

GREAT VOICES

20 SPEECHES THAT STILL SPEAK TO US



BOUNDLESSGLEAM

TITLE PAGE

Great Voices

Famous Speeches for Curious Minds and Families

ANNOTATED & ILLUSTRATED

Created and assembled by BoundlessGleam

Published by Sharp Ventures LLC



**BOUNDLESS
GLEAM**

LIGHT / LIFE / POSSIBILITY

First Edition - 2026



Copyright & edition note

COPYRIGHT

Selection, introductions, annotations, discussion prompts, arrangement, and original design © 2026 Sharp Ventures LLC. All rights reserved. BoundlessGleam is the publishing imprint of this edition.

HISTORICAL TEXTS

The historical passages are drawn from editions and records first published before 1931 and used here on a United States public-domain basis. Copyright rules differ by country; readers and distributors outside the United States should assess local requirements.

EDITORIAL INTEGRITY

The book labels literary reconstructions, remembered versions, translations, interpreted statements, and manuscript or newspaper witnesses. Excerpts retain historical wording while light punctuation and paragraphing may be used for readability. Context and prompts are original editorial work.

ARTWORK DISCLOSURE

Portraits and historical scenes are original AI-assisted editorial illustrations commissioned for this edition, then selected, cropped, color-treated, and integrated by the publisher. They are interpretive artwork—not documentary photographs—and should not be treated as evidence of a person’s exact appearance or an event’s exact visual details.

EDUCATIONAL NOTICE

Historical views are presented for study and do not necessarily represent the publisher’s views. This book is educational and is not legal advice concerning copyright or territorial distribution.

EDITION

Great Voices: 20 Speeches That Still Speak to Us. Annotated & Illustrated Family Edition. First sale edition, August 2026. Published by Sharp Ventures LLC under the BoundlessGleam imprint. boundlessgleam.com

WHY BOUNDLESSGLEAM EXISTS



BOUNDLESS GLEAM

LIGHT / LIFE / POSSIBILITY

OUR MISSION

To seek wisdom, truth, beauty, and understanding in God's creation; to grow in faith with humility; to spread joy, faith, hope, and love; and to uplift God and humanity spiritually, physically, and mentally through learning, creativity, service, and compassionate action.

May every idea become a light that inspires understanding,
encourages flourishing, and reflects God's goodness.

TRUTH / BEAUTY / SERVICE / STEWARDSHIP



How to use this book

Each person receives a two-page spread. Begin on the context page. Locate the speaker in time and place. Read the central question before reading the speech aloud.

On the facing page, take turns reading the original words. Pause at punctuation. Let difficult language become a reason to talk rather than a reason to rush.

Afterward, return to the question. There is no answer key. The aim is attention, historical honesty, courageous conversation, and a growing ability to use words well.



READ WITH CARE

A note on historical truth

Speeches come to us in different ways. Some survive in a speaker's handwriting. Others were printed soon after delivery. Ancient speeches were reconstructed by historians; Indigenous speeches often passed through interpreters; Patrick Henry's famous text was rebuilt decades later from memory.

This book tells readers which kind of record they are hearing. Famous words deserve admiration, but they also deserve accurate labels.



Contents / I

- 01 Pericles - The Funeral Oration
- 02 Jesus Of Nazareth - The Sermon on the Mount
- 03 Elizabeth I - Speech to the Troops at Tilbury
- 04 Patrick Henry - Liberty or Death
- 05 George Washington - Farewell Address
- 06 Tecumseh - Speech at Vincennes
- 07 Sojourner Truth - Address at the Woman's Rights Convention
- 08 Frederick Douglass - What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?
- 09 Abraham Lincoln - The Gettysburg Address
- 10 Susan B. Anthony - Is It a Crime for a Citizen to Vote?



Contents / II

- 11 Chief Joseph - I Will Fight No More Forever
- 12 Theodore Roosevelt - Citizenship in a Republic
- 13 Booker T. Washington - Atlanta Exposition Address
- 14 Frances E. W. Harper - We Are All Bound Up Together
- 15 Emmeline Pankhurst - Freedom or Death
- 16 Woodrow Wilson - The Fourteen Points
- 17 Ida B. Wells - Lynch Law in All Its Phases
- 18 Robert Emmet - Speech from the Dock
- 19 William Jennings Bryan - The Cross of Gold
- 20 Mohandas K. Gandhi - Statement at the Great Trial



PERICLES

Statesman and general

ATHENS, GREECE / c. 495-429 BCE / DEMOCRACY

What makes a community worthy of sacrifice?



THEIR WORLD

Classical Greece; city-states debated democracy while Athens and Sparta fought for power.

THEIR WORK

Helped shape Athenian public life, strategy, and monumental building.

THIS MOMENT

After the first year of the Peloponnesian War, Athens held a public funeral for its dead. Thucydides records Pericles praising the civic life they defended. These words are Thucydides' literary reconstruction in Richard Crawley's 1874 translation.

THE IDEA THAT TRAVELED

The speech still shapes arguments about citizenship: a free society asks people not only what they receive, but what they help sustain.



The Funeral Oration

431 BCE / Athens

Our form of government does not enter into rivalry with the institutions of others. We do not copy our neighbors, but are an example to them. It is true that we are called a democracy, for the administration is in the hands of the many and not of the few.

But while the law secures equal justice to all alike in their private disputes, the claim of excellence is also recognized; and when a citizen is in any way distinguished, he is preferred to the public service, not as a matter of privilege, but as the reward of merit. Neither is poverty a bar.

We cultivate refinement without extravagance and knowledge without weakness; wealth we employ more for use than for show, and place the real disgrace of poverty not in owning to the fact but in declining the struggle against it.



AFTER THE WORDS

Which qualities of Athens does Pericles believe make courage possible?

READ IT ALOUD

Read ceremonially. Pause after each contrast: few/many, wealth/merit, private/public.

SOURCE

Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War, Book II, trans. Richard Crawley (1874); Project Gutenberg ebook 7142.



JESUS OF NAZARETH

Jewish teacher; central figure of Christianity

JUDEA AND GALILEE / c. 4 BCE-c. 30 CE / MERCY

Strength can appear as mercy, purity, and peacemaking.



THEIR WORLD

The region lived under Roman rule. Religious teachers spoke in synagogues, homes, fields, and public places.

THEIR WORK

Taught love of God and neighbor, mercy, repentance, justice, and the kingdom of God.

THIS MOMENT

The Gospel of Matthew gathers these teachings into a mountain sermon. This selection uses the King James Version as printed in a 1908 public-domain edition. The passage has shaped Christian ethics, literature, and movements for peace and justice.

THE IDEA THAT TRAVELED

These blessings reversed ordinary ideas of power. Mercy, peace, humility, and moral courage became signs of a life made strong.

The Sermon on the Mount

1st century CE / Galilee

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.



AFTER THE WORDS

Which blessing feels easiest to understand? Which one asks the most of us?

READ IT ALOUD

Let each line have its own breath. Do not hurry the repeated word 'Blessed.'

SOURCE

Matthew 5:3-9, 14, 16, King James Version; The Sermon on the Mount (1908), public-domain edition.

ELIZABETH I

Queen of England and Ireland

GREENWICH, ENGLAND / 1533-1603 / COURAGE

A leader earns trust by sharing the danger.



THEIR WORLD

European kingdoms competed by sea; religious conflict shaped politics; the English Renaissance was flowering.

THEIR WORK

Ruled for forty-four years and rallied England during the Spanish Armada crisis.

THIS MOMENT

England expected invasion by the Spanish Armada. Elizabeth visited troops at Tilbury and declared that she would live or die among them. The famous text survives through a later letter by Leonel Sharp; historians debate its exact wording.

THE IDEA THAT TRAVELED

The image endured because the queen did not speak from safety. She made leadership feel physical, shared, and personal.

Speech to the Troops at Tilbury

1588 / Tilbury, England

My loving people,

We have been persuaded by some that are careful of our safety to take heed how we commit ourselves to armed multitudes, for fear of treachery. But I assure you, I do not desire to live to distrust my faithful and loving people.

Let tyrants fear. I have always so behaved myself that, under God, I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and good-will of my subjects; and therefore I am come amongst you, as you see, at this time, not for my recreation and disport, but being resolved, in the midst and heat of the battle, to live and die amongst you all.

I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too.



AFTER THE WORDS

Why might appearing in person have mattered as much as the words?

READ IT ALOUD

Begin warmly, then build toward the line about heart and stomach.

SOURCE

Elizabeth I, Tilbury speech (1588), Leonel Sharp version, published in Cabala (1654).



PATRICK HENRY

Lawyer, legislator, revolutionary orator

HANOVER COUNTY, VIRGINIA / 1736-1799 / DECISION

**At what point does delay
become a decision of its own?**



THEIR WORLD

Britain's North American colonies were resisting taxation and imperial control before the Revolution.

THEIR WORK

Persuaded Virginia to prepare for armed resistance and later served as governor.

THIS MOMENT

Henry urged Virginia to prepare for armed resistance to Britain. No contemporary transcript survives. The accepted text was reconstructed by William Wirt and published in 1817 from later recollections, so it is an influential remembered version, not a recording.

THE IDEA THAT TRAVELED

Its closing choice became unforgettable shorthand for the moment when caution gives way to commitment.



Liberty or Death

1775 / Richmond, Virginia

There is no longer any room for hope. If we wish to be free - if we mean to preserve inviolate those inestimable privileges for which we have been so long contending - if we mean not basely to abandon the noble struggle in which we have been so long engaged - we must fight! I repeat it, sir, we must fight!

The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle?

Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!



AFTER THE WORDS

How does knowing the text was reconstructed change the way we read it?

READ IT ALOUD

Build from controlled urgency to the final sentence. Leave silence after it.

SOURCE

William Wirt, Sketches of the Life and Character of Patrick Henry (1817); Yale Avalon Project.

GEORGE WASHINGTON

General, farmer, first U.S. president

WESTMORELAND COUNTY, VIRGINIA / 1732-1799 / UNITY

Liberty needs a structure strong enough to hold differences.



THEIR WORLD

A new republic was testing whether elected government and peaceful transfers of power could endure.

THEIR WORK

Commanded the Continental Army and established key presidential precedents.

THIS MOMENT

Washington did not deliver this address aloud. He published it as a letter announcing that he would not seek another presidential term. With help from James Madison and Alexander Hamilton, he warned against sectional division and destructive faction.

THE IDEA THAT TRAVELED

His warning remains alive whenever loyalty to a party, region, or faction threatens loyalty to the whole.



Farewell Address

1796 / Philadelphia

The unity of government which constitutes you one people is also now dear to you. It is justly so; for it is a main pillar in the edifice of your real independence, the support of your tranquillity at home, your peace abroad; of your safety; of your prosperity; of that very liberty which you so highly prize.

But as it is easy to foresee that, from different causes and from different quarters, much pains will be taken, many artifices employed to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth; as this is the point in your political fortress against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will be most constantly and actively directed, it is of infinite moment that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national Union to your collective and individual happiness.



AFTER THE WORDS

How can a country disagree strongly without losing the ability to act together?

READ IT ALOUD

Use the tone of an experienced friend giving serious final counsel.

SOURCE

George Washington, Farewell Address (1796); U.S. Senate edition based on the final manuscript.

TECUMSEH

Shawnee leader and diplomat

OHIO COUNTRY / c. 1768-1813 / STEWARDSHIP

Can land be treated as property when a whole people depends upon it?



THEIR WORLD

Native nations faced rapid U.S. settlement, disputed treaties, and the loss of shared homelands.

THEIR WORK

Built a multi-nation alliance to defend Indigenous land and political independence.

THIS MOMENT

Tecumseh challenged the 1809 Treaty of Fort Wayne, which transferred millions of acres to the United States. The speech was oral and interpreted; several versions survive. This selection follows a record printed by the Indiana Historical Commission in 1922.

THE IDEA THAT TRAVELED

His question reaches beyond one treaty: can land, air, water, and inheritance be owned without responsibility to generations?

Speech at Vincennes

1810 / Indiana Territory

Brother, I wish you to give me close attention, because I think you do not clearly understand. I want to speak to you about promises that the Americans have made.

The Great Spirit gave this great island to his red children; he placed the whites on the other side of the big water. They were not contented with their own, but came to take ours from us. They have driven us from the sea to the setting sun.

No tribe has the right to sell, even to each other, much less to strangers. Sell a country! Why not sell the air, the clouds and the great sea, as well as the earth? Did not the Great Spirit make them all for the use of his children?

The only way to stop this evil is for all the red men to unite in claiming a common and equal right in the land, as it was at first, and should be now.



AFTER THE WORDS

What different ideas of ownership and responsibility collide in this speech?

READ IT ALOUD

Read with firmness rather than anger. Emphasize shared land and future generations.

SOURCE

Tecumseh, Speech at Vincennes (1810), Governors Messages and Letters, Indiana Historical Collections, vol. 1 (1922).



SOJOURNER TRUTH

Preacher, abolitionist, women's-rights advocate

ULSTER COUNTY, NEW YORK / c. 1797-1883 / EQUALITY

Rights are not a limited cup from which one person drinks at another's expense.



THEIR WORLD

The United States was divided by slavery while early women's-rights conventions challenged legal inequality.

THEIR WORK

Escaped slavery, recovered her son in court, and traveled widely speaking for freedom.

THIS MOMENT

Truth spoke without a manuscript. This page uses Marius Robinson's account, published a few weeks later in the Anti-Slavery Bugle. The more famous dialect version appeared twelve years afterward and contains major differences.

THE IDEA THAT TRAVELED

Her wit makes equality concrete. Rights do not shrink when they are shared, and dignity is not a limited supply.

Address at the Woman's Rights Convention

1851 / Akron, Ohio

May I say a few words? I want to say a few words about this matter. I am a woman's rights. I have as much muscle as any man, and can do as much work as any man. I have plowed and reaped and husked and chopped and mowed, and can any man do more than that?

As for intellect, all I can say is, if a woman have a pint and man a quart - why can't she have her little pint full? You need not be afraid to give us our rights for fear we will take too much, for we can't take more than our pint'll hold.

I have heard the Bible and have learned that Eve caused man to sin. Well, if woman upset the world, do give her a chance to set it right side up again.



AFTER THE WORDS

Why is the earlier Robinson text important when retelling Truth's speech?

READ IT ALOUD

Keep the humor alive. The wit is part of the argument.

SOURCE

Marius Robinson, Woman's Rights Convention, Anti-Slavery Bugle, June 21, 1851.



FREDERICK DOUGLASS

Writer, editor, abolitionist, diplomat

MARYLAND'S EASTERN SHORE / c. 1818-1895 / CONSCIENCE

A nation's ideals become powerful when they are applied honestly.



THEIR WORLD

Slavery still shaped the nation even as Americans celebrated liberty and democratic ideals.

THEIR WORK

Escaped slavery and became one of the century's strongest voices for equal citizenship.

THIS MOMENT

Speaking to an antislavery audience on July 5, Douglass praised the courage of the American founders, then exposed the contradiction between a celebration of liberty and the continued enslavement of millions.

THE IDEA THAT TRAVELED

Douglass used a nation's own ideals as a mirror. Honest criticism can be one of the deepest forms of commitment.

What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?

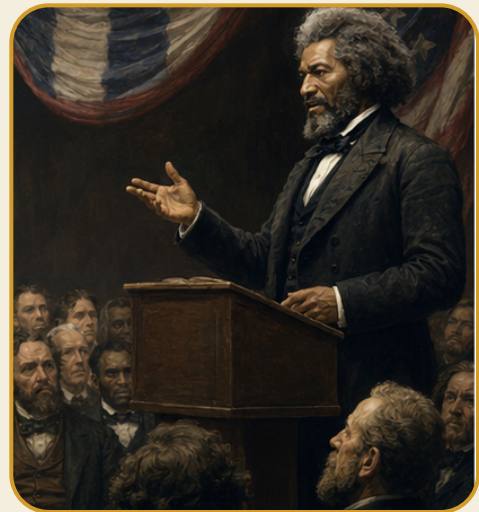
1852 / Rochester, New York

If I do forget, if I do not faithfully remember those bleeding children of sorrow this day, 'may my right hand forget her cunning, and may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth!' To forget them, to pass lightly over their wrongs, and to chime in with the popular theme, would be treason most scandalous and shocking.

My subject, then, fellow-citizens, is American slavery. I shall see this day and its popular characteristics from the slave's point of view.

What, to the American slave, is your Fourth of July? I answer: a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim.

The existence of slavery in this country brands your republicanism a sham, your humanity a base pretense, and your Christianity a lie.



AFTER THE WORDS

Is strong criticism a rejection of a country, or can it be a form of commitment?

READ IT ALOUD

Read the central question slowly. Keep the contrast between celebration and suffering clear.

SOURCE

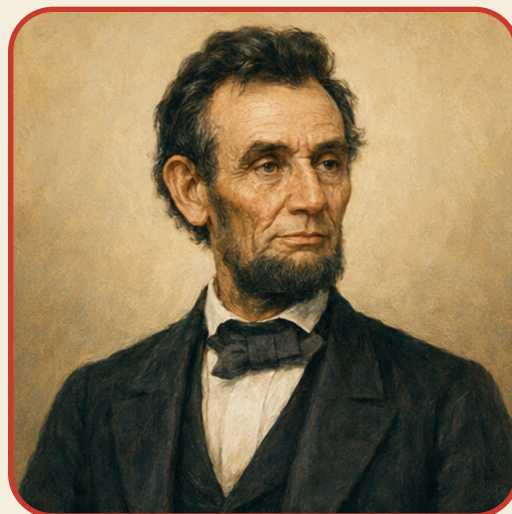
Frederick Douglass, Oration Delivered in Corinthian Hall (1852); National Constitution Center transcription.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Lawyer and sixteenth U.S. president

HARDIN COUNTY, KENTUCKY / 1809-1865 / RENEWAL

**The living honor sacrifice by
continuing unfinished work.**



THEIR WORLD

The Civil War tested the Union and transformed the struggle into one over emancipation and national purpose.

THEIR WORK

Led the Union, issued the Emancipation Proclamation, and pressed to abolish slavery.

THIS MOMENT

At the dedication of a cemetery after one of the Civil War's deadliest battles, Lincoln spoke for only a few minutes. Several manuscript and newspaper versions differ slightly. This page follows the signed Bliss copy, the standard text.

THE IDEA THAT TRAVELED

In fewer than three hundred words, grief becomes purpose and remembrance becomes unfinished work.

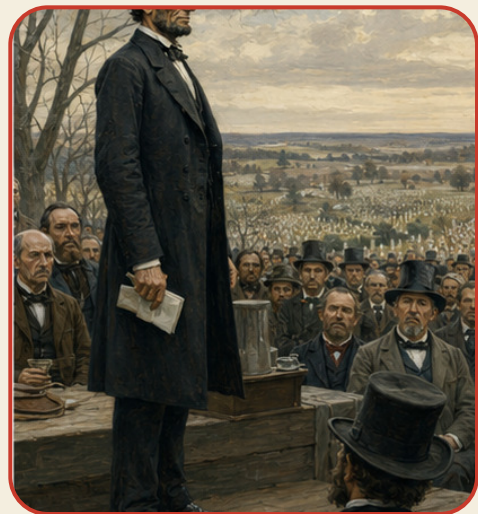
The Gettysburg Address

1863 / Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure.

It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced - that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion - that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain - that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom - and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.



AFTER THE WORDS

Why might a short speech become more memorable than the two-hour address that preceded it?

READ IT ALOUD

Keep it quiet and clear. The power comes from structure, not volume.

SOURCE

Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address, Bliss copy (1864); Library of Congress.



SUSAN B. ANTHONY

Organizer and women's-suffrage leader

ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS / 1820-1906 / CITIZENSHIP



Government does not create human rights; it is formed to protect them.

THEIR WORLD

Women could not vote nationally and faced major restrictions involving wages, property, and public life.

THEIR WORK

Organized for abolition and suffrage and challenged the law by voting in 1872.

THIS MOMENT

After Anthony voted in the 1872 presidential election, federal authorities arrested her. Before trial, she carried this constitutional argument through New York, insisting that women were already included in 'We, the people.'

THE IDEA THAT TRAVELED

Her argument changed the frame: women were not asking government for a favor, but claiming citizenship already promised.

Is It a Crime for a Citizen to Vote?

1873 / Rochester, New York

Our democratic-republican government is based on the idea of the natural right of each individual member thereof to a voice and a vote in making and executing the laws. We assert the province of government to be to secure the people in the enjoyment of their unalienable rights.

Nor can you find a word in any of the grand documents left us by the fathers that assumes for government the power to create or to confer rights.

It was we, the people, not we, the white male citizens, nor yet we, the male citizens; but we, the whole people, who formed this Union. And we formed it, not to give the blessings of liberty, but to secure them; not to the half of ourselves and the half of our posterity, but to the whole people - women as well as men.



AFTER THE WORDS

What is the difference between asking for a right and asserting that it already belongs to you?

READ IT ALOUD

Read as a legal argument with a human heartbeat: precise, composed, persistent.

SOURCE

Susan B. Anthony, Female Suffrage: Is It a Crime...? Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, April 4, 1873.

CHIEF JOSEPH

Nez Perce leader and advocate

WALLOWA VALLEY, OREGON / 1840-1904 / COMPASSION

The strongest words may be spoken when fighting must stop.



THEIR WORLD

U.S. expansion forced Native communities from homelands despite earlier agreements and promises.

THEIR WORK

Led his people during their flight and later argued peacefully for their return home.

THIS MOMENT

After a long flight toward Canada, the Nez Perce were surrounded in freezing weather. Chief Joseph's statement was translated and transmitted by Lieutenant C. E. S. Wood. The familiar English words are therefore a mediated record.

THE IDEA THAT TRAVELED

The speech endures because command becomes care. The fate of children outweighs pride, anger, and reputation.



I Will Fight No More Forever

1877 / Bear Paw Mountains

Tell General Howard I know his heart. What he told me before, I have in my heart. I am tired of fighting.

Our chiefs are killed. Looking Glass is dead. Toohoolhoolzote is dead. The old men are all dead. It is the young men who say yes and no.

It is cold and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. My people have run away to the hills and have no blankets, no food; no one knows where they are - perhaps freezing to death.

I want to have time to look for my children and see how many I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead.

Hear me, my chiefs. I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever.



AFTER THE WORDS

How does responsibility for children shape Joseph's decision?

READ IT ALOUD

Do not perform the sadness. Read simply and let the facts carry it.

SOURCE

Chief Joseph statement (1877), as published in *The Century*, vol. 6 (1884), p. 141.



THEODORE ROOSEVELT

Writer, reformer, conservationist, president

NEW YORK CITY / 1858-1919 / EFFORT

The worthy life belongs to the person willing to enter the arena.



THEIR WORLD

Industrial growth brought enormous wealth, harsh labor conditions, and demands for political reform.

THEIR WORK

Expanded conservation, challenged corporate power, and promoted energetic public service.

THIS MOMENT

Speaking at the Sorbonne after leaving the presidency, Roosevelt argued that democratic citizenship requires character, work, and willingness to risk failure. One passage became known as 'The Man in the Arena.'

THE IDEA THAT TRAVELED

The arena became a universal image for meaningful effort: imperfect action matters more than comfortable judgment.

Citizenship in a Republic

1910 / Paris, France

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better.

The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause;

who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.



AFTER THE WORDS

What is the difference between useful criticism and criticism from the sidelines?

READ IT ALOUD

Begin conversationally, then let each active verb gather momentum.

SOURCE

Theodore Roosevelt, Citizenship in a Republic, Sorbonne, April 23, 1910.



BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

Educator and institution builder

FRANKLIN COUNTY, VIRGINIA / 1856-1915 / WORK



Progress needs practical opportunity - and dignity beyond usefulness.

THEIR WORLD

After slavery, Black Americans pursued education and economic independence amid segregation and racial terror.

THEIR WORK

Led Tuskegee Institute and promoted vocational education and economic advancement.

THIS MOMENT

Washington addressed a racially mixed audience at a major Southern exposition. He urged Black economic advancement and interracial cooperation. The speech won national attention but later drew criticism for accepting too much political inequality.

THE IDEA THAT TRAVELED

The address still invites debate about patience, opportunity, compromise, dignity, and the price of practical progress.



Atlanta Exposition Address

1895 / Atlanta, Georgia

A ship lost at sea for many days suddenly sighted a friendly vessel. From the mast of the unfortunate vessel was seen a signal, 'Water, water; we die of thirst!' The answer from the friendly vessel at once came back, 'Cast down your bucket where you are.'

The captain of the distressed vessel, at last heeding the injunction, cast down his bucket, and it came up full of fresh, sparkling water from the mouth of the Amazon River.

To those of my race who depend on bettering their condition in a foreign land, I would say: Cast down your bucket where you are.

In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress.



AFTER THE WORDS

Which parts promoted opportunity? Which parts might later critics find too accommodating?

READ IT ALOUD

Tell the bucket story clearly, then slow down for the image of the hand.

SOURCE

Booker T. Washington, Atlanta Exposition Address (1895); Library of Congress/National Park Service transcript.

FRANCES E. W. HARPER

Poet, novelist, lecturer, reformer

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND / 1825-1911 / SOLIDARITY

A society injures its own soul when it tramples its weakest members.



THEIR WORLD

Abolition and women's rights overlapped, but movements often failed to include Black women's experiences.

THEIR WORK

Joined literature and organizing in campaigns for abolition, temperance, citizenship, and women.

THIS MOMENT

At the National Woman's Rights Convention, Harper asked white suffragists to see how race, gender, poverty, and law combined in Black women's lives. She insisted that freedom could not be divided into unrelated causes.

THE IDEA THAT TRAVELED

She insisted that reform cannot call itself universal while leaving the most vulnerable women outside its concern.



We Are All Bound Up Together

1866 / New York City

I feel I am something of a novice upon this platform. Born of a race whose inheritance has been outrage and wrong, most of my life had been spent in battling against those wrongs.

But I did not feel as keenly as others that I had these rights in common with other women, which are now demanded. In advocating the cause of the colored man, since the war commenced, I have felt there was something else beyond the mere question of the enslavement and enfranchisement of my race.

We are all bound up together in one great bundle of humanity, and society cannot trample on the weakest and feeblest of its members without receiving the curse in its own soul.



AFTER THE WORDS

What does the image of one 'bundle of humanity' ask different groups to recognize?

READ IT ALOUD

Read the personal lines gently; make the central sentence broad and inclusive.

SOURCE

Frances E. W. Harper, We Are All Bound Up Together, Proceedings of the Eleventh National Woman's Rights Convention (1866).



EMMELINE PANKHURST

British suffrage organizer

MANCHESTER, ENGLAND / 1858-1928 / RESOLVE



What can people do when a government will neither hear nor count them?

THEIR WORLD

British women were denied the parliamentary vote; suffrage groups debated patient persuasion and militancy.

THEIR WORK

Founded the Women's Social and Political Union and endured repeated imprisonment.

THIS MOMENT

Pankhurst visited the United States while leading the militant British suffrage movement. She explained why women denied the vote had moved beyond polite petitions. The speech includes controversial defenses of disruption and should be read in context.

THE IDEA THAT TRAVELED

Her words force a difficult question that every movement faces: what remains when lawful voices are repeatedly ignored?

Freedom or Death

1913 / Hartford, Connecticut

I am here as a soldier who has temporarily left the field of battle in order to explain - it seems strange it should have to be explained - what civil war is like when civil war is waged by women.

We women, in trying to make our case clear, always have to make as part of our argument the fact - a very simple fact - that women are human beings.

Suppose the men of Hartford had a grievance, and they laid that grievance before their legislature, and the legislature obstinately refused to listen to them. At the next general election the men of Hartford would turn out that legislature and elect a new one.

But let the men of Hartford imagine that they were not voters at all, that they were governed without their consent being obtained. They would have to choose: submit indefinitely to an unjust state of affairs, or adopt some of the means by which men in the past got their grievances remedied.



AFTER THE WORDS

When does protest strengthen democracy, and what moral limits should it keep?

READ IT ALOUD

Read as explanation to a skeptical audience - controlled, direct, and unsentimental.

SOURCE

Emmeline Pankhurst, Freedom or Death, Hartford, Connecticut, November 13, 1913.



WOODROW WILSON

Scholar and twenty-eighth U.S. president

STAUNTON, VIRGINIA / 1856-1924 / PEACE

Peace lasts only when justice is not reserved for the strongest.



THEIR WORLD

World War I devastated Europe and toppled empires, creating pressure for a new international order.

THEIR WORK

Proposed the Fourteen Points and helped create the League of Nations idea.

THIS MOMENT

While World War I continued, Wilson addressed Congress with principles for an open and durable settlement. Several ideas shaped the peace negotiations, but many were abandoned. His proposed League of Nations became the plan's most lasting institutional idea.

THE IDEA THAT TRAVELED

The dream outlived the plan: peace requires rules and institutions that protect smaller nations as well as powerful ones.

The Fourteen Points

1918 / Washington, D.C.

It will be our wish and purpose that the processes of peace, when they are begun, shall be absolutely open and that they shall involve and permit henceforth no secret understandings of any kind.

What we demand in this war, therefore, is nothing peculiar to ourselves. It is that the world be made fit and safe to live in; and particularly that it be made safe for every peace-loving nation which wishes to live its own life, determine its own institutions, be assured of justice and fair dealing by the other peoples of the world as against force and selfish aggression.

All the peoples of the world are in effect partners in this interest, and for our own part we see very clearly that unless justice be done to others it will not be done to us.



AFTER THE WORDS

Which principles sound permanent, and which belong especially to the world of 1918?

READ IT ALOUD

Use an orderly, constructive tone. These words propose a framework, not a victory celebration.

SOURCE

Woodrow Wilson, Address to Congress on War Aims and Peace Terms, January 8, 1918; National Archives.



IDA B. WELLS

Journalist, investigator, civil-rights leader

HOLLY SPRINGS, MISSISSIPPI / 1862-1931 / TRUTH

Documented truth can break the protection that silence gives injustice.



THEIR WORLD

Reconstruction had collapsed; segregation and mob violence threatened Black life and citizenship.

THEIR WORK

Documented lynching, challenged false justifications, and organized for civil rights.

THIS MOMENT

After friends were lynched and her Memphis newspaper office was destroyed, Wells investigated mob violence and challenged the stories used to excuse it. At Tremont Temple, she asked Americans to defend due process and confront facts their society avoided.

THE IDEA THAT TRAVELED

She showed that careful evidence can become moral force - especially when comfortable stories depend on silence.

Lynch Law in All Its Phases

1893 / Boston, Massachusetts

I am before the American people today through no inclination of my own, but because of a deep-seated conviction that the country at large does not know the extent to which lynch law prevails in parts of the Republic, nor the conditions which force into exile those who speak the truth.

I cannot believe that the apathy and indifference which so largely obtains regarding mob rule is other than the result of ignorance of the true situation.

It is with no pleasure I have dipped my hands in the corruption here exposed. Somebody must show that the Afro-American race is more sinned against than sinning, and it seems to have fallen upon me to do so.



AFTER THE WORDS

Why are evidence and careful documentation powerful forms of courage?

READ IT ALOUD

Read without sensationalizing violence. Give weight to Wells's evidence and moral clarity.

SOURCE

Ida B. Wells, Lynch Law in All Its Phases, address at Tremont Temple, February 13, 1893.



ROBERT EMMET

Irish republican and revolutionary

DUBLIN, IRELAND / 1778-1803 / LEGACY

A reputation should be judged by the freedom and justice it tried to serve.



THEIR WORLD

Ireland was governed from Britain; the 1798 rebellion had recently failed when Emmet planned another uprising.

THEIR WORK

Led the failed 1803 rising and became remembered for his final courtroom speech.

THIS MOMENT

After a failed Irish uprising, Emmet was convicted of high treason and sentenced to death. His final courtroom speech defended his motives and asked that no epitaph be written until Ireland could stand among independent nations.

THE IDEA THAT TRAVELED

By asking history to wait, Emmet turned a courtroom defeat into a long argument about freedom, memory, and judgment.



Speech from the Dock

1803 / Dublin, Ireland

I have but one request to ask at my departure from this world: it is the charity of its silence. Let no man write my epitaph; for as no man who knows my motives dares now vindicate them, let not prejudice or ignorance asperse them.

Let them and me repose in obscurity and peace, and my tomb remain uninscribed, until other times and other men can do justice to my character.

When my country takes her place among the nations of the earth, then, and not till then, let my epitaph be written. I have done.



AFTER THE WORDS

Why would Emmet ask future generations to delay judgment of him?

READ IT ALOUD

Keep dignity stronger than anger. Slow down for the request about his epitaph.

SOURCE

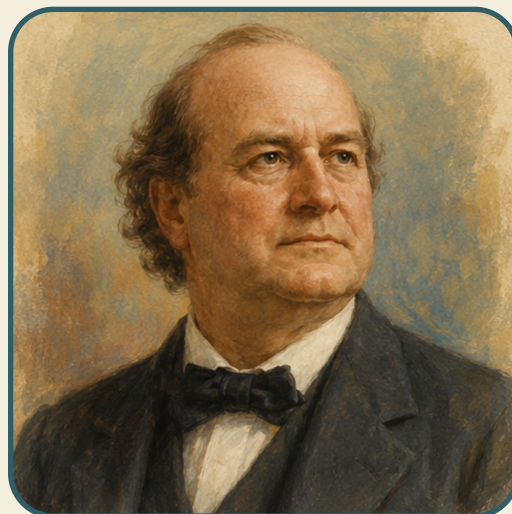
Robert Emmet, Speech from the Dock, September 19, 1803; early broadside and court-text tradition.



WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN

Lawyer, congressman, presidential candidate

SALEM, ILLINOIS / 1860-1925 / JUSTICE



Economic rules are never merely technical when they shape ordinary lives.

THEIR WORLD

Farmers and workers debated whether the gold standard favored creditors and concentrated wealth.

THEIR WORK

Turned monetary policy into a national moral argument and won three presidential nominations.

THIS MOMENT

At the Democratic National Convention, Bryan attacked the gold standard and defended the free coinage of silver, which supporters believed would ease pressure on farmers and debtors. His performance helped win him the presidential nomination.

THE IDEA THAT TRAVELED

He made an abstract money policy visible in the lives of workers and farmers - a model of persuasive moral framing.



The Cross of Gold

1896 / Chicago, Illinois

I would be presumptuous, indeed, to present myself against the distinguished gentlemen to whom you have listened if this were but a measuring of ability; but this is not a contest among persons.

The humblest citizen in all the land, when clad in the armor of a righteous cause, is stronger than all the whole hosts of error that they can bring. I come to speak to you in defense of a cause as holy as the cause of liberty - the cause of humanity.

Having behind us the producing masses of this nation and the world, supported by the commercial interests, the laboring interests, and the toilers everywhere, we will answer their demand for a gold standard by saying to them: You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns; you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold.



AFTER THE WORDS

How does Bryan turn a complicated money debate into a moral drama?

READ IT ALOUD

Contrast the calm opening with the rising imagery of armor, thorns, and the cross.

SOURCE

William Jennings Bryan, Cross of Gold speech (1896), printed in *The First Battle* (1896-97).

MOHANDAS K. GANDHI

Lawyer and nonviolent independence leader

PORBANDAR, INDIA / 1869-1948 / NONVIOLENCE



Nonviolence is not avoidance of consequence; it can mean accepting consequence openly.

THEIR WORLD

India was under British colonial rule; mass movements sought self-government and economic dignity.

THEIR WORK

Developed satyagraha: disciplined nonviolent resistance grounded in truth and responsibility.

THIS MOMENT

British authorities charged Gandhi with sedition for articles opposing colonial rule. He pleaded guilty, explained his commitment to nonviolence, accepted responsibility for foreseeable consequences, and asked for no mercy.

THE IDEA THAT TRAVELED

The trial became part of the protest. Accepting consequences openly transformed punishment into testimony.

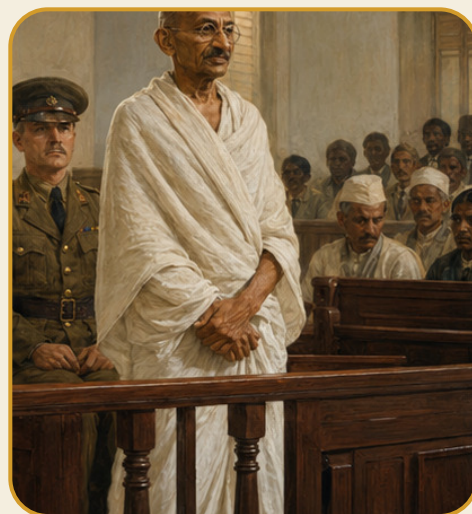
Statement at the Great Trial

1922 / Ahmedabad, India

I knew that I was playing with fire. I ran the risk, and if I was set free I would still do the same.

I wanted to avoid violence. Nonviolence is the first article of my faith. It is also the last article of my creed. But I had to make my choice. I had either to submit to a system which I considered had done an irreparable harm to my country, or incur the risk of the mad fury of my people bursting forth when they understood the truth from my lips.

I know that my people have sometimes gone mad. I am deeply sorry for it and I am, therefore, here to submit not to a light penalty but to the highest penalty. I do not ask for mercy.



AFTER THE WORDS

How can accepting punishment become part of resistance rather than surrender?

READ IT ALOUD

Read quietly and deliberately. The moral force comes from responsibility, not self-pity.

SOURCE

M. K. Gandhi, Statement in the Great Trial, March 18, 1922; printed in Young India, March 23, 1922.



The next voice is yours

Great speeches are not only relics. They are examples of a human being meeting a moment with words.

Choose one value from this book: mercy, courage, unity, stewardship, equality, conscience, renewal, citizenship, compassion, effort, work, solidarity, resolve, peace, or nonviolence.

Write five sentences:

1. What is happening?
2. What is at stake?
3. What do people need to understand?
4. What action do you ask of them?
5. What final line should remain when the speech is over?

How these texts reach us

Famous words do not all survive in the same way. This edition names the kind of record on each context page so that admiration and historical honesty can live together.

MANUSCRIPT OR PRINTED WITNESS

A text surviving in the speaker's hand, an authorized printing, or a near-contemporary newspaper or pamphlet.

LITERARY RECONSTRUCTION

An ancient historian's shaped account rather than a transcript. Pericles appears here through Thucydides and Richard Crawley's 1874 English translation.

REMEMBERED VERSION

Words assembled after the event from recollection. Patrick Henry's famous close comes through William Wirt's 1817 reconstruction.

INTERPRETED OR MEDIATED RECORD

Oral words recorded through an interpreter or recorder. Tecumseh and Chief Joseph require this special care.

TRANSLATED OR RECEIVED TEXT

Words encountered through an identified historical English edition, including Scripture and ancient material.

EXCERPT

A purposeful selection from a longer address. Ellipses are generally avoided; transitions are created by paragraph breaks, and the source line identifies the larger work.

A reader's promise

Read the words aloud. Notice the source label. Ask what is certain, what is mediated, and why the distinction matters.

Sources 01-10

01 PERICLES

Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War, Book II; Richard Crawley translation (1874), Project Gutenberg ebook 7142. Literary reconstruction in historical translation.

02 JESUS OF NAZARETH

Matthew 5:3-9, 14, 16, King James Version; wording checked against The Sermon on the Mount (1908). Received sacred text in a historical English edition.

03 ELIZABETH I

Tilbury speech (1588), Leonel Sharp version, later printed in Cabala (1654). Famous text transmitted through a later letter.

04 PATRICK HENRY

William Wirt, Sketches of the Life and Character of Patrick Henry (1817). Influential remembered reconstruction; no contemporary transcript survives.

05 GEORGE WASHINGTON

Farewell Address (1796), final manuscript tradition; U.S. Senate historical edition. Published address, not delivered aloud.

06 TECUMSEH

Speech at Vincennes (1810), Governors Messages and Letters, Indiana Historical Collections, vol. 1 (1922). Oral, interpreted, mediated record.

07 SOJOURNER TRUTH

Marius Robinson account, Anti-Slavery Bugle, June 21, 1851. Near-contemporary report; differs from the later dialect version.

08 FREDERICK DOUGLASS

Oration Delivered in Corinthian Hall (1852), published pamphlet; transcription consulted via the National Constitution Center.

09 ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Gettysburg Address, Bliss copy (1864), Library of Congress. Several manuscript and newspaper witnesses vary slightly.

10 SUSAN B. ANTHONY

"Is It a Crime for a Citizen...to Vote?" Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, April 4, 1873.

Sources 11-20

11 CHIEF JOSEPH

Statement at Bear Paw (1877), recorded through Lieutenant C. E. S. Wood; published in The Century (1884). Translated and mediated record.

12 THEODORE ROOSEVELT

“Citizenship in a Republic,” Sorbonne, April 23, 1910. Published address.

13 BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

Atlanta Exposition Address (1895); historical transcript consulted via Library of Congress and National Park Service resources.

14 FRANCES E. W. HARPER

Proceedings of the Eleventh National Woman’s Rights Convention (1866). Convention record.

15 EMMELINE PANKHURST

“Freedom or Death,” Hartford, Connecticut, November 13, 1913. Published and circulated speech.

16 WOODROW WILSON

Address to Congress on War Aims and Peace Terms, January 8, 1918; National Archives. Official U.S. government address.

17 IDA B. WELLS

“Lynch Law in All Its Phases,” Tremont Temple, February 13, 1893. Printed address.

18 ROBERT EMMET

Speech from the Dock, September 19, 1803; early broadside and court-text tradition. Textual witnesses vary.

19 WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN

“Cross of Gold” speech (1896), printed in The First Battle (1896–97). Authorized historical text.

20 M. K. GANDHI

“Statement in the Great Trial,” March 18, 1922; Young India, March 23, 1922. Contemporary English publication.