



# The American Heritage Book of Great American Speeches for Young People

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The history of the United States has been characterized by fervent idealism, intense struggle, and radical change. And for every critical, defining moment in American history, there were those whose impassioned voices rang out, clear and true, and whose words compelled the minds and hearts of all who heard them. When Patrick Henry declared, "Give me liberty, or give me death!", when Martin Luther King Jr. said, "I have a dream", Americans listened and were profoundly affected. These speeches stand today as testaments to this great nation made up of individuals with bold ideas and unshakeable convictions.

The American Heritage Book of Great American Speeches for Young People includes over 100 speeches by founding fathers, patriots, Native American and African American leaders, abolitionists, women's suffrage and labor activists, writers, athletes, and others from all walks of life, featuring inspiring and unforgettable speeches by such notable speakers as:

Patrick Henry \* Thomas Jefferson \* Tecumseh \* Frederick Douglass \* Sojourner Truth \* Abraham Lincoln \* Susan B. Anthony \* Mother Jones \* Lou Gehrig \* Franklin D. Roosevelt \* Albert Einstein \* Pearl S. Buck \* Langston Hughes \* John F. Kennedy \* Martin Luther King Jr.

These are the voices that shaped our history. They are powerful, moving, and, above all else, uniquely American.

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### Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 7 Up-A useful compendium of more than 100 speeches that span nearly 400 years of American history, from Powhatan (1609) to Senator Charles Robb (2000). Prominent orators include Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, John Kennedy, Richard Nixon, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X. Two indexes allow readers to find a selection by its speaker or its theme. Black-and-white photos and reproductions accompany many of the entries. Alongside the Founding Fathers and patriots are athletes, authors, and media celebrities. The speeches inform readers and provide examples of how the spoken word has affected Americans throughout our past.

*David M. Alperstein, Queens Borough Public Library, NY*

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### Review

How many of you remember the agony of having to memorize the Gettysburg Address in school? Or perhaps it was something by one of the founding father? "Who needs this stuff?" you would moan. "What's the point?"

The major problem with historic orations, students have always complained, is that they are dry. American Heritage, one of the foremost magazine about this nation's culture, has collected an eclectic set of speeches given not only by politicians, but also by people in many walks of life, from sports figures to "ordinary" people in extraordinary circumstances.

The Book of Great American Speeches for Young People contains over 100 discourses on a myriad of topics. Some classics can be found within, such as Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream and Franklin Delano Roosevelt's address after the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, "a date which will live in infamy." On a lighter political note, there's the "Checker's Speech," in which Richard Nixon swore that the only gift he received during 1952 campaign was a little cocker spaniel and that "we're gonna keep him." Other orators in The Book of Great American Speeches for Young People include Malcolm X, Langston Hughes, John F. Kennedy, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Mark Twain, just to name a few. Speeches are used to influence and encourage, so there are several "declamations" which consider the struggles for women's suffrage, civil right and the evils of slavery. And since the nation was founded on free speech, there are also numerous discourses of protest and dissent.

The less earthshaking fare, though no less dramatic, is also here. Lou Gehrig paid an emotional farewell to baseball, in which, though stricken with the terminal illness that would one day bear his name, he considered himself "the luckiest man on the face of the earth."

One of the more poignant speeches, to which young readers will relate, was given by 10-year old Samantha Smith in 1983 to the Children's Symposium on the Year 2001, after her impassioned letter to Soviet Premier Yuri Adropov made world news. The letter stated her fears nuclear war between his country and American, proving that young people can make that difference.

In addition to its generous collection, The Book of Great American Speeches for Young People encourages readers to speak out for what they believe in. Its concluding chapter on how (and why) to make an effective speech will give the reader a boost of confidence and a skill which will prove useful long after school days are over. (BookPage, October 2001)

Gr7 Up--A useful compendium of more than 100 speeches that span nearly 400 years of American history, from Powhatan (1609) to Senator Charles Robb (2000). Prominent orators include Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, John Kennedy, Richard Nixon, Martin Luther King Jr., and Malcolm X. Two indexes allow readers to find a selection by its speaker or its theme. Black-and-white photos and reproductions accompany many of the entries. Alongside the Founding Fathers and patriots are athletes, authors, and media celebrities. The speeches inform readers and provide examples of how the spoken word has affected Americans throughout our past. --David M. Alperstein, Queens Borough Public Library, NY (School Library Journal, December 2001)

#### From the Back Cover

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## Users Review

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