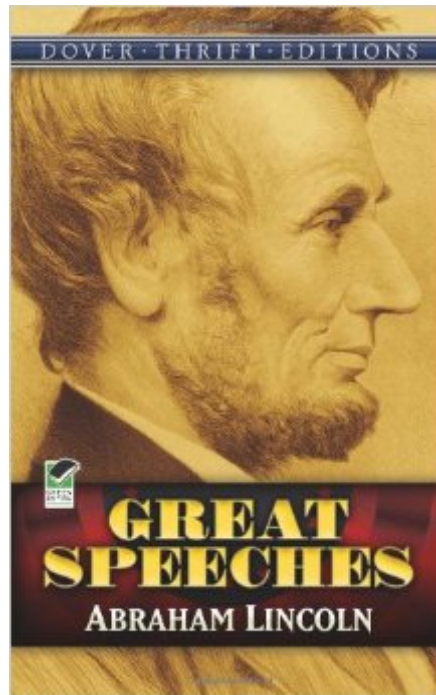


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Abraham Lincoln: Great Speeches (Dover Thrift Editions)



Synopsis

For someone who claimed he had been educated by "littles" â " a little now and a little then â " Abraham Lincoln displayed a remarkable facility in his use of the written word. The simple yet memorable eloquence of his speeches, proclamations and personal correspondence is recorded here in a representative collection of 16 documents. This volume contains, complete and unabridged, the Address Before the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois (1838), which emphasized a theme Lincoln was to return to repeatedly, namely, the capacity of a people to govern themselves; the "House Divided" speech at the Republican State Convention in Illinois (1858); the First Inaugural Address (1861), in which he appealed to the people of an already divided union for sectional harmony; the Gettysburg Address (1863), a speech delivered at ceremonies dedicating a part of the Gettysburg battlefield as a cemetery; the Letter to Mrs. Bixby (1864), expressing Lincoln's regrets over the wartime deaths of her five sons; the Second Inaugural Address (March 1865), urging a post-war nation to "bind up its wounds" and show "charity for all"; and his Last Public Address (April 11, 1865). New notes place the speeches and other documents in their respective historical contexts. An invaluable reference for history students, this important volume will also fascinate admirers of Abraham Lincoln, Americana enthusiasts, Civil War buffs and any lover of the finely crafted phrase. Includes 2 selections from the Common Core State Standards Initiative: "Gettysburg Address" and "Second Inaugural Address."

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Customer Reviews

This book presents the full-length versions of some of Lincoln's best oratory feats. Great Speeches contains fifteen of Lincoln's best along with his famous letter to Mrs. Bixby, who lost all five of her sons during the war. Here is an excerpt as only Lincoln could create: "I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours, to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of Freedom." What you get from the book is a fabulous primary source from which to quote our sixteenth president. What you do not get is a lot of analysis on his underlying motivations. Although a short essay at the beginning of each discourse helps place Lincoln's words in historical context, you will not find a wealth of scholarly insight into why Lincoln gave each particular speech and what the implications were to the nation. Nevertheless, Great Speeches helps the reader understand this incredible man in a manner unbiased by the opinions of others. Highly recommended for anyone wishing to learn more about President Lincoln and some of the issues he faced during a time of incredible national upheaval.

This is a wonderful collection of Lincoln's most famous speeches. His "farewell to Springfield" speech, Gettysburg address and annual messages to Congress all collected in one book. Great Speeches would make an excellent reading assignment for U.S. history class.

Whatever else one may feel about President Lincoln (he has been both glorified as a martyr and demonized as an opponent of individual civil liberties), one cannot come away from this great little anthology of his speeches without seeing a principle-driven politician at his best. And the principle that we see driving Lincoln from his very earliest days through his final speeches (although by that time, preserving the Union had become an equally important theme) is that of the abolition of slavery. Lincoln is clearly a man who believed in right and wrong. He sees slavery as the great evil of his day. From the beginning of his political involvement to the day he died, his speeches show him as a man determined to do away with this evil. If only we had one man in our political arena as interested in principles today. We haven't had one in our Federal Government since Paul Wellstone died. Too many are money and/or power driven rather than having any interest in principle. I do not say this to despair. I picked up my copy of this book this spring at the gift shop of the National Historic site for Lincoln's birthplace. Both the site (which is beautiful and well worth seeing if you're ever in Kentucky) and the book stand as testimonies to what one determined man of principles can do. Read these speeches if you get a chance. I recommend them highly.

Today Abraham Lincoln's political views are often misrepresented in many ways. Some claim he was a great forward-thinking emancipator (he originally planned to let the southern states have until 1900 to abolish slavery on an individual-state basis), while others claim he was never really interested in ending slavery at all (in fact, as early as 1838 Lincoln made it clear that he thought the only practical way of ending slavery was to contain it where it already existed, so that it would then eventually die out). These are only examples. These speeches, however, are Lincoln's definitive statement, from his own mouth, of what he did and did not stand for. They are a bit tedious to read (and would obviously work better as speeches), but anyone who is interested in Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War should read this book.

I find it amazing to read these speeches, considering that I've heard some of them a few times (performed by actors). They come across just as powerfully written as they do orally. What's even more amazing is that Lincoln worked hard to educate himself, and his writing reflects someone who is in love with the usage and power of words, language, and meaning. His style is somewhat outdated (punctuation usage has changed, and the odd capitalization of nouns is a holdover from possibly the Germanic influence on English) but never stilted or boring. And, the Gettysburg Address is still eloquent (and powerful) after all of this time.

This book is a well thought-out collection of a dozen Lincoln speeches. I liked this book because of the variety. The speeches range from short (like the Gettysburg address) to very long inaugural addresses and speeches to Congress (20+ pages). Most speeches are from Lincoln's presidency, but the book also includes speeches from earlier in his political career. The speeches are in chronological order. In my opinion, Lincoln's early speeches were long winded and not particularly good, but I'm glad they were included, because it is fascinating to see how his style evolved, and how he really didn't become a great speaker (in my opinion) until after he became President. My only complaint has nothing to do with the book itself. It's that it is now charging a \$1.99 "sourcing fee", thereby raising the book's price from \$1.50 to \$3.49. , I wish you would do away with these fees!

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