

Presidential Moments: Inaugural Addresses



Which President spoke these words during an inaugural address?

1. About to undertake the arduous duties that I have been appointed to perform by the choice of a free people, I avail myself of this customary and solemn occasion to express the gratitude which their confidence inspires and to acknowledge the accountability which my situation enjoins. While the magnitude of their interests convinces me that no thanks can be adequate to the honor they have conferred, it admonishes me that the best return I can make is the zealous dedication of my humble abilities to their service and their good... It will be my sincere and constant desire to observe toward the Indian tribes within our limits a just and liberal policy, and to give that humane and considerate attention to their rights and their wants which is consistent with the habits of our Government and the feelings of our people.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> George Washington | <input type="checkbox"/> Richard M. Nixon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rutherford B. Hayes | <input type="checkbox"/> Andrew Jackson |

2. I am certain that my fellow Americans expect that on my induction to the Presidency I will address them with a candor and a decision which the present situation of our Nation impels. This is preeminently the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly. Nor need we shrink from honestly facing conditions in our country today. This great Nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper. So first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance. In every dark hour of our national life a leadership of frankness and vigor has met with that understanding and support of the people themselves which is essential to victory. I am convinced that you will again give that support to leadership in these critical days... Happiness lies not in the mere possession of money; it lies in the joy of achievement, in the thrill of creative effort. The joy and moral stimulation of work no longer must be forgotten in the mad chase of evanescent profit. These dark days will be worthy all they cast us if they teach us that our true destiny is not to be ministered unto but to minister to ourselves and to our fellow men... Our primary task is to put people to work. This is no unsolvable problem if we face it wisely and courageously.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Herbert Hoover | <input type="checkbox"/> Franklin Delano Roosevelt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Woodrow Wilson | <input type="checkbox"/> Gerald R. Ford |

3. 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, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty... Let [us] seek to invoke the wonders of science instead of terrors. Together let us explore the stars, conquer the deserts, eradicate disease, tap the ocean depths, and encourage the arts and commerce. 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.

- John F. Kennedy
- Calvin Coolidge
- Harry S. Truman
- Andrew Johnson

4. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured... Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with or even before the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces, but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes.

- Lyndon B. Johnson
- Abraham Lincoln
- Warren G. Harding
- Jimmy Carter

5. Justice was the promise that all who made the journey would share in the fruits of the land. In a land of great wealth, families must not live in hopeless poverty. In a land rich in harvest, children just must not go hungry. In a land of healing miracles, neighbors must not suffer and die unattended. In a great land of learning and scholars, young people must be taught to read and write. For the more than 30 years that I have served this Nation, I have believed that this injustice to our people, this waste of our resources, was our real enemy. For 30 years or more, with the resources I have had, I have vigilantly fought against it. I have learned, and I know, that it will not surrender easily. But change has given us new weapons. Before this generation of Americans is finished, this enemy will not only retreat—it will be conquered. Justice requires us to remember that when any citizen denies his fellow, saying, "His color is not mine," or "His beliefs are strange and different," in that moment he betrays America, though his forebears created this Nation.

- William J. Clinton
- Lyndon B. Johnson
- Abraham Lincoln
- Ronald Reagan