

Name _____

PRINT and handwritten

Read the speech below annotated to help you identify the following:

- The speaker's message
- The speaker's purpose
- Rhetorical choices—Powerful diction (word choice) and syntax (sentence structure). Look for moments that you find to be powerful or moving and ask, “How is the speaker using language to have the effect?” Pay attention to patterns.

Answer the questions at the end of the speech.

Be ready to discuss this when you return from break.

Barack Obama

Presidential Farewell Address

delivered 10 January 2017, McCormick Place, Chicago, Illinois

Which brings me to my final point: Our democracy -- Our democracy is threatened whenever we take it for granted. All of us, regardless of party, should be throwing ourselves into the task of rebuilding our democratic institutions. When voting rates in America are some of the lowest among advanced democracies, we should be making it easier, not harder, to vote. When -- When trust in our institutions is low, we should reduce the corrosive influence of money in our politics, and insist on the principles of transparency and ethics in public service. When Congress is dysfunctional, we should draw our congressional districts to encourage politicians to cater to common sense and not rigid extremes.

But remember, none of this happens on its own. All of this depends on our participation, on each of us accepting the responsibility of citizenship, regardless of which way the pendulum of power happens to be swinging.

[Our Constitution](#) is a remarkable, beautiful gift. But it's really just a piece of parchment. It has no power on its own. We, the people, give it power. We, the people, give it meaning -- with our participation, and with the choices that we make, and the alliances that we forge; whether or not we stand up for our freedoms; whether or not we respect and enforce the rule of law. That's up to us.

America is no fragile thing. But the gains of our long journey to freedom are not assured.

In his own [farewell address](#), George Washington wrote that self-government is the underpinning of our safety, prosperity, and liberty, but “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.” And so we have to preserve this truth with “jealous anxiety;” that we should reject “the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties” that make us one.

America, we weaken those ties when we allow our political dialogue to become so corrosive that people of good character aren't even willing to enter into public service; so coarse with rancor that Americans with whom we disagree are seen not just as misguided but as malevolent. We weaken those ties when we define some of us as more American than others; when we write off the whole system as inevitably corrupt; and when we sit back and blame the leaders we elect without examining our own role in electing them.

It falls to each of us to be those anxious, jealous guardians of our democracy; to embrace the joyous task we've been given to continually try to improve this great nation of ours. Because for all our outward differences, we, in fact, all share the same proud title, the most important office in a democracy: "citizen."

Citizen.

So, you see, that's what our democracy demands. It needs you. Not just when there's an election; not just when your own narrow interest is at stake; but over the full span of a lifetime. If you're tired of arguing with strangers on the Internet, try talking with one of them in real life. If something needs fixing, then lace up your shoes and do some organizing. If you're disappointed by your elected officials, grab a clipboard, get some signatures, and run for office yourself.

Show up.

Dive in.

Stay at it.

Sometimes you'll win. Sometimes you'll lose. Presuming a reservoir of goodness in other people, that can be a risk, and there will be times when the process will disappoint you. But for those of us fortunate enough to have been a part of this work, and to see it up close, let me tell you: It can energize and inspire. And more often than not, your faith in America, and in Americans, will be confirmed.

Mine sure has been. Over the course of these eight years, I've seen the hopeful faces of young graduates and our newest military officers. I have mourned with grieving families searching for answers, and [found grace in a Charleston church](#). I've seen our scientists help a paralyzed man regain his sense of touch. I've seen wounded warriors who at points were given up for dead walk again. I've seen our doctors and volunteers rebuild after earthquakes and stop pandemics in their tracks.

I've seen the youngest of children remind us through their actions and through their generosity of our obligations to care for refugees, or work for peace, and, above all, to look out for each other.

So that faith that I placed all those years ago, not far from here, in the power of ordinary Americans to bring about change -- that faith has been rewarded in ways I could not have possibly imagined. And I hope your faith has, too. Some of you here tonight or watching at home, you were there with us [in 2004](#), in [2008](#), [2012](#); maybe you still can't believe we pulled this whole thing off. Let me tell you, you're not the only ones.

Michelle -- Michelle LaVaughn Robinson, girl of the South Side: For the -- For the past 25 years you have not only been my wife and mother of my children, you have been my best friend. You took on a role you didn't ask for. And you made it your own with grace and with grit and with style, and good humor. You made the White House a place that belongs to everybody.

And a new generation sets its sights higher because it has you as a role model. So, you have made me proud, and you have made the country proud.

[...]

And to all of you out there -- every organizer who moved to an unfamiliar town, every kind family who welcomed them in, every volunteer who knocked on doors, every young person who cast a ballot for the

first time, every American who lived and breathed the hard work of change: You are the best supporters and organizers anybody could ever hope for, and I will be forever grateful. Because you did change the world. You did.

And that's why I leave this stage tonight even more optimistic about this country than when we started. Because I know our work has not only helped so many Americans, it has inspired so many Americans, especially so many young people out there, to believe that you can make a difference, to hitch your wagon to something bigger than yourselves.

Let me tell you, this generation coming up -- unselfish, altruistic, creative, patriotic, I've seen you in every corner of the country. You believe in a fair, and just, and inclusive America. You know that constant change has been America's hallmark; that it's not something to fear but something to embrace. You are willing to carry this hard work of democracy forward. You'll soon outnumber all of us, and I believe as a result the future is in good hands.

My fellow Americans:

It has been the honor of my life to serve you. I won't stop. In fact, I will be right there with you, as a citizen, for all my remaining days. But for now, whether you are young or whether you're young at heart, I do have one final ask of you as your President -- the same thing I asked when you took a chance on me eight years ago:

I'm asking you to believe.

Not in my ability to bring about change -- but in yours.

I am asking you to hold fast to that faith written into our founding documents; that idea whispered by slaves and abolitionists; that spirit sung by immigrants and homesteaders and those who marched for justice; that creed reaffirmed by those who planted flags from foreign battlefields to the surface of the moon; a creed at the core of every American whose story is not yet written: Yes, we can.

Yes We Did! Yes We Can!

Thank you.

God bless you.

And may God continue to bless the United States of America.

<https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/barackobama/barackobamafarewelladdress.htm>

Answer the following questions. Note you do not need to address these in order.

Speaker Who is the speaker and what do they do to establish credibility (or ethos) with their audience?

Occasion/Exigence What is the context in which this speech is delivered? What might be motivating and compelling the speaker to speak this speech at this time in this place?

Audience Who is the speaker appealing to? What are the values the speaker assumes their audience to have?

Purpose What is the speaker trying to achieve? What does he want from his audience?

Subject What is the subject of the speaker? What is the message or main idea?

Rhetorical Analysis Identify and analyze two rhetorical choices Obama makes to convey his message. In other words, analyze how Obama uses specific language choices effectively. Use specific evidence from the text to support your line of reasoning.

Choice 1

Choice 2