

John f. kennedy inaugural speech analysis assignment

[History](#)



John F. Kennedy once said, " I am not the Catholic candidate for President. I am the Democratic Party's candidate for President, who happens also to be a Catholic. " In this single sentence, he uses a method of Aristotle's persuasive speech making. One of the greatest examples of using rhetorical strategies is indeed John F. Kennedy's inaugural address of 1961. John F. Kennedy uses diction, syntax, and Aristotle's method of persuasion in his inaugural address that not only made it uniquely his own, but made it undoubtedly one of the best, emotion tugging, speeches ever.

It was a very cold, icy January day when John F. Kennedy made his inaugural address. He was the youngest president to ever take office. He won by a very small margin. He was the first Roman Catholic president. In this way, he established ethos. The shortness of the speech showed he cared about the audience standing in the freezing temperatures on that wintry day. First, Kennedy uses Aristotle's rhetorical speech making method??? the appeals: ethos, logos, and pathos.

He establishes ethos by naming how important God is to him and to the future of the United States. In other words, he is finding common ground with his audience. He also talks as if he as well as all the American citizens are in making this country better together by using words like us and we. He uses ethos by quoting the Bible (Isiah 58: 6) to show he has done all the research. He also shows he has thought out every side to the arguments saying he will be a horrible president. He establishes pathos by asking what you can do for your country.

He takes every person into consideration by asking what they can do, making everyone feel like they have a part in the country. Diction plays a very strong part in this speech. President Kennedy uses words like: life freedom, poverty, devotion, loyalty, and sacrifice to draw people in. For example, these are all words that can relate to everyone. Everyone can put these words in his or her own perspective. They are very powerful words, and people have their own interpretations of them. He uses metaphors and personification to create an image.

For example, “ the jungle of suspicion” and “ those who foolishly sought power by riding the back of the tiger, ended up inside. ” Both of these can paint a picture in the listener’s (or reader’s) head, and can help them understand what JFK is referring to in his speech. Sometimes President Kennedy uses words that seem old fashioned. He does this because he is the youngest president, and he tries to appeal to the older people to show them he is as mature as any other person who could have been elected president.

Syntax helped Kennedy achieve his purpose as well. He used short paragraphs to get his point across. For example “ And, so my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you ??? ask what you can do for your country. ” Think of how famous this quote has become! The short sentences make more of an impression. They express more emotion.

Complex sentences are also used in this speech. They allow feelings to be built up in sentences. He uses opposites in this speech a lot. For instance, “ Never let us negotiate out of fear.

But let us ever fear to negotiate. " This shows he has considered all counterarguments and knows exactly what he wants to achieve while in office and that he is as qualified as any other politician to be the next president of the United States. Aristotle's rhetorical strategies can help a writer achieve the art of persuasion. John F. Kennedy's inaugural speech is a perfect example of this. In this speech he used the basic rhetorical appeals (ethos, logos, and pathos), diction and word structure, and syntax and sentence and paragraph structure.