

Climbing Space



(Excerpt from President John F. Kennedy's Speech Given at Rice University in Houston, Texas on the United States Space Effort)

There is no strife, no prejudice, no national conflict in outer space as yet. Its hazards are hostile to us all. Its conquest deserves the best of all mankind, and its opportunity for peaceful cooperation many never come again. But why, some say, the moon? Why choose this as our goal? And they may well ask why climb the highest mountain? Why, 35 years ago, fly the Atlantic? ...

We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win, and the others, too.

It is for these reasons that I regard the decision last year to shift our efforts in space from low to high gear as among the most important decisions that will be made during my incumbency in the office of the Presidency.

[...]

The growth of our science and education will be enriched by new knowledge of our universe and environment, by new techniques of learning and mapping and observation, by new tools and computers for industry, medicine, the home as well as the school. Technical institutions, such as Rice, will reap the harvest of these gains.

[...]

To be sure, all this costs us all a good deal of money. This year's space budget is three times what it was in January 1961, and it is greater than the space budget of the previous eight years combined...

But if I were to say, my fellow citizens, that we shall send to the moon, 240,000 miles away from the control station in Houston, a giant rocket more than 300 feet tall, the length of this football field, made of new metal alloys, some of which have not yet been invented, capable of standing heat and stresses several times more than have ever been experienced, fitted together with a precision better than the finest watch, carrying all the equipment needed for propulsion, guidance, control, communications, food and survival, on an untried mission, to an unknown celestial body, and then return it safely to earth, re-entering the atmosphere at speeds of over 25,000 miles per hour, causing heat about half that of the temperature of the sun ... and do all this, and do it right, and do it first before this decade is out-then we must be bold.

[...]

Many years ago the great British explorer George Mallory, who was to die on Mount Everest, was asked why did he want to climb it. He said, "Because it is there."

Well, space is there, and we're going to climb it, and the moon and the planets are there, and new hopes for knowledge and peace are there. And, therefore, as we set sail we ask God's blessing on the most hazardous and dangerous and greatest adventure on which man has ever embarked.

Thank you.

Renewing America



Excerpt from President Bill Clinton's First Inaugural Address (1993)

When George Washington first took the oath I have just sworn to uphold, news traveled slowly across the land by horseback and across the ocean by boat. Now, the sights and sounds of this ceremony are broadcast instantaneously to billions around the world.

Communications and commerce are global; investment is mobile; technology is almost magical; and ambition for a better life is now universal. We earn our livelihood in America today in peaceful competition with people all across the Earth.

Profound and powerful forces are shaking and remaking our world, and the urgent question of our time is whether we can make change our friend and not our enemy.

This new world has already enriched the lives of millions of Americans who are able to compete and win in it. But when most people are working harder for less; when others cannot work at all; when the cost of health care devastates families and threatens to bankrupt our enterprises, great and small; when the fear of crime robs law-abiding citizens of their freedom; and when millions of poor children cannot even imagine the lives we are calling them to lead—we have not made change our friend.

We know we have to face hard truths and take strong steps. But we have not done so. Instead, we have drifted, and that drifting has eroded our resources, fractured our economy, and shaken our confidence.

Though our challenges are fearsome, so are our strengths. Americans have ever been a restless, questing, hopeful people. And we must bring to our task today the vision and will of those who came before us.

From our Revolution to the Civil War, to the Great Depression, to the civil rights movement, our people have always mustered the determination to construct from these crises the pillars of our history.

Thomas Jefferson believed that to preserve the very foundations of our Nation, we would need dramatic change from time to time. Well, my fellow Americans, this is our time. Let us embrace it.

[...]

To renew America, we must meet challenges abroad as well as at home. There is no longer a clear division between what is foreign and what is domestic-the world economy, the world environment, the world AIDS crisis, the world arms race, they affect us all.

Today, as an old order passes, the new world is more free but less stable. Communism's collapse has called forth old animosities and new dangers. Clearly America must continue to lead the world we did so much to make.

While America rebuilds at home, we will not shrink from the challenges, nor fail to seize the opportunities, of this new world. Together with our friends and allies, we will work to shape change, lest it engulf us.

[...]

But our greatest strength is the power of our ideas, which are still new in many lands. Across the world, we see them embraced-and we rejoice. Our hopes, our hearts, and our hands, are with those on every continent who are building democracy and freedom. Their cause is America's cause.

The American people have summoned the change we celebrate today. You have raised your voices in an unmistakable chorus. You have cast your votes in historic numbers. And you have changed the face of the Congress, the Presidency, and the political process itself.

Yes, you, my fellow Americans, have forced the spring.

Now, we must do the work the season demands.

To that work I now turn, with all the authority of my office. I ask the Congress to join with me. But no President, no Congress, no government, can undertake this mission alone.

My fellow Americans, you, too, must play your part in our renewal.

I challenge a new generation of young Americans to a season of service-to act on your idealism by helping troubled children, keeping company with those in need, reconnecting our torn communities. There is so much to be done-enough indeed for millions of others who are still young in spirit to give of themselves in service, too.

In serving, we recognize a simple but powerful truth: We need each other. And we must care for one another.

Today, we do more than celebrate America; we rededicate ourselves to the very idea of America:

An idea born in revolution and renewed through two centuries of challenge;

An idea tempered by the knowledge that, but for fate, we-the fortunate and the unfortunate-might have been each other;

An idea ennobled by the faith that our Nation can summon from its myriad diversity the deepest measure of unity;

An idea infused with the conviction that America's long heroic journey must go forever upward.

And so, my fellow Americans, as we stand at the edge of the 21st century, let us begin anew with energy and hope, with faith and discipline, and let us work until our work is done.

Vocabulary

commerce

noun

definition: the buying and selling of goods or services; trade; business.

The United States has increased its commerce with Mexico.

Cities are centers of commerce.

Spanish: comercio

enterprise

noun

definition: a business organization.

Their software enterprise made huge profits last year.

Spanish: empresa, compañía

investment

noun

definition: the act or process of putting money or something else of value to use in the hope of making more money or getting some benefit.

Their investment of ten thousand dollars in the project eventually made them a million dollars when the business became successful.

The investment of her time in studying will help her later in life.

Spanish: inversión

1. Before you start reading...

Here are the vocabulary words that will be in this reading. Let's see how well you already know them.

Check the box that shows how well you know each word. It's ok if you don't know them yet (this is not graded)!

	Don't know it	Have heard of it but not sure of its meaning	Know something about its meaning	Know it well
commerce				
conquest				
explorer				

2. Word Builder

Words are made of smaller parts that are called syllables. Some words have one syllable, but many have two or more. Draw lines to show how the syllables build each vocabulary word.

er	merce	quest	com	plor	ex	con
1. _____	2. _____	3. _____				

3. After reading and exploring the words through some activities...

Do you know these words better? Check the box that shows how well you know each word. It's ok if you don't know them yet (this is not graded)!

	Don't know it	Have heard of it but not sure of its meaning	Know something about its meaning	Know it well
commerce				
conquest				
explorer				

Name: _____ Date: _____

Use the article "Renewing America" to answer questions 1 to 2.

1. Reread the last paragraph of this speech. What does Clinton urge Americans to do?
2. What is the central message of this speech?

Use the article "Climbing Space" to answer questions 3 to 4.

3. Reread the next-to-last paragraph of this speech. What is the "most hazardous and dangerous and greatest adventure" that Kennedy refers to?
4. What is the central message of this speech?

Use the articles "Climbing Space" and "Renewing America" to answer questions 5 to 6.

5. Compare the central messages of both speeches.
6. The last part of a speech is its conclusion. Explain how the conclusion of a speech can be used to support its central message. Cite evidence from these speeches to support your answer.