

Competing Visions

Compare Civil War leaders' ideas about the nation and its government.

8.8.D “analyze Abraham Lincoln's ideas about liberty, equality, union, and government as contained in his first and second inaugural addresses and the Gettysburg Address and contrast them with the ideas contained in Jefferson Davis's inaugural...”

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline Lincoln's ideas about liberty, equality, union, or government. Circle Davis's ideas, then number one place where the two leaders disagree.

Two Views of the Nation

- ① On March 4, 1861, Abraham Lincoln took office while several Southern states claimed they had left the United States. In his First Inaugural Address, he argued that the Union was older than the Constitution and could not be broken by a state acting alone. He promised not to interfere with slavery where it already existed, but he rejected secession. Lincoln described government as a system created by the people, able to endure only if citizens accepted lawful decisions rather than destroying the nation when elections disappointed them.
- ② At Gettysburg in 1863, Lincoln connected the war to the Declaration of Independence. He said the nation was “conceived in Liberty” and dedicated to the idea that all men are created equal. The battlefield, he explained, showed whether such a nation could survive. Lincoln asked listeners to continue the work of those who died so that the nation might have “a new birth of freedom.” He ended with a goal for government, “of the people, by the people, for the people,” to endure.
- ③ Jefferson Davis became president of the Confederacy in February 1861. In his inaugural address, he said the Confederate states had withdrawn from the United States and formed a new government. He presented that step as the work of separate, sovereign states protecting their rights and interests. Davis argued that the new government would be limited and would protect liberty by leaving many powers with the states. Unlike Lincoln, he treated departure from the Union as lawful, not as a threat to popular government. His address did not make equality for all people its central purpose.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did Lincoln's First Inaugural Address describe the Union, and what duty did he give citizens?

2 How did Lincoln connect equality and freedom to the survival of the nation in the Gettysburg Address?

3 How did Davis explain the Confederate government's purpose, and how did this view differ from Lincoln's view of secession?

4 What major difference in emphasis about equality appears in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and Davis's inaugural address?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a five-sentence comparison explaining which speaker offered the stronger reason for what makes a government legitimate. Use one detail from Lincoln's addresses and one detail from Davis's address, then support your judgment.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline Lincoln's ideas about liberty, equality, union, or government. Circle Davis's ideas, then number one place where the two leaders disagree. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Lincoln's First Inaugural Address describe the Union, and what duty did he give citizens?	Lincoln said the Union could not be broken by one state. He said citizens should accept lawful decisions rather than destroy the nation when elections disappoint them.
2	How did Lincoln connect equality and freedom to the survival of the nation in the Gettysburg Address?	Lincoln said the nation was dedicated to equality and was being tested to see whether it could survive. He called for a new birth of freedom and a government of, by, and for the people.
3	How did Davis explain the Confederate government's purpose, and how did this view differ from Lincoln's view of secession?	Davis said separate sovereign states formed a limited government to protect their rights and keep powers with the states. He viewed leaving the Union as lawful, while Lincoln rejected secession and said the Union could not be broken by one state.
4	What major difference in emphasis about equality appears in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and Davis's inaugural address?	Lincoln made the idea that all men are created equal central to the nation's purpose. Davis's address did not make equality for all people its central purpose.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Lincoln offered the stronger reason for legitimate government because he tied government to the whole people. In his First Inaugural Address, he said citizens must accept lawful election results instead of breaking the Union. At Gettysburg, he described government as belonging to, run by, and serving the people. Davis supported a limited government that left many powers to separate states. That view protected state authority, but Lincoln better explained how a nation could survive disagreement.

Accept accurate paraphrases that distinguish Lincoln's permanent Union and popular government from Davis's state sovereignty and lawful secession. For the open response, accept a supported judgment that uses one accurate detail about each speaker.