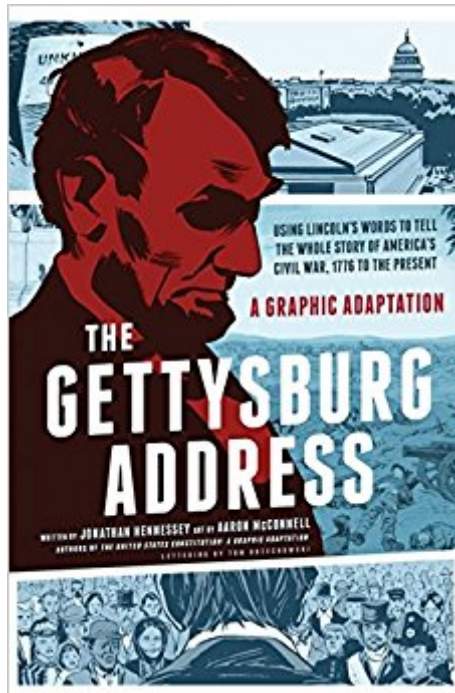




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# The Gettysburg Address: A Graphic Adaptation



## Synopsis

The Gettysburg Address: A Graphic Adaptation is a full-color illustrated look at Abraham Lincoln's most famous speech, the bloody battle of the Civil War that prompted it, and how they led to a defining point in the history of America. Most of us can recall "Four score and seven years ago," but much of what we know about Abraham Lincoln's oration has been forgotten after high school. Using Lincoln's words as a keystone, and drawing from first-person accounts, The Gettysburg Address shows us the events through the eyes of those who lived through the events of the War, from soldiers to slaves. Writer Jonathan Hennessey and illustrator Aaron McConnell illuminate history with vibrant, detailed graphics and captions that deliver a fresh understanding of this vital speech.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Hennessey deconstructs the phrases composing President Lincoln's brief memorial speech and uses each one to explore the many complicated cultural and political components of the American Civil War. McConnell's detailed and highly textured art expands and supports the text by showing the variety of class-based, racial, and historical perspectives creating the mismatched lenses through which Americans view their own history, along with helpful maps and comparative presentations of changed landscapes. Without being didactic or overwhelming, this stellar nonfiction graphic novel shows the challenges of nation building and maintenance in a place and time where technology, economics, and social theory are all undergoing rapid growth and facing considerable

resistance. Instead of deifying Lincoln as either an author or an orator, the creators of this work present a thoroughgoing study of the complexity of his brief battlefield speech. A star follow-up to the team's *The United States Constitution: A Graphic Adaptation* (2008). --Francisca Goldsmith

“An excellent work. | Not a simplification but a detailed and nuanced analysis of Lincoln's famous speech” • (Library Journal (starred review)) “Engaging, provocative and deftly nuanced. ... This second collaboration by Hennessey and McConnell again finds them probing the implications of history through incisive analysis and compelling art.” • (Kirkus Reviews (starred review)) “Aaron McConnell's illustrations are brilliant in their effectiveness of depicting complex themes and ideas in discernable ways. The style is reminiscent of the political cartoons of yore and his use of iconography is clever and informative.” • (Chris Wilson, *The Graphic Classroom*) Praise for *The United States Constitution: A Graphic Adaptation*: “The coolest thing since *Schoolhouse Rock*.” • (Rachel Maddow) “A sweet, quick, thoroughgoing history of the U.S. Constitution . . . You'd be hard-pressed to find a better primer for bringing the kids, foreigners and forgetful in your life up to speed.” • (Cory Doctorow) “Intelligently written, lushly illustrated . . . Hennessey interweaves the Framers' intent with contemporary battles over constitutional law, while McConnell colors history with masterful strokes. A civics lesson no one should miss.” • (Village Voice (A Best Book of 2008)) “Avoiding the didactic, the book succeeds in being both consistently entertaining and illuminating . . . A fine introduction to U.S. legal history.” • (Publishers Weekly) “Before Obama is sworn in as the next U.S. president in January, let Hennessey and McConnell's *The United States Constitution: A Graphic Adaptation* be your refresher course.” • (Charles Moss, *PopMatters*) “[A] must-read graphic novel treatment of the history, meaning and evolution of the United States Constitution. It should be a staple of every high school history class.” • (Jonathan Valania, *Phawker*) “We the people can now appreciate our nation's founding document unpacked into easy-to-follow explanations enriched with stick-in-your-mind visuals . . . A surprising and effective accomplishment; highly recommended for all collections. Buy multiples for kids, teens, and adults.” • (School Library Journal (starred review)) “A stellar nonfiction graphic novel. ... McConnell's detailed and highly textured art. ... shows the variety of class-based, racial, and historical perspectives creating the mismatched lenses through which Americans view their own history.” • (Booklist) “A very nuanced historical argument” • (Slate Political Gabfest)

While there is some confusion over the origin of the concept that "a picture is worth 1,000 words",

Jonathon Hennessey's book certainly dramatically embodies the idea. I am a voracious reader and was, frankly, a bit skeptical of the effectiveness of using graphics to convey some fairly subtle and complex historical issues. After reading the book, however, I am amazed how effectively graphics were intertwined with incisive and clever prose to establish moods and tones that would have been very difficult to achieve with words alone. There is a section where a lady is stumbling around the battlefield after the fight looking for her husband among the dead and rotting corpses. She is shown holding a cloth to her nose for obvious reasons. Unfortunately, she finds him. The reader cannot help get caught up in the tragedy, sadness and chill of the moment. An extremely skillful use of graphics has served to convey heavy dose of reality. The depth of research is truly commendable, and the authors have uncovered numerous, but fascinating, sidebar areas that I found to be intriguing. The comparison of the number of Civil War dead, preponderance of southern presidents, and the evolution of the cemetery are examples. The book made me reflect on deeper issues as well. A Yankee by birth, I had always narrowly viewed the succession from the Union as evil and unjust. Hennessey's comprehensive comparison of the Declaration of Independence vs. the Constitution opened my eyes to a whole different interpretation of that process. In fact, he demonstrates the southern states viewed their actions as very much justified both legally and morally, and, indeed obligated, in the same spirit that we all broke away from the tyranny of England. That idea had never really occurred to me. If I have any reservation about recommending "The Gettysburg Address", it might be that, while the book is crammed full of interesting factoids, anecdotes, incidents, and ideas, it is perhaps overdone in that respect in parts. The storyline, if one is even applicable in this case, gets a bit obscure and difficult to follow at times. New sections sometimes become brand new stories rather than natural transitions from previous parts. That said, this book is one that you can keep going back to and learn something new virtually every time. Pick out almost any page and become engrossed. On balance, it is an excellent presentation of perhaps the signature event in our nation's history. This one book that you will hang on to, and I am sure will take its place within the cornerstone selections of many personal libraries.

This is not your standard fair for Graphic Novels. I already utilize the author's "U.S. Constitution" graphic novel in my high school classes and it is seriously perfect for kids. THIS book, however, is deeper philosophically and ideologically about so much more than the Gettysburg Address. I like that the book is not filled with U.S. Civil War battle scenes or general profiles, but about much more compelling and deeper American issues. As a U.S. History teacher I would classify this as a 'must-read', though everyone might not feel the same. I'm particularly using the segment about

States' Rights vs. Federal Rights in my classroom.

This is spectacular. Do not be fooled by the graphic nature of this text; the writing is exceptional, the ideas are high-level, and there are a ton of excellently dug-out primary source quotations in here to lay down context. I use this in high school social studies, and the concepts and ideas are very solid, particularly the interesting debate between Lincoln's Unionist ideals and State Sovereignty activists. Highly recommend.

Read this one. You can read it in a couple of hours. It's a graphic novel for adults but even my six year olds love it for the pictures. This book does a magnificent job of explaining everything political and social that led up to the Civil War, and everything that happened during the war, and why. It's framed on a line by line explication of the Gettysburg address, so you can understand what Lincoln was getting at during those few immortal lines. It should be required reading for all high school students, and they would not even find it painful. Magnificent job by the author and illustrator.

I bought it as a gift to someone who specifically requested it. I did not read, but did skim through it prior to wrapping it up. I wished they had had this type of resource when I was younger ... having painfully read 'dry', old textbooks on history for school as needed! I would have tested much better on the information if it had been presented in the more interesting and dynamic manner like this graphic novel. I will be keeping this in mind for future gift or resources for my nieces and nephews. Thank you!

I found this graphic history quite interesting although the actual subject materials were not groundbreaking. The strong point of the work was to put the address into context of 1st, Lincoln; 2nd, the times; and 3rd, current social and political currents. The drawings were well done but I don't know if I felt they added a great deal to the book. Its just a matter of taste, I suppose. Overall I gave the work 5 stars and I feel that it would work quite well as a high school civics supplement. An enjoyable read as well as informative and important.

Plumb forgot how Lincoln asked Johnson, a southern DEMOCRAT, to balance the ticket for his second term. Sadly, it was Johnson who set-back emancipation. In grade school, I was told it was those nasty carpet baggers. Johnson opposed the 14th amendment, etc. Ironical that it took another assassination and another Johnson to re-energize matters BUT 40 years ago!

I feel like I just completed an American history course at Harvard--and it was delightful. Apparently people can remember very complex ideas when they are presented visually. The Gettysburg Address demonstrates this. The ideas are sophisticated and the graphics smart. Reading this graphic book was like being let into a hip professor's seminar.

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