



HISTORICAL INAUGURAL SPEECHES

From the 1st President, George Washington, to the 43rd President, George W. Bush, all elected Presidents of the United States begin their term in the White House with the traditional Inaugural Address. Access all historical inaugural addresses below and be inspired to write one of your own!

LESSON PLAN IDEAS

A president's inaugural address is not just a celebratory speech; it is an American tradition that often sets the stage for an entire presidency. Listed below are the inaugural speeches of every U.S. President since George Washington. You can use these speeches in a variety of ways in your classroom.

- Assign each student or group of students to one inaugural address. Ask them to read through the address and create a list of that President's promises and priorities according to his speech. Once the list is created, ask students to research that President's term in office and report on how many of those promises were kept and how his priorities may have shifted during his time in office.
- Ask students to read through a selection of inaugural addresses and pick out famous quotes they might have heard previously. Together as a class, put those quotes in a historical context. Selections may include John F. Kennedy's 1961 inaugural address quote, "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country," or Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1933 inaugural address quote, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."
- Assign students a period in history. Ask them to write an inaugural speech addressing the concerns and hopes of our country at that time.
- Choose two presidential speeches 20, 50 or 100 years apart, ask students to read the speeches and compare and contrast the style of the speech, the concerns expressed in the speech and the Presidents themselves. Perhaps compare our past father and son Presidents: George Herbert Walker Bush (1989-1993) and George W. Bush (2001-2009) or John Adams (1797-1801) and John Quincy Adams (1825-1829).

Click on any of the President's names below and access their historic inaugural speech!

- [George Washington – 1789](#)
- [George Washington – 1793](#)
- [John Adams – 1797](#)
- [Thomas Jefferson – 1801](#)
- [Thomas Jefferson – 1805](#)
- [James Madison – 1809](#)
- [James Madison – 1813](#)
- [James Monroe – 1817](#)
- [James Monroe – 1821](#)
- [John Quincy Adams – 1825](#)
- [Andrew Jackson – 1829](#)
- [Andrew Jackson – 1833](#)
- [Martin Van Buren – 1837](#)
- [William Henry Harrison – 1841](#)
- [John Tyler*](#)
- [James Knox Polk – 1845](#)
- [Zachary Taylor – 1849](#)
- [Millard Fillmore – 1850*](#)
- [Franklin Pierce – 1853](#)
- [James Buchanan – 1857](#)
- [Abraham Lincoln – 1861](#)
- [Abraham Lincoln – 1865](#)
- [Andrew Johnson – 1865*](#)
- [Ulysses S. Grant – 1869](#)
- [Ulysses S. Grant – 1873](#)
- [Rutherford B. Hayes – 1877](#)
- [James A. Garfield – 1881](#)
- [Grover Cleveland – 1885](#)
- [Benjamin Harrison – 1889](#)
- [Grover Cleveland – 1893](#)
- [William McKinley – 1897](#)
- [William McKinley – 1901](#)
- [Theodore Roosevelt – 1901*](#)
- [Theodore Roosevelt – 1905](#)
- [William Howard Taft – 1909](#)
- [Woodrow Wilson – 1913](#)
- [Woodrow Wilson – 1917](#)
- [Warren G. Harding – 1921](#)
- [Calvin Coolidge – 1923*](#)
- [Calvin Coolidge – 1925](#)
- [Herbert Hoover – 1929](#)
- [Franklin D. Roosevelt – 1933](#)
- [Franklin D. Roosevelt – 1937](#)
- [Franklin D. Roosevelt – 1941](#)
- [Franklin D. Roosevelt – 1945](#)
- [Harry S Truman – 1945*](#)
- [Harry S Truman – 1949](#)
- [Dwight D. Eisenhower – 1953](#)
- [Dwight D. Eisenhower – 1957](#)
- [John F. Kennedy – 1961](#)
- [Lyndon Baines Johnson – 1963*](#)
- [Lyndon Baines Johnson – 1965](#)
- [Richard Milhous Nixon – 1969](#)
- [Richard Milhous Nixon – 1973](#)
- [Gerald Ford – 1974*](#)
- [Jimmy Carter – 1977](#)
- [Ronald Reagan – 1981](#)
- [Ronald Reagan – 1985](#)
- [George H.W. Bush – 1989](#)
- [William Jefferson Clinton – 1993](#)
- [William Jefferson Clinton – 1997](#)
- [George W. Bush – 2001](#)
- [George W. Bush – 2005](#)

*Note: Due to circumstances at that time, an Inaugural Address was not given.