

# ESSAYS ABOUT LINCOLN

*A statewide reading and writing contest celebrating Abraham Lincoln's 200th birthday.*



... read the **GETTYSBURG ADDRESS**  
... be **INSPIRED** ... write an **ESSAY!**

In November 1863, President Abraham Lincoln was invited to say “a few appropriate remarks” to dedicate a cemetery in rural Pennsylvania, the final resting place for more than 50,000 Americans who gave their lives during the Civil War. Facing a divided nation, Lincoln expressed in less than 300 words that from this terrible sacrifice “this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom — and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.” Lincoln’s *Gettysburg Address* became one of our nation’s most revered speeches.

Today, the nation is again divided and at war. Imagine yourself in Lincoln’s place. What would you say to your fellow citizens to unite the country? In 300 words or less, tell what your ideals are for a nation of freedom, democracy and equal opportunity.

## COMPETITION LEVELS

**Level 1:** Grades 5-6

**Level 2:** Grades 7-8

**Level 3:** Grades 9-12

## AWARDS

The Illinois Center for the Book will select a first-, second- and third-place winning essay in each of the three competition levels. The Illinois State Library will send the winners and their parents/guardians to Springfield for an awards presentation in conjunction with the bicentennial celebration of Lincoln’s birthday. Winners will read their essays at the awards ceremony, tour the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum, and receive a plaque and cash award: \$200 first-place; \$150 second-place; \$100 third-place. Winning essays also will be published in the 2009 Handbook of Illinois Government.

## DEADLINE

Submit essays by **May 31, 2008**. Winners will be notified in December 2008.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information, contact Bonnie Matheis, 217-558-2065, [bmatheis@ilsos.net](mailto:bmatheis@ilsos.net), or [illinoiscenterforthebook.org](http://illinoiscenterforthebook.org).



*Endorsed by: Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, Lincoln Illinois Bicentennial Commission.*

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GUIDELINES

# Preparing Your Essay for Submission

- **Return Address:** Print your name, complete address and phone number in the upper-right corner of the first page of the essay. Letters without a return address will be disqualified.
- **Essay Format:** Essays must be 300 words or less and typed or printed legibly in ink. If the judges cannot read your handwriting, your essay will be disqualified.
- **Entry Coupon:** Each essay must be accompanied by an Entry Coupon (see below). Staple the coupon to the back of your essay (do not use paper clips). If your essay is chosen as a winner, you will be contacted by the Illinois Center for the Book using the information on your Entry Coupon. Please be sure this information is complete and legible.
- **Submission Agreement & Release Form:** A dated and signed Submission Agreement and Release Form (see next page) must accompany each essay.
- **Mailing Envelope:** Judges prefer entries in a flat 9" x 11" envelope. Indicate the competition level — 1, 2, 3 — on the front of the envelope. Use correct postage or your essay will be returned. **Teachers/Librarians:** Mail class sets together in one flat envelope rather than individual envelopes. Use one envelope for each level.

**NOTE:** All essays become property of the Illinois Center for the Book. Please make a copy of your essay as it will not be returned.

**Submission Deadline:** All entries must be postmarked by **May 31, 2008**, to:

**Essays About Lincoln — Level (1, 2, 3)**  
**Illinois Center for the Book**  
**Gwendolyn Brooks Building**  
**300 S. Second St.**  
**Springfield, IL 62701-1796**

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## Essays About Lincoln: Entry Coupon (Must accompany Submission Agreement and Release Form.)

Please type or print legibly. Staple coupon to the back of each essay. (If submitting for an entire class, **use one coupon per essay**, rather than one coupon for the entire class, as each child's contact information will be different.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade (Circle one grade only): **Level 1:** 5 6    **Level 2:** 7 8    **Level 3:** 9 10 11 12

Home Address: Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP Code \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**IMPORTANT:** If submitting through a school or library, please complete the additional information below:

School/Library: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP Code \_\_\_\_\_

School/Library Telephone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ School/Library E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher/Librarian Telephone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher/Librarian E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

# Submission Agreement and Release Form

(Must accompany Entry Coupon.)

Entrant and parent/guardian understands and agrees that the execution of this release is a prerequisite to acceptance of the entrant's submission to the Essays About Lincoln reading and writing competition, and in partial consideration thereof, entrant and parent/guardian agrees to the following:

1. Warrants and represents that he/she has retained at least one copy of the material, and hereby releases the Illinois Secretary of State (including the Illinois State Library and the Illinois State Archives), the Illinois Center for the Book and the Illinois State Board of Education (sponsoring organizations) from any and all liability for loss of or damage to copies of the submitted material.
2. Warrants that the submission is his/her original, unpublished material, and understands that copies of his/her entry will not be returned. Entrant agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the sponsoring organizations and the employees thereof from any claims brought by third parties alleging that the entrant's submission is not an original work.
3. Understands that an independent panel of judges will determine the semi-finalists and the winners, and that the sponsoring organizations are under no obligation to the entrant whatsoever if his/her submission is not selected as a winner. All judges' decisions are final.
4. Winners must sign and return affidavits of eligibility within 14 days of prize letter notification mailing date or the prize will be forfeited. All taxes on prizes are the sole responsibility of the winners. All prizes claimed will be awarded.
5. Acknowledges that he/she is an Illinois resident.
6. Judges, officials and employees of the sponsoring organizations and their immediate families are not eligible to participate in the competition.
7. Hereby grants to the sponsoring organizations permission to quote from and/or release to the media and appropriate publications any or all parts of any award-winning essay that the entrant submits to the competition. Entrant grants permission to the sponsoring organizations to use the entrant's name and hometown in his/her respective publications and Web sites without compensation.
8. Copyright remains with the author, but sponsoring organizations retain the non-exclusive rights to publish the winning entries in their respective newsletters, publications and in book form at a later date to benefit the activities of the sponsoring organizations, without compensation.

## Agreed and Accepted.

_____ Name of Entrant (print)	_____ Signature of Entrant
_____ Name of Parent or Guardian (print)	_____ Signature of Parent or Guardian
_____ Date	_____ Daytime Telephone Number
_____ Street Address	_____ City, State, ZIP

Name and Address of Local Newspaper: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

ESSAYS ABOUT LINCOLN

# ESSAYS ABOUT LINCOLN

## *The Essays About Lincoln contest supports the following Illinois Learning Standards:*

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

#### Goal 1: Reading

Using strategies for constructing meaning before, during and after reading the *Gettysburg Address* will help students connect historical events to the present situation.

#### Goal 2: Literature

By exploring the techniques that Lincoln used to convey a message and evoke responses, students will connect literature to their own lives and daily experiences.

#### Goal 3: Writing

Students can produce an essay that shows planning and organization, and effectively conveys the intended message and meaning.

#### Goal 4: Listening and Speaking

To understand the *Gettysburg Address* as spoken by Lincoln, students must be able to listen carefully and use specific techniques to clarify what they have heard.

#### Goal 5: Research

Students will learn to frame questions for inquiry, identify and organize relevant information about the *Gettysburg Address*, and communicate it effectively in an essay format.

### SOCIAL SCIENCE

#### Goal 14: Understand political systems, with an emphasis on the United States.

Through the study of government and documents like the *Gettysburg Address*, students will develop the skills and knowledge needed to be informed and contributing citizens, now and in the future.

#### Goal 16: Understand events, trends, individuals and movements shaping the history of Illinois, the United States and other nations.

Students who can examine and analyze the events of the past that frame Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg have a powerful tool for understanding the events of today and the future.



**Birthday Bicentennial**  
Jesse White, Illinois Secretary of State