

Inaugural address research paper examples

[Countries](#), [United States](#)



1. Why did you pick your speech?

The main reason I chose this speech is that despite it being 52 years old its' message is still significant today. This speech focuses on vices, hardships and terrors which we currently face today and were faced in the yester years. The speech is direct, simple and eloquent. Its message is concise; it is the fourth shortest inaugural speech delivered, 13 minutes and 59 second. However, it is ranked by historians as one of the best inaugural speeches of all time (Grier, 2011).

I was also drawn to this speech because of the profile of its deliverer. John F. Kennedy delivered this inaugural speech after taking the presidential oath. He was then the youngest man to be elected as the president of the United States of America, at age 43. He was replacing the oldest serving president at that time, President Dwight Eisenhower aged 70. He spoke with enthusiasm of the dawn of a new age and revolution in America and the world.

2. What is the general purpose of the speech? What makes you think so?

This speech is a presidential inaugural speech. This is evident since the late president delivered it during his presidential inauguration in 1961. The general purpose was to give the citizens of America and the world his vision for the country and the mission he had for his fellow citizens.

I am able to make this conclusion from the various quotes in the speech. The president wanted to rally troops to hold hands and conquer the challenges they were facing as a global community. " My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the

freedom of man". He also wanted the nations to work together and achieve prosperity and success, " Together let us explore the stars, conquer the deserts, eradicate disease, tap the ocean depths and encourage the arts and commerce".

3. Do you agree with the overall message of the speech? Why or why not?

I agree with the overall message in the speech. It was one of unity of all countries in fighting common enemies. These enemies according to John F. Kennedy were poverty, tyranny, diseases and war. He called for joint support for the America's neighbours, newly liberated countries, allies and the United Nations, who were the last frontier for peace in the world.

I agree with this message, because the road map for global peace and unity given by the former president is in use today and is fruitful. The United Nations and various American non-governmental organizations have been able to carry on this touch lit by JFK. They have pioneered peacekeeping in war-torn areas, poverty alleviation in the third-world countries and various medical camps and initiatives to eradicate diseases such as polio.

4. What part of the speech was the most effective? Why? For example, was there an inspirational quote, an impressive statistic, or an encouraging example?

The inspirational quote: " And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country. My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man."

The above quote in my opinion was most effective. All through the speech, the president addressed specific issues such as freedom from colonialism, loyalty to ally nations, iron fist rule against communism, strive for liberty, zero tolerance for war and desire to uphold human rights and dignity. However, without the above phrase at the close of the speech the government would should all the responsibility for achieving the president's dream. Using this closing phrase, he made sure that everyone was collectively responsible for achieving this objective. All Americans and citizens of the world were challenged to be active in the fight against tyranny, poverty, war and disease. This is therefore the most effective part of the speech since it shared the responsibility for achieving these objectives with every citizen and not laying it expressly on the hands of his government.

Vice President Johnson, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chief Justice, President Eisenhower, Vice President Nixon, President Truman, Reverend Clergy, fellow citizens:

We observe today not a victory of party but a celebration of freedom, symbolizing an end as well as a beginning, signifying renewal as well as change. For I have sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn oath our forbears prescribed nearly a century and three-quarters ago.

The world is very different now. For man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life. And yet the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe - the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God.

We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution. Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans, born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage, and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world.

Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.

This much we pledge - and more.

To those old allies whose cultural and spiritual origins we share, we pledge the loyalty of faithful friends. United there is little we cannot do in a host of cooperative ventures. Divided there is little we can do; for we dare not meet a powerful challenge at odds and split asunder.

To those new states whom we welcome to the ranks of the free, we pledge our word that one form of colonial control shall not have passed away merely to be replaced by a far more iron tyranny. We shall not always expect to find them supporting our view. But we shall always hope to find them strongly supporting their own freedom; and to remember that, in the past, those who foolishly sought power by riding the back of the tiger ended up inside.

To those people in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help

themselves, for whatever period is required – not because the communists may be doing it, not because we seek their votes, but because it is right. If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.

To our sister republics south of our border, we offer a special pledge: to convert our good words into good deeds in a new alliance for progress; to assist free men and free governments in casting off the chains of poverty. But this peaceful revolution of hope cannot become the prey of hostile powers. Let all our neighbors know that we shall join with them to oppose aggression or subversion anywhere in the Americas. And let every other power know that this Hemisphere intends to remain the master of its own house.

To that world assembly of sovereign states, the United Nations, our last best hope in an age where the instruments of war have far outpaced the instruments of peace, we renew our pledge of support, to prevent it from becoming merely a forum for invective, to strengthen its shield of the new and the weak, and to enlarge the area in which its writ may run.

Finally, to those nations who would make themselves our adversary, we offer not a pledge but a request: that both sides begin anew the quest for peace, before the dark powers of destruction unleashed by science engulf all humanity in planned or accidental self-destruction.

We dare not tempt them with weakness. For only when our arms are sufficient beyond doubt can we be certain beyond doubt that they will never be employed.

But neither can two great and powerful groups of nations take comfort from our present course - both sides overburdened by the cost of modern weapons, both rightly alarmed by the steady spread of the deadly atom, yet both racing to alter that uncertain balance of terror that stays the hand of mankind's final war.

So let us begin a new remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof. Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate.

Let both sides explore what problems unite us instead of belaboring those problems which divide us.

Let both sides, for the first time, formulate serious and precise proposals for the inspection and control of arms - and bring the absolute power to destroy other nations under the absolute control of all nations.

Let both sides seek to invoke the wonders of science instead of its terrors. Together let us explore the stars, conquer the deserts, eradicate disease, tap the ocean depths and encourage the arts and commerce.

Let both sides unite to heed in all corners of the Earth the command of Isaiah to "undo the heavy burdens . . . (and) let the oppressed go free."

And if a beachhead of cooperation may push back the jungle of suspicion, let both sides join in creating a new endeavor, not a new balance of power, but a new world of law, where the strong are just and the weak secure and the peace preserved.

All this will not be finished in the first one hundred days. Nor will it be finished in the first one thousand days, nor in the life of this Administration, nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin.

In your hands, my fellow citizens, more than mine, will rest the final success or failure of our course. Since this country was founded, each generation of Americans has been summoned to give testimony to its national loyalty. The graves of young Americans who answered the call to service surround the globe.

Now the trumpet summons us again; not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need; not as a call to battle, though embattled we are; but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and year out, " rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation" - a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease and war itself.

Can we forge against these enemies a grand and global alliance, North and South, East and West, that can assure a more fruitful life for all mankind? Will you join in that historic effort?

In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility; I welcome it. I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it - and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.

And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country.

My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.

Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us here the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on Earth God's work must truly be our own.

References

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Inaugural Address, 20 January 1961

John F. Kennedy.

(Source: <http://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/BqXIEM9F4024ntFI7SVAjA.aspx>)