



Comprehension questions

1. What are the two things Obama says the American people have chosen by voting for him?
2. Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases from the speech.
 - A. petty grievances
 - B. worn-out dogmas
 - C. feed hungry minds
3. Obama refers to two different groups of people who have and haven't been part of the journey to greatness. What is the difference between these two groups?
4. How does Obama pledge to support the poor, both in the USA and beyond?
5. What examples does Obama give of what the American people can do rather than the government itself?
6. In your own words, explain how Obama wishes the nation to approach its duties and responsibilities.
7. How do you think Obama views the American nation? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
8. Choose one sentence from the text that you think is rhetorically very powerful. Explain why you have chosen it, and why it is so effective.



Reading activities

1

Make a list of all of the persuasive and rhetorical devices that are used in the speech. This could include writing techniques such as repetition, or particular phrases and words. Separate them into categories.

2

Identify the 'old values' to which Obama refers. Can you think of examples of acts that embody these values.



Writing tasks

1

Write a story based around one of the 'old values' to which Obama refers in his speech: honesty, hard work, courage, fair play, tolerance, curiosity, loyalty or patriotism. Your story may take the form of a fable or moral tale. Challenge yourself to include more than one of the values.

2

Imagine you have just been voted by your classmates as the new head teacher of your school. Write a speech to address the school's pupils and teachers, outlining how you would like the school to move forward and change, and what you will do and what you would like them to do to make that possible.

3

In this speech, Obama refers to the important role of the American people in the building of a good future for the nation. Write a balanced argument addressing the following statement: 'A country's people are more important in shaping its future than the government'.



Speak up!

When you can't see into the future, is it ever possible to make a true promise?