

ECHO



The Fire of the Human Spirit



When faced with major community or world issues, can the individual really make a difference?

Often when things in life aren't right, we wait for them to change. Can we always depend on someone else to take a stand and begin the process that will set things right or make our lives better? What inspires some individuals to be bold, to sacrifice, to risk their safety and comfort to make important changes? In this Echo section, a speech, interview, essay, song, and poster provide various perspectives on these questions.

Learning Goals

- analyze theme in a variety of genres
- recognize and reflect on differences in form and style
- explore the diverse ways in which texts reveal and produce ideologies, identities, and positions
- create original texts in response to specific texts

Inauguration Speech

✧ Nelson Mandela

This inaugural speech, delivered in 1994 by Nelson Mandela, the newly elected President of South Africa, officially celebrated the end of apartheid (the South African policy of segregation and discrimination against non-whites). The speech calls for the country's factions to forgive the past and with a "spiritual and physical oneness" unite and build a new, glorious South Africa.

Your Majesties, Your Highnesses, Distinguished Guests, Comrades and Friends.

Today, all of us do, by our presence here, and by our celebrations in other parts of our country and the world, confer glory and hope to new-born liberty.

Out of the experience of an extraordinary human disaster that lasted too long, must be born a society of which all humanity will be proud.

Our daily deeds as ordinary South Africans must produce an actual South African reality that will reinforce humanity's belief in justice, strengthen its confidence in the nobility of the human soul and sustain all our hopes for a glorious life for all.

All this we owe both to ourselves and to the peoples of the world who are so well represented here today.

To my compatriots, I have no hesitation in saying that each one of us is as intimately attached to the soil of this beautiful country as are the famous jacaranda trees of Pretoria and the mimosa trees of the bushveld.

* Each time one of us touches the soil of this land, we feel a sense of personal renewal. The national mood changes as the seasons change.

We are moved by a sense of joy and exhilaration when the grass turns green and the flowers bloom.

That spiritual and physical oneness we all share with this common homeland explains the depth of the pain we all carried in our hearts as we saw our country tear itself apart in a terrible conflict, and as we saw it spurned, outlawed and isolated by the peoples of the world, precisely because it has become the universal base of the pernicious ideology and practice of racism and racial oppression.

* We, the people of South Africa, feel fulfilled that humanity has taken us back into its bosom, that we, who were outlaws not so long ago, have today been given the rare privilege to be host to the nations of the world on our own soil.

We thank all our distinguished international guests for having come to take possession with the people of our country of what is, after all, a common victory for justice, for peace, for human dignity.

We trust that you will continue to stand by us as we tackle the challenges of building peace, prosperity, non-sexism, non-racialism and democracy.

We deeply appreciate the role that the masses of our people and their political mass-democratic, religious, women, youth, business, traditional

and other leaders have played to bring about this conclusion. Not least among them is my Second Deputy President, the Honourable F. W. de Klerk.

We would also like to pay tribute to our security forces, in all their ranks, for the distinguished role they have played in securing our first democratic elections and the transition to democracy, from blood-thirsty forces which still refuse to see the light.

The time for the healing of the wounds has come.

The moment to bridge the chasms that divide us has come.

The time to build is upon us.

We have, at last, achieved our political emancipation. We pledge ourselves to liberate all our people from the continuing bondage of poverty, deprivation, suffering, gender and other discrimination.

We succeeded to take our last steps to freedom in conditions of relative peace. We commit ourselves to the construction of a complete, just and lasting peace.

We have triumphed in the effort to implant hope in the breasts of the millions of our people. We enter into a covenant that we shall build the society in which all South Africans, both black and white, will be able to walk tall, without any fear in their hearts, assured of their inalienable right to human dignity—a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world.

As a token of its commitment to the renewal of our country, the new Interim Government of National Unity will, as a matter of urgency, address the issue of amnesty for various categories of our people who are currently serving terms of imprisonment.

We dedicate this day to all the heroes and heroines in this country and the rest of the world who sacrificed in many ways and surrendered their lives so that we could be free.

Their dreams have become reality. Freedom is their reward.

We are both humbled and elevated by the honour and privilege that you, the people of South Africa, have bestowed on us, as the first President of a united, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist South Africa, to lead our country out of the valley of darkness.

We understand it still that there is no easy road to freedom.

We know it well that none of us acting alone can achieve success.

We must therefore act together as a united people, for national reconciliation, for nation building, for the birth of a new world.





Let there be justice for all.
 Let there be peace for all.
 Let there be work, bread, water and salt for all.
 Let each know that for each the body, the mind and the soul have
 been freed to fulfill themselves.

Never, never and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will
 again experience the oppression of one by another and suffer the indignity
 of being the skunk of the world.

Let freedom reign.

The sun shall never set on so glorious a human achievement!

God bless Africa!

Thank you.

- 5 Nelson Mandela was a South African politician before he became president in 1994. As a result of organizing a political party against apartheid, Mandela was imprisoned in 1964 for 27 years. During this time, he became a symbol of the struggle against South African apartheid. After his release, he reentered politics, he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993 for his reforms to the government. (*Born South Africa 1918*)

RESPONDING

Meaning

1. The title of a written piece distinguishes it from all others. It is a descriptive name and should give the reader the main idea of the content. Recalling the tone and essence of Nelson Mandela's inaugural speech, develop a number of appropriate titles. Choose one and write a one-sentence descriptor.
2. According to Peggy Noonan, author of *On Speaking Well*, speeches are "... great because (the speaker) says big important things in a beautiful way." Find three strong examples in Mandela's inaugural speech where he does just that. Support your answers.

Form and Style

3. Many speechwriters and linguists agree that one of the strongest signal systems in the English language is *intonation*. Intonation includes *pitch* (the degree of highness or lowness of vocal tones), *stress* (the amount of emphasis given to syllables or words), and *junction* (the pauses or breaks between words and word groups). With a partner, try using intonation techniques when reading paragraphs 6, 9, and 32 of Mandela's speech. As a class, listen to two or three students read a paragraph from the speech. Who seemed to capture the essence of the paragraph? Why?