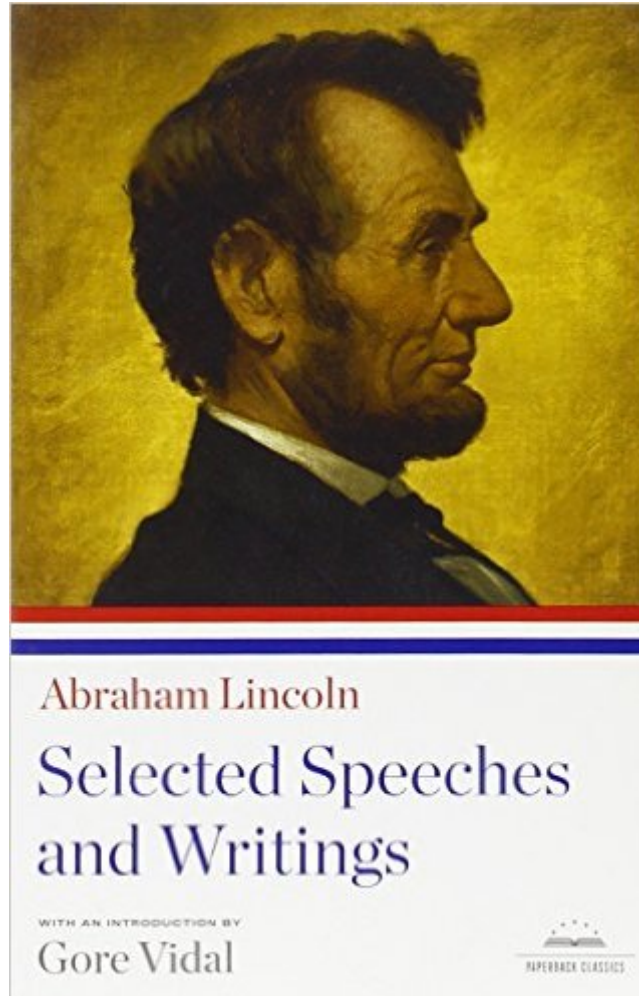


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Abraham Lincoln: Selected Speeches And Writings (Library Of America)



Synopsis

Alone among American Presidents, it is possible to imagine Lincoln, grown up in a different milieu, becoming a distinguished writer of a not merely political kind.--Edmund Wilson Ranging from finely honed legal argument to wry and some sometimes savage humor to private correspondence and political rhetoric of unsurpassed grandeur, the writings collected in this volume are at once a literary testament of the greatest writer ever to occupy the White House and a documentary history of America in Abraham Lincoln's time. They record Lincoln's campaigns for public office; the evolution of his stand against slavery; his electrifying debates with Stephen Douglas; his conduct of the Civil War; and the great public utterances of his presidency, including the Emancipation Proclamation and the Gettysburg Address. Library of America Paperback Classics feature authoritative texts drawn from the acclaimed Library of America series and introduced by today's most distinguished scholars and writers. Each book features a detailed chronology of the author's life and career, and essay on the choice of the text, and notes. The contents of this Paperback Classic are drawn from Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Writings 1832- 1858 and Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Writings 1859-1865, volumes number 45 and 46 in the Library of America series. They are joined in the series by a companion volume, number 192s, The Lincoln Anthology: Great Writers on his Life and Legacy from 1860 to Now.

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Customer Reviews

After perusing the voluminous annals of Lincoln's writings, scholars and laymen alike are astounded

by his ability to set forth his views with clarity and logic in an age noted for oblique, flourished writing styles reminiscent of 18th century dinner invitations from the Queen. We also marvel at his ability to convey complex thoughts and feelings in the style of an accomplished poet. He was indeed a master of the English language worthy of the high esteem for which he is remembered. However, to my limited knowledge, no one has yet analyzed his writings from the perspective of his profession. He wrote in the style of the lawyer which he was to get the attention of impatient judges and juries who were likely illiterate. He had to appeal to people with little knowledge (including judges of the time), short attention spans, and do it in the least amount of time possible. A good piece of legal writing is roughly divided into three parts. The first is a statement of the facts, the second an analysis of those facts in the context of applicable law and the third the conclusion (or, in the case of judges), a definitive holding. Lincoln consciously selected each word for a purpose and arranged his arguments in logically ordered paragraphs that ultimately supported, and persuaded others, to agree with his conclusion. It does not take much time to observe his style just by flipping through the pages of Lincoln's speeches, letters and other writings set forth in the unadulterated versions set forth in the books published by the Library of America. Every piece of writing, including his short notes, begins with a strong topic sentence that sets forth the subject of the remainder of the paragraph without any wasted words.

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