STRUCTURE

Write a “Reverse Outline” for the speech. In other words, read each paragraph of it and write down the main idea of the paragraphs in just 1-2 sentences. It’s okay to combine very short paragraphs.

**TITLE of the SPEECH:** “Address to Congress on Women’s Suffrage”

**AUTHOR/SPEAKER:** Carrie Chapman Catt

**DATE:** November 1917

Paragraph 1 (Introduction)

* There are three reasons that women will inevitably get the right to vote.

Paragraph 2 (first reason- history and background)

* First reason- in 1776 Americans fought a war based on the idea that it’s unjust to rule people and take their money (taxes) unless the people have a say in who rules and how the taxes are used.

Paragraph 3 (connect the past to now)

* Abraham Lincoln and Woodrow Wilson have both said that the government must represent the voice of the people.

Paragraph 4 (more connecting the past to now)

* America hasn’t always been great at applying these principles, but we stick to our foundation of democracy and freedom.

Paragraph 5 (second reason women should vote)

* Women deserve the right to vote and have a voice in government. They are educated, moral citizens.

Paragraph 6 (third reason)

* Half of the U.S. states have already approved women’s suffrage, but we can’t stay divided. All women must have the right to vote.

Paragraph 7 (fourth reason)

* The U.S. can’t be a world leader/representative of democracy if it doesn’t allow women to vote.

Paragraph 8 – 11 (consequences if we don’t allow women to vote)

* “Do you realize…” (repeated several times for effect) the cost of not allowing women to vote? This long wait is unbearable.

Paragraph 12 (fifth reason)

* Many politicians claim to support suffrage, but they need to actually prove it through their actions.

Paragraph 13 (sixth reason)

* When women can finally vote, they’ll remember who supported them (and who didn’t). Support them now, or you’ll pay the price.

Paragraph 14 (counterarguments)

* There will be opposition, but liberty will triumph.

Paragraph 15 (seventh reason)

* We’re grateful for the support of the Senate and House—we know we’re in the majority and more are joining us every year.

Paragraph 16 (counterargument)

* Yes, the war (WWI) is important, but so is this issue. It’s part of the fight for freedom, too.

Paragraph 17 (eighth reason)

* Some of you (in Congress) are about to retire. Think about your legacy.

Paragraph 18 (ninth reason)

* Some of you think we should just let the states decide, but we need to move forward as a whole nation.

Paragraph 19 (overall thesis)

* Call to action: approve the amendment and make sure your state does, too!

Paragraph 20 (final appeal)

* Repeats the opening statement (suffrage is inevitable) and invites action: will you “help or hinder it?”

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| RHETORICAL DEVICES | Notes: |
| **Allusions:** How does the speaker make connections to others’ ideas, historical events, or well-known people? Famous literature (novels, plays, stories)? Popular culture (celebrities, movies, commercials, sports, etc.)? If there are not allusions, what could the author have included to be more effective? | There are lots of allusions to American history that would appeal to educated Americans.  Historical allusion to the Revolutionary War: In 1776 Americans fought a war based on the idea that it’s unjust to rule people and take their money (taxes) unless the people have a say in who rules and how the taxes are used.  Allusion to Abraham Lincoln and Woodrow Wilson (both support women’s rights)  Allusion to ongoing war in Europe for freedom |
| **Comparisons:** How does the speaker use comparisons? Are there metaphors or similes to influence the way the audience thinks/feels about their message? If there are not comparisons, what could the author have included to be more effective? | Comparison helps the speaker argue for her position on voting.  Simile: modern women are like the early Americans who fought against “taxation without representation” in the Revolutionary War (they can and should protest until they get the right to vote, just like the early colonists did). |
| **Repetition & Parallelism:** How does the speaker use parallelism or repeated phrases/ideas to make their message more interesting, memorable, and/or appealing? If you don’t see these strategies, where do you think the speaker could have included repetition or parallelism to make the message more effective? | The speaker emphasizes her main ideas by repeating key ideas.  Repeated question- “Do you realize…?”  Repeated statement “Women’s suffrage is inevitable”  No parallelism, but she could have included it as part of her nine reasons so they would stand out more. |
| **Rhetorical Questions:** How does the speaker use any questions to get their audience to think about their message? Do they use questions to get the audience to silently agree with them (questions where the only obvious answer is “yes” or “no”)? If you don’t see any rhetorical questions, what do you think the speaker could have included to be more effective? | The speaker wants the U.S. government to create an amendment that gives all women the right to vote  She uses several rhetorical questions to help lawmakers see the consequences of not joining her cause:  “Are you willing that those who take your places by and by shall blame you for having failed to keep pace with the world and thus having lost for them a party advantage? Is there any real gain for you, for your party, for your nation by delay? Do you want to drive the progressive men and women out of your party?” |
| **Other:** What else does the speaker do with language, tone, or other devices to appeal to their audience?  For example, does the speech’s beginning match up with its ending? | People tend to remember the first thing and the last thing they hear the best, so she makes sure they remember her main point by saying it at the beginning and the end:  “Women’s suffrage is inevitable” – this makes the whole speech feel connected and focused. |