



ArtsPower presents
Fourscore and Seven Years Ago
Study Guide

For Teacher Classroom Use
Performance: February 7, 2018 at 10am and 12:15pm



This program is made possible through the support of Advocate Medical Group,
the Foglia Family Foundation, NICOR and ComEd

This program in conjunction with this study guide supports the following Common Core Standards:

RL.3-5.2, RL.3-5.3, RL.3-5.5, RL.3-5.6, RL.3-5.7, RL.3-5.9

RI.3-5.2

RH.6-8.7, RH.6-8.9

W.3-5.3, W.3-5.7

SL.3-5.2, SL.305.4

A 501(c)3 non-profit, charitable organization dedicated to enriching the lives of all through the arts.
Located in historic, downtown Crystal Lake, Illinois.
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About the Show

In **GETTYSBURG**, in the summer of 1863, a young black man named **LEMUEL** works in a store owned by a Quaker widow, **MRS. MCLHENY**. Lemuel recently escaped from slavery. Mrs. McIlheny employs him and teaches him to read. What Lemuel wants most, however, is to be a Union soldier and fight for **ABOLITION**. He has been told that black men are not permitted to join the army.

Officers from the Union (**SERGEANT HITCHBORNE**) and the Confederacy (**GENERAL PICKETT**) come to Mrs. McIlheny's store to obtain supplies. Both armies are preparing for a battle at Gettysburg. Lemuel meets **JACOB**, a young Confederate soldier, who is Mrs. McIlheny's nephew. Jacob is rude and **CONDESCENDING** to Lemuel. He calls him "BOY" and orders him around. However, they soon discover that they have more in common than the difference in their skin color would have had them believe.

Lemuel and Mrs. McIlheny witness the **BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG**. They describe the **REGIMENTS** of soldiers in blue and gray uniforms, the **ARTILLERY**, the cannon fire, the **DRUMMERS**, and the dead and wounded.

Jacob is among the wounded. Although they risk charges of **TREASON**, Lemuel and Mrs. McIlheny help Jacob. Months later, recalling the words of President Abraham Lincoln's **GETTYSBURG ADDRESS**, they reflect on people who fight for their beliefs.

Vocabulary Check

ABOLITION: A movement to rid the United States of slavery

CONDESCENDING: Having a superior attitude

"BOY": An insulting term for a black male, usually suggests servant or slave status

BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG: A Civil War battle fought between Union and Confederate forces on July 1-3, 1863

REGIMENTS: Military units of ground troops

ARTILLERY: Large guns and cannons

DRUMMERS: Soldiers who beat rhythms on drums to send orders and inspire the soldiers

TREASON: The crime of betraying one's own country by purposely acting to aid its enemies

GETTYSBURG

ADDRESS: Famous speech written and given by President Lincoln at the dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery in November 1863. It begins, "Fourscore and seven years ago..."



The Setting of the Play

The setting of *Four Score and Seven Years Ago* is Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The play's action occurs before, during, and after the famous battle.

Four Score and Seven Years Ago features five characters created to tell the story and to represent historically significant groups of people involved in the U.S. Civil War.

Characters

LEMUEL is a young black man. He works in a dry goods store in Gettysburg in the **free state** of Pennsylvania.

MRS. MCILHENY is a Quaker widow who owns the **dry goods** store. She employs Lemuel and teaches him how to read.

JACOB is a young **Confederate** soldier who is also Mrs. McIlheny's nephew.

SERGEANT HITCHBORNE is an officer in the **Union** army.

GENERAL PICKETT is a commander of **Confederate** troops.

Historical Significance

LEMUEL represents the black people who **escaped slavery** via the **Underground Railroad**.

MRS. MCILHENY represents people of the **Quaker religion** who do not believe in war or slavery.

JACOB represents the **inexperienced and untrained youths** who joined the Civil War armies of the North and the South. His relationship with his aunt illustrates that in civil wars, members of the same family often fight on opposing sides.

SERGEANT HITCHBORNE represents the officers of the forces of the North. His activities illustrate that not all people on the "winning" side are honest and principled.

The real **GENERAL GEORGE PICKETT** led 15,000 Confederate soldiers at Gettysburg in the bloodiest attack of the Civil War.

More Vocabulary

FREE STATE— one of the United States in which owning slaves was illegal

DRY GOODS— textiles, clothing, and other related items

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD— a series of safe hiding places created to help escaping slaves reach "free states"

QUAKER— a Christian religion also known as the Society of Friends.

CONFEDERATE

—referring to the association of southern states that withdrew from the United States in 1860 to govern themselves

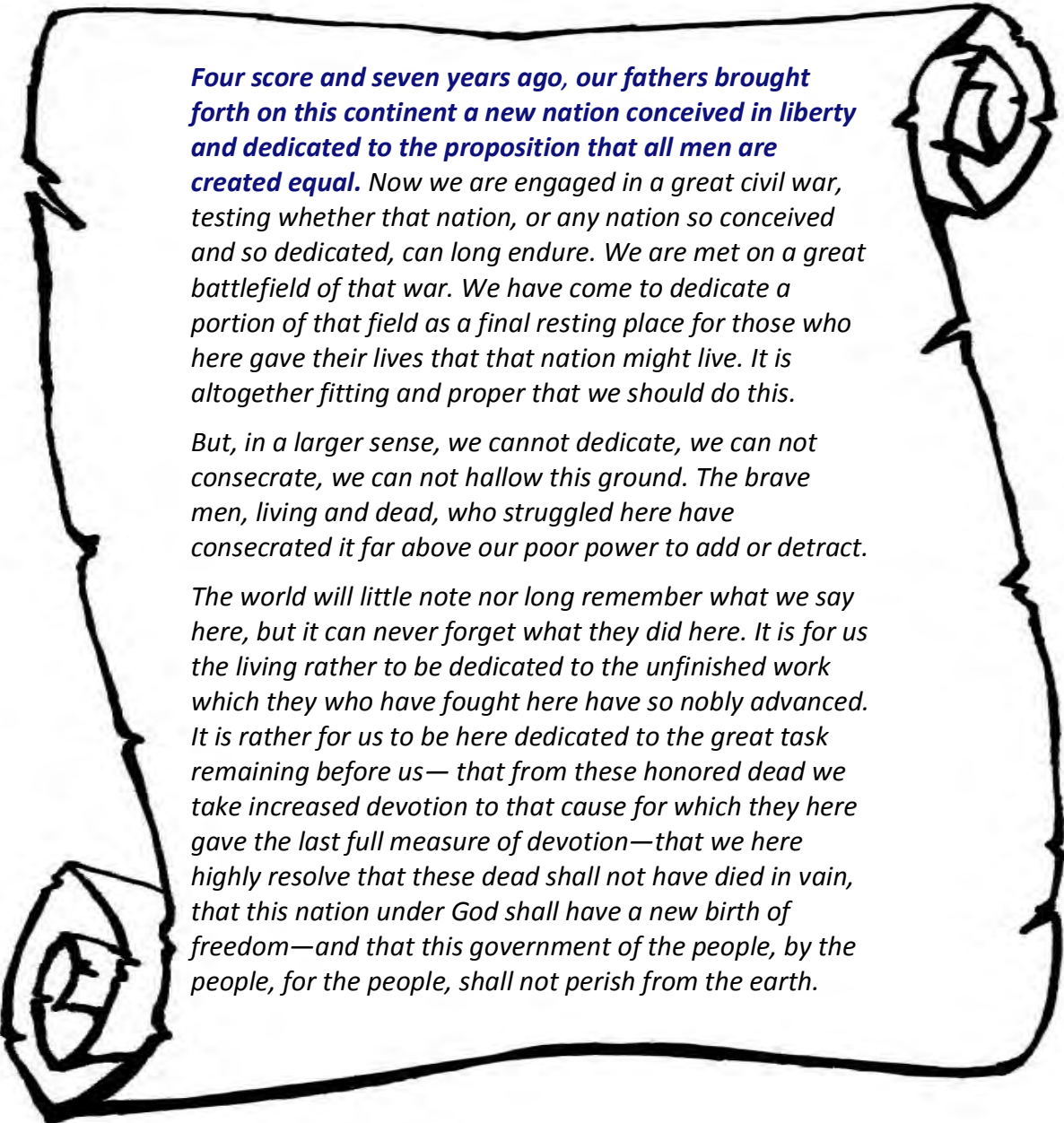
UNION—the northern states that remained loyal to the existing U.S. government

The Gettysburg Address

Four Score and Seven Years Ago takes its title from the first sentence of President Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.

In 1863, the United States was in the middle of a **CIVIL WAR**. (A **CIVIL WAR** is a war fought between two groups of people that live in the same country.) On July 1-3, 1863, on an open field beside the small town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, Union forces from the northern United States fought a long and bloody battle against troops from the southern Confederate States of America.

After the battle, President Lincoln wrote and delivered a speech at the dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery. That speech has become one of the most famous in American history. It is called the **GETTYSBURG ADDRESS**.



Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we can not consecrate, we can not hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract.

The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living rather to be dedicated to the unfinished work which they who have fought here have so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us— that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom—and that this government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Poetry Exercise: Confederacy

THE HIGH TIDE AT GETTYSBURG by [Will Henry Thompson](#)

A cloud possessed the hollow field,
The gathering battle's smoky shield:
Athwart the gloom the lightning flashed,
And through the cloud some horsemen dashed,
And from the heights the thunder pealed.

Then, at the brief command of Lee,
Moved out that matchless infantry,
With Pickett leading grandly down,
To rush against the roaring crown
Of those dread heights of destiny.

Far heard above the angry guns
A cry across the tumult runs,--
The voice that rang from Shilo's woods
And Chickamauga's solitudes,
The fierce South cheering on her sons!

Ah, how the withering tempest blew
Against the front of Pettigrew!
A Khamsin wind that scorched and singed
Like that infernal flame that fringed
The British squares at Waterloo!

A thousand fell where Kemper led;
A thousand died where Garnett bled:
In blinding flame and strangling smoke
Their remnant through the batteries broke
And crossed the works with Armistead.

"Once more in Glory's van with me!"
Virginia cried to Tennessee;
"We two together, come what may,
Shall stand upon these works to-day!"
(The reddest day in history.)

Brave Tennessee! In reckless way
Virginia heard her comrade say:
"Close round this rent and riddled rag!"
What time she set her battle-flag
Amid the guns of Doubleday.

But who shall break the guards that wait
Before the awful face of Fate?
The tattered standards of the South
Were shriveled at the cannon's mouth,
And all her hopes were desolate.

In vain the Tennessean set
His breast against the bayonet;
In vain Virginia charged and raged,
A tigress in her wrath uncaged,
Till all the hill was red and wet!

Above the bayonets, mixed and crossed,
Men saw a gray, gigantic ghost
Receding through the battle-cloud,
And heard across the tempset loud
The death-cry of a nation lost!

The brave went down! Without disgrace
They leaped to Ruin's red embrace;
They heard Fame's thunders wake,
And saw the dazzling sun-burst break
In smiles on Glory's bloody face!

They fell, who lifted up a hand
And bade the sun in heaven to stand;
They smote and fell, who set the bars Against the
progress of the stars,
And stayed the march of Motherland!

They stood, who saw the future come
On through the fight's delirium;
They smote and stood, who held the hope
Of nations on that slippery slope
Amid the cheers of Christendom.

God lives! He forged the iron will
That clutched and held that trembling hill!
God lives and reigns! He built and lent
The heights for freedom's battlement
Where floats her flag in triumph still!

Fold up the banners! Smelt the guns!
Love rules. Her gentler purpose runs.
A mighty mother turns in tears
The pages of her battle years,
Lamenting all her fallen sons!

Poetry Exercise: Union

GETTYSBURG by James Jeffrey Roche (1847-1908)

There was no union in the land,
Though wise men labored long
With links of clay and ropes of sand
To bind the right and wrong.

There was no temper in the blade
That once could cleave a chain;
Its edge was dull with touch of trade
And clogged with rust of gain.

The sand and clay must shrink away
Before the lava tide:
By blows and blood and fire assay
The metal must be tried.

Here sledge and anvil met, and when
The furnace fiercest roared,
God's undiscerning workingmen
Reforged His people's sword.

Enough for them to ask and know
The moment's duty clear—
The bayonets flashed it there below,
The guns proclaimed it here:

To do and dare, and die at need,
But while life lasts, to fight—
For right or wrong a simple creed,
But simplest for the right.

They faltered not who stood that day
And held this post of dread;
Nor cowards they who wore the gray
Until the gray was red.

For every wreath the victor wears
The vanquished half may claim;
Every monument declares
A common pride and fame.

We raise no altar stones to Hate,
Who never bowed to fear:
No province crouches at our gate,
To shame our triumph here.

Here standing by a dead wrong's grave
The blindest now may see,
The blow that liberates the slave
But sets the master free!

When ills beset the nation's life
Too dangerous to bear,
The sword must be the surgeon's knife,
Too merciful to spare.

O Soldier of our common land,
'Tis thine to bear that blade
Loose in the sheath, or firm in hand,
But ever unafraid.

When foreign foes assail our right,
One nation trusts to thee—
To wield it well in worthy fight--
The sword of Meade and Lee!

Poem found on www.civilwarpoetry.org

Activities/Discussion

Read both poems about The Gettysburg Battle. Notice each is from a different side of the war. How are they the same? How are they different? Do they use different adjectives or words that indicate how the battle ended for their side?

Look at other poems or songs from the Civil War (doesn't have to be from Gettysburg). Are there similar differences and similarities in those to these two poems?

Write your own poem about current events utilizing the structure or rhetoric that these poems use. How is your intent the same or different from the poems above?

War: A Conflict of Ideas

In the play *Four Score and Seven Years Ago*, the playwrights were very careful to represent many different views of what was happening in the Civil War.

THE UNION (also called The North and The Yankees)

The main government was fighting to retain the United States as one country with one central government that could make laws for the whole country.

Many people were also fighting to abolish slavery in the whole country, not just in certain states.

PACIFISTS

People who hate all kinds of fighting or whose religions forbid fighting are called “pacifists” (*pass-i-fists*). During the Civil War, pacifists felt both sides were wrong, and that the way to solve differences was through talking, or “negotiation.”

THE CONFEDERACY (also called The South and Dixie)

The main government was fighting to support the right of individual states to choose which laws worked best for those states and to oppose the right of a central government to impose laws on the whole country.

Many people were fighting to keep slavery, even though they knew it was morally wrong. They knew that without slaves, the large farms of cotton and tobacco would fail; the farmers didn’t make enough money to pay as many workers as they needed. Without slaves, the farms would fail and the whole south would be an economic disaster.

Activities/Discussion

Imagine that you are on a news panel in 1862. This quote, taken from a song in the play, is your topic of conversation.

A war like this is terrible.

But one thought makes it bearable:

“Our cause is just and cannot be denied.

How can you lose with God on your side?”



Writers Create Atmosphere

PLAYWRIGHTS are people who write plays. They tell stories through lines written for actors to speak. Those lines need to keep the actions of the story moving, show the character of the person who is speaking, and give an idea of the time in which the story takes place.

LYRICISTS write the words for the songs. These songs need to reflect the moods of the characters and help to underline important conflicts and discoveries. ArtsPower’s playwright and lyricist used many sources to help them get the **ATMOSPHERE** (the general feeling) for this play. They researched the mid-1800s so they could use the correct words for things and get the atmosphere of the play right.

This advertisement appeared in a newspaper named *The Gettysburg Compiler* in June 1863. It inspired the playwrights to create the character of Mrs. McIlheny and to use the dry goods store as a setting in the play.

McIlheny’s Store now offers a splendid assortment of boots and shoes, comprising men’s fine calf boots, Balmorals, Wellington



Quakers: “Thee” instead of “You”

The character Mrs. McIlheny is a Quaker. Until the late 1800s, Quakers spoke “plain speech.” They felt that “thee” was less formal than “you.” They used “thee” to address every person because they believed in equality among all human beings. *During the performance, listen for “thee” in Mrs. McIlheny’s lines, as in: “Friend Blackwell, thee knows we sell no weapons.”*

Sergeant Hitchborne tells Mrs. McIlheny that she might get six dollars for her three-dollar blankets on the **BLACK MARKET**. Mrs. McIlheny rejects war profiteering, underlining her character’s strong morals.

A **BLACK MARKET** is an illegal way to sell goods. A **WAR PROFITEER** makes large amounts of money (profits) during wartime by selling items that are in short supply.



Yanks • Rebs • Dixie

YANKEES or **YANKS** was the nickname for Union soldiers in the Civil War. Confederate soldiers were called **REBS** because they were **REBELS** against the United States. **DIXIE** was the nickname for the states that were south of the **MASON-DIXON LINE**, an old boundary line that served to separate the free states from the slave states.

Pre-Show Discussion

1. Read parts of the study guide to the students or have the students read on their own. Discuss any questions they may have about that aspect of the topic they will see. This will help clear up any confusion they may have before the show.
2. Have the students seen any shows that were based on historical perspectives, books or stories before? What about movies? How do they expect this show to be different from what they have seen in the past? How do they expect the show to be different from the book?
3. This study guide includes just a fraction of information on The Civil War. Have the students research The Civil War, The Gettysburg Address and the Battle of Gettysburg, as well as other African American or historical figures from the time period and write a paper describing what each had to go through. Can they think of anything happening now that is similar to what people at that time were going through? How is what happened then different from what African Americans or American citizens have to deal with now? How is his story similar or different to other Civil War leaders?
4. Have the students draw or write predictions on what they think they will see based on what they read in the study guide, pictures, and history. After the show, look at the predictions and see who was correct.
5. Find out more about the Civil War (or find a timeline and pick out an event). Research important people, places, etc. that surrounded those events. How did each event effect the Civil War?
6. Have the students research civil war or upheaval in other countries. How is it different or similar to the Civil War? This can be a research paper, project or just a homework assignment.
7. Have the students research storytelling in other countries or history. How is it different or similar to American folktales and fables? This can be a research paper, project or just a homework assignment. Have them present what they found to the class.
8. Since the main theme of the play is standing up for your beliefs and being brave, have a class discussion on the topic. Have the students think of a moral or a lesson that they would want to teach someone and write their own fable. Have them go a step further and illustrate the story, similar to the explanation of the puppetry with deciding what they want the animals to look like. Have them present to the class explaining why they told the story in the way they did. (What animals did they use and why did they choose them?)
9. Have the students read another story about the Civil War or standing up for your beliefs or watch a movie featuring the topic. What are some common themes of the story? What is the main theme of the story? Are there other stories they can think of that have the same theme? Consider using other folk tales and fables to illustrate this point: Greek mythology, fables, American folk tales, etc. What are some other famous stories? Was the lesson the same in each story?
10. Have the students research other stories. How are the stories similar to the story of the Civil War (themes, characters, setting, etc.)? How are they different? Even if they haven't read the stories, is there anything that they can tell from the description or even pictures that are similar to the story in the show? If you have come to past Mad River shows at the Raue before, how does this story compare to some of the other shows like the stories about Eugene Bullard, Rosa Parks, or Jackie Robinson?
11. Have the students think about how it would have been to grow up in the 1860s while this was going on. What else was going on around that time (national conflicts, social issues, popular culture)? How do their lives compare now with then?

Post-Show Discussion

(Some of these are good to discuss with your students while you wait for your bus to arrive at the theatre after the show!)

1. Have each student come up with one or two of their favorite parts of the show. What was their least favorite part?
2. Compare the show they just saw with other theatre shows or movies they've seen. How are they different? How are they similar?
3. What is the difference between a movie or book about the subject and the play they've just seen? Are there similar aspects in each or are they completely different?
4. Do the students think they could write a play based on their lives? Have the students write a story that could be turned into a play. Maybe include their favorite day, vacation they've taken, school or friend adventures. To expand on this activity, have the students write a scene of their play. Go to the library and look at the format of a play including stage directions, dialogue and scene description. Have the students perform their scene for the class. If they can't come up with something on their own lives, have them write something for another story.
5. Write a journal entry about the play. Include favorite or least favorite parts. Scenes or times in the show that students related to in some way. Have they ever felt like any of the characters did? Were there things they would do differently if they were in his/her shoes?
6. Have the students pretend you are a reporter for a newspaper and write a review of the play they have just seen.
7. Have the students read the synopsis and the first few pages of the study guide. What are the common themes? What is the main theme of the play? After the show, have the students recall what they read about the story before they came to the show. Does their idea of the theme change after seeing the show? How is what they saw different/ similar to what they read? Did the play use specific words or descriptions to add to the story or create the mood of the story? Use specific examples.
8. Have the students pick out their favorite part of the story and describe it in detail from the perspective of the main character in the scene. Have them rewrite the story from another character's perspective (i.e. from Lemuel's to Mrs. McIlheny). Did that change the story at all? How? How is each story told—first person or third person perspective? Have the students rewrite it one more time from their own perspective as an audience member.
9. Have the students choose their favorite character in the play. How are they important to the story? What are they like?
10. An important aspect of the show is the music chosen. How is music used in setting the mood? What kind of music is played for the happy parts? The sad parts? Tell the students to listen for music that sets the mood the next time they see a movie or a television show. Do you think the songs are intentionally chosen or just because the director liked the songs?
11. Review the moral of the story and discuss what happened to the characters to show the moral (what bad thing happened that made them learn the lesson). How might you apply this lesson to your life?
12. Are there other ways the students can think of to tell the stories? Play, storyboards, etc. Have them try telling a story using that medium.
13. Read the Civil Rights poems in this study guide. How do the stories told in the poem and musical differ? How are they similar? What elements does the author of the poem use to tell the story (rhyme, rhythm, etc.)? What elements of theatre (costumes, characters, settings, dialogue, music) do the players use to tell the same story?
14. How did the play make the children feel? Talk about how the actors assume different roles (characters) and how a play is different from a movie. Ask the children what they think happened in the lives of the characters after the action of the play.
15. How would you describe these characters and who they represent as an important figure in history? How do his or her actions support your description of them? Be specific.
16. Which parts of the play were fact? Which parts were fiction? How does the play show what might have happened? Does the playwright of this play show an opinion? Are we supposed to feel that one character is "right" in his political beliefs?

Sources:

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Web:
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