

# LINCOLN ANALYSIS REVISION GUIDE



## STRUCTURAL DIVISION OF THE PIECE

The most logical division probably looks like this:

- Paragraphs 1-2 (Lincoln's review of the state of the conflict and his presidency)
- Paragraph 3 (His condemnation of slavery and the connection to God's justice/mercy)
- Paragraph 4 (His call for unity after the war)

## PROOFING COMMENTS

- **PURP** means to make sure to shift your thesis and/or topic sentences to discuss the purpose of the argument, not just the subject.
- **C/C** is a reference to CRISPING. It means you should combine these sentences and condense your analysis.
- **AL** means Abraham Lincoln, of course.
- **KERNEL** means make your quote shorter, while **TEXT** means you need some here.

## COMMON ERRORS

- Many of you don't even seem to be trying to write interesting intros. Revisions need to include STAMPY intros with vivid language, not vague summaries of the prompt. If your essay begins with "In Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address..." you've made a terrible mistake.
- Many of the papers contain far too much literal analysis, which means analysis that merely repeats his quote in slightly different phrasing. Remember, your analysis is always supposed to be about explaining **how** AL's language functions and **why** he chooses to write the way he does.
- This is an especially evident problem in analysis of **paragraph one**. To be honest, there's little interesting analytical work to be done there, and many of you spent an inordinate amount of time summarizing this section.
- When Lincoln calls the Civil War "a great contest," he is not saying it was childish or like a game.
- Topic sentences are generally quite weak. They need to have clear transitions and express Lincoln's purpose. Far too often, they are simply vague references to his subject.
- Topic sentences and thesis statements are not meant to leave the reader wondering. Instead of saying something like "Lincoln expresses his view on the issue of slavery," it would be much better to argue in the topic sentence that "Lincoln bitterly condemns the South's reliance on slavery, arguing that it violates divine law."
- Many papers seemed to miss that Lincoln bitterly condemns slavery and calls out the South for its continued embrace of it. While the speech does end with a call for unity, Lincoln's argument is more nuanced than that.
- **Embedded quotes** need to make sense in the sentence. They need to read as complete, logical sentences. Check the writing guide if this still doesn't make sense to you.
- **You're forbidden from talking about how language sounds for now**. Don't talk about "a pleasing rhythm," "hammering effect," or the like. It almost never adds to your analysis.



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## KERNELS

- Make sure to effectively weave kernels of text into your analysis. A good minimum would be 3 kernels of text per paragraph, although aiming for 5 would be an excellent decision.
- Kernels are brief references to text, not full sentences.
- Periodically, you can combine a number of details in a sentence if they address the same issue/are use for the same purpose. This is especially true in that long third paragraph about slavery and God.
- When you discuss devices, it's important to **reference** them, not **focus** on them. The critical element of your analysis should be **how** Lincoln's specific language affects the audience and **why** he makes the rhetorical choices he does.

## KERNEL CHECKLIST

*Your revision needs to include at least twelve of these elements. Please attach this sheet and check off the elements as you include them.*

### Paragraphs 1-2

- \_\_\_ Lincoln's view of the future
- \_\_\_ All dreaded it, all sought to avert it
- \_\_\_ Insurgent Agents and their meaning
- \_\_\_ "One of them would make war....the other would accept war."

### Paragraph 3

- \_\_\_ Slaves as the cause of the war
- \_\_\_ "Both pray to the same God"
- \_\_\_ "wringing their bread from the sweat..."
- \_\_\_ "slavery is one of those offenses" and ""gives to North and South this terrible war..."
- \_\_\_ "Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray"
- \_\_\_ "...every drop of blood drawn with the lash..."

### Paragraph 4

- \_\_\_ "With malice toward none, with charity toward..." This is the most famous line of the speech.
- \_\_\_ "bind the wounds"
- \_\_\_ "widow and orphan"
- \_\_\_ "just and lasting peace"