

## Simplifying Washington's Language: Historic to Modern

*On June 8, 1790, President George Washington delivered the first State of the Union Address to Congress. Below are the opening paragraphs of the speech. The language is in keeping with the time and with his audience, which was made up almost entirely of senators and Congressmen. Today's State of the Union Address uses modern language for not only the members of Congress but for a vast television audience. The language of Washington's speech would be difficult for modern listeners to follow.*

*Rewrite the following paragraphs in modern language. You may trim the sentences down and revise the vocabulary, but do not lose the meaning of the speech.*



Fellow-Citizens of the Senate and House of Representatives:

I embrace with great satisfaction the opportunity which now presents itself of congratulating you on the present favorable prospects of our public affairs. The recent accession of the important state of North Carolina to the Constitution of the United States (of which official information has been received), the rising credit and respectability of our country, the general and increasing good will toward the government of the Union, and the concord, peace, and plenty with which we are blessed are circumstances auspicious in an eminent degree to our national prosperity.

In resuming your consultations for the general good you can not but derive encouragement from the reflection that the measures of the last session have been as satisfactory to your constituents as the novelty and difficulty of the work allowed you to hope. Still further to realize their expectations and to secure the blessings which a gracious Providence has placed within our reach will in the course of the present important session call for the cool and deliberate exertion of your patriotism, firmness, and wisdom.



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**Answers: Student's answer will vary; example of correct answer:**

**Fellow-Citizens of the Senate and House of Representatives:**

**I'm glad to announce to you that our government has bright prospects. The great state of North Carolina has ratified the Constitution. Our country is gaining in respect; the attitude toward the government is strong; and the country is prospering with peace and plenty.**

**As you debate the important issues before you, you should know that your constituents are satisfied with your previous work. To succeed in the present session to you will need to deliberate calmly and with a dedication to patriotism, discipline, and wisdom.**