

Looking Ahead *Advanced*

Unit 8: Civil War

Name:

Date:

Period:

Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address

When Abraham Lincoln was elected president in 1861, Southern states began seceding from the Union, and within a few months the American Civil War began. Three years later, on November 8, 1864, the states that had remained in the Union elected Abraham Lincoln president for a second term. Four months after that, Lincoln delivered his Second Inaugural Address to the nation on March 4, 1865. By that time, the Confederacy was becoming increasingly weaker, and the end of the Civil War was in sight.

As Lincoln prepared for his second four-year term in office, he turned his mind toward the future. His Second Inaugural Address focused on important issues like how to heal the country's wounds after four years of the bloodiest fighting in the nation's history; how to reunite the North and the South; and how the nation could move forward after the war.

In this lesson, you will read excerpts from Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address to determine Lincoln's thoughts on what should happen after the Civil War.

1. Based on the context of the reading above, what is an Inaugural Address?
2. What was the primary theme or essential questions Lincoln focused on as he approached his second term as president?
3. How do you think Lincoln approached trying to answer these questions?

“With Malice Toward None”

“On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it ~ all sought to avert it.... Both parties deprecated war but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive, and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came.”

1. According to Lincoln, how did the North and South feel about starting a war four years earlier?

“One eighth of the whole population were colored slaves.... These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was somehow the cause of the war. To strengthen perpetuate and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union even by war while the government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it.”

2. According to Lincoln’s address, what was the cause of the Civil War?
3. What did Lincoln say were the goals of the North and the South related to this cause?

"With malice toward none with charity for all with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right let us strive on to finish the work we are in to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan ~ to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

4. Which word from this excerpt means “the intention to do evil, or to harm someone?” How does Lincoln use the word in his speech, and what do you think he meant in the phrase in which he used the word?
5. In this excerpt, Lincoln gives examples of actions the United States must take for how to “finish the work” the country was in. What actions does Lincoln suggest?
6. Based on Lincoln’s speech, do you think Lincoln wanted to focus on harsh punishment for the Southern states who rebelled against the government, or reconciliation and unity? What words or phrases from the excerpt support your claim?