribed at Lincoln Memorial
- The Gettysburg Address: Making Comparisons handout
- Teacher’s copy of The Gettysburg Address: Making Comparisons handout

Resources
Brief background for the lesson:
On his way to attend the dedication ceremony for the cemetery, President Lincoln drafted the speech he would give. He had been invited to participate in the ceremony and make a few brief remarks appropriate for the occasion. It is believed that he wrote out those remarks during the train trip to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, where the cemetery for Union soldiers killed in the Battle of Gettysburg would be established.

Before leading students through the exploration process, teachers should make themselves familiar with the details of the drafting of the Gettysburg Address by reading the following Library of Congress resources:

- The Gettysburg Address
- Primary Documents in American History: Gettysburg Address
- The Civil War In America: November 1863 – April 1865
**CURRICULUM STANDARDS**

**Tennessee State Standards**

Social Studies 5.13 Read and write an informative piece summarizing the Gettysburg Address to determine its meaning and significance.

**Reading Standards for Informational Text (Common Core)**

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.5 Compare and contrast the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in two or more texts.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.9 Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

**Writing Standards (Common Core)**

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

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**PROCEDURE**

**Step 1** Working with the entire class, discuss students’ understanding of a document Ask the following questions to frame the discussion: What is a document? (e.g., a record of information) What are examples of common documents? (e.g., letter, diploma, passport, driver’s license)

**Step 2** Explain that in this lesson students will take a close look at an important historical document. Distribute copies and engage students with the Nicolay Copy of the Gettysburg Address. Ask students to examine the document. Possible questions include: Where does your eye go first? How would you describe what you’re seeing? What do you notice about the physical condition? Which words or phrases can you read? Has the document been altered in any way? Are there any indications (e.g., names, dates) of ownership or time period?

**Step 3** Now distribute copies of the printed transcription of the document (since students cannot read cursive style in manuscript). Explain that they will be working in small groups to study the document. Encourage students to speculate about the document, its creator, and its context. Possible questions include: What do you think this document is about? What words or phrases give clues? What about language, its tone and style? Writing style? Is this a public or private document? What might have been the author’s purpose in writing this? Who might have been the intended audience? Help students to think about their personal responses to the document. Possible questions include: What surprises you about what you’re seeing? What do you want to know about this document?
Step 4  
Come back together as a whole group and ask students to draw conclusions about what his document was for, who created it, and why.

Step 5  
Pass out copies of the Hay Draft (manuscript and transcription) of the Address while reviewing students’ prior knowledge. Ask students to summarize what they know about the Gettysburg Address. Possible questions include: What was happening during this time period? What importance does this document have? Ask students how they could determine changes made to this document during the drafting process. Most students will quickly understand that comparing the two documents will reveal the changes.

Step 6  
Model the comparative analysis process using the Gettysburg Address: Making Comparisons handout. Use as an example the changes in paragraph one. (See step five for the process) *Note—the teacher’s copy has the changes in bold type for your reference. Student copies do not have the changes marked, but the teacher’s copy may be used with students who have difficulty reading, are English Language Learners, etc. to provide more support during the activity.

Step 7  
Assign students to work in pairs or groups. Ask students to first identify unfamiliar vocabulary. Encourage students to analyze and compare the wording of the two versions by marking and making notes directly on the Gettysburg Address: Making Comparisons handout. Ask students to record their individual responses to the following questions on a separate piece of paper: What do you think is the most significant difference in wording between the Nicolay Copy and the Hay Draft? Why do you think this change was made? How does this difference in wording change your understanding of the text’s meaning, if at all? What about the changes to the grammar and the paragraph structure? Would these changes have been important? Do they change the meaning? Why do we still study this speech? Why is it still important?

EVALUATION:

25%  
Teacher observation of collaborative work. Based on participation in class and small group discussions.

25%  
Teacher observation of critical thinking. Based on verbal and written responses to discussion questions.

50%  
Evaluating the Gettysburg Address: Making Comparisons handout and written responses. Based on degree of completion (i.e. were all changes to the document noted, were all of the reflection questions answered).

For the written reflection in the lesson extension, teachers may choose to use the rubric provided for grading. (See separate sheet “Opinion/Argument Rubric, Grade 5,” courtesy of Elk Grove United School District, Elk Grove, CA)

EXTENSION:

•  Have students write a response to the Gettysburg Address. Writing prompt—If you had been in the crowd that day, how would you have felt? Are those feelings different than the ones you have now—looking back over 150 years later?

•  View the video, 273 Words to a New America.

•  For one reaction to the speech, read Edward Everett to Abraham Lincoln [November 20, 1863].

•  And for a lighter approach, view this “Kindergarten Cop” Gettysburg Address scene.
Gettysburg Address: Making Comparisons

Directions: Read through each version and circle or underline unfamiliar words. Then make notes, or draw lines and arrows, to identify or indicate differences between the Nicolay and Hay copies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nicolay Copy*</th>
<th>Hay Draft**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that &quot;all men are created equal.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of it, as a final resting place for those who died here, that the nation might live. This we may, in all propriety do. But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate—we can not consecrate—we can not hallow, this ground—The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have hallowed it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here; while it can never forget what they did here.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is rather for us, the living, we here be dedicated to the great task remaining before us — that, from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here, gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve these dead shall not have died in vain; that the nation, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people by the people, shall not perish from the earth.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This document represents the earliest known of the five drafts of what may be the most famous American speech. This document is presumed to be the only working, or pre-delivery, draft and is commonly identified as the Nicolay Copy because it was once owned by John George Nicolay, Lincoln's private secretary. [http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/gettyburg-address/exhibition-items.html#obj4](http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/gettyburg-address/exhibition-items.html#obj4)

**The second draft of the Gettysburg Address, probably made by Lincoln shortly after his return to Washington from Gettysburg, was given to his secretary John Hay. [http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/gettyburg-address/exhibition-items.html#obj5](http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/gettyburg-address/exhibition-items.html#obj5)
Gettysburg Address: Making Comparisons

Name:

Directions: Read through each version and circle or underline unfamiliar words. Then make notes, or draw lines and arrow, to identify or indicate differences between the Nicolay and Hay copies.

Nicolay Copy*

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that "all men are created equal."

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of it, as a final resting place for those who died here, that the nation might live. This we may, in all propriety do. But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate—we can not consecrate—we can not hallow, this ground—The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have hallowed it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here; while it can never forget what they did here.

It is rather for us, the living, we here be dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that, from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here, gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve these dead shall not have died in vain; that the nation, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people by the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Hay Draft**

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation, so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met here on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of it as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But in a larger sense we can not dedicate—we can not consecrate—we can not 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 can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they have, thus far, so nobly carried on. 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 here gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation shall have a new birth of freedom; and that this government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

* This document represents the earliest known of the five drafts of what may be the most famous American speech. This document is presumed to be the only working, or pre-delivery, draft and is commonly identified as the Nicolay Copy because it was once owned by John George Nicolay, Lincoln’s private secretary. http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/gettysburg-address/exhibition-items.html#obj4

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### Opinion/Argument Rubric, Grade 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus/Opinion*</th>
<th>4 (Above Grade Level)</th>
<th>3 (At Grade Level)</th>
<th>2 (Approaching Grade Level)</th>
<th>1 (Below Grade Level)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CCSS</strong>:</td>
<td><strong>W - 1a</strong></td>
<td><strong>W - 1c</strong></td>
<td><strong>W - 1d</strong></td>
<td><strong>W - 4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>Responds skillfully to all parts of the prompt</td>
<td>Responds to all parts of the prompt</td>
<td>Responds to most parts of the prompt</td>
<td>Responds to some or no parts of the prompt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CCSS</strong>:</td>
<td><strong>W - 1a</strong></td>
<td><strong>W - 1c</strong></td>
<td><strong>W - 1d</strong></td>
<td><strong>W - 4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizes ideas and information into purposeful, coherent paragraphs that include an elaborated introduction with clear thesis, structured body, and insightful conclusion</strong></td>
<td><strong>Uses a variety of linking words, phrases, and clauses skillfully to connect reasons to opinion/argument/claim</strong></td>
<td><strong>Uses linking words, phrases, and clauses appropriately to connect reasons to opinion</strong></td>
<td><strong>Does not organize ideas and information coherently due to lack of paragraph structure and/or missing introduction, body, or conclusion</strong></td>
<td><strong>Uses no linking words, phrases, or clauses</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support/Evidence</strong></td>
<td><strong>Supports opinion skillfully with substantial and relevant evidence</strong></td>
<td><strong>Supports opinion with sufficient and relevant evidence</strong></td>
<td><strong>Supports opinion with minimal and/or irrelevant facts, details, and/or reasons</strong></td>
<td><strong>Does not support opinion with evidence and/or evidence is irrelevant or inaccurate</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CCSS</strong>:</td>
<td><strong>RIT - 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>W - 1b</strong></td>
<td><strong>W - 9b</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provides insightful explanation/analysis of how evidence supports opinion</strong></td>
<td><strong>Provides clear explanation/analysis of how evidence supports opinion</strong></td>
<td><strong>Provides some explanation/analysis of how evidence supports opinion</strong></td>
<td><strong>Provides no or inaccurate explanation/analysis of how evidence supports opinion</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language</strong></td>
<td><strong>L - 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>L - 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uses purposeful and varied sentence structures</strong></td>
<td><strong>Uses correct and varied sentence structures</strong></td>
<td><strong>Uses some repetitive yet correct sentence structure</strong></td>
<td><strong>Does not demonstrate sentence mastery</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demonstrates creativity and flexibility when using conventions (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling) to enhance meaning</strong></td>
<td><strong>Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not obscure meaning</strong></td>
<td><strong>Demonstrates some grade level appropriate conventions, but errors obscure meaning</strong></td>
<td><strong>Demonstrates limited grade level appropriate conventions, and errors interfere with the meaning</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uses precise and sophisticated academic and domain-specific vocabulary appropriate for the audience and purpose</strong></td>
<td><strong>Uses academic and domain-specific vocabulary appropriate for the audience and purpose</strong></td>
<td><strong>Uses limited academic and/or domain-specific vocabulary, and errors interfere with the meaning</strong></td>
<td><strong>Uses no academic or domain-specific vocabulary</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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*CCSS – Common Core State Standards alignment (“W” = Writing strand; “RIT”=Reading – Informational Text; “L”=Language strand)

Courtesy of Elk Grove Unified School District

Elk Grove, California