

Famous Persuasive Speeches

John F. Kennedy - *The Decision to go the Moon 1961* (President of USA in 1960s)

We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organise and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to **postpone**, and one which we intend to win, and the others, too.



postpone - agree to do later

Barack Obama - *Victory speech* (Previous President of USA)

The road ahead will be long. Our climb will be steep. We may not get there in one year or even in one term, but America - I have never been more hopeful than I am tonight that we will get there. I promise you - we as a people will get there.

There will be setbacks and false starts. There are many who won't agree with every decision or policy I make as president, and we know that government can't solve every problem. But I will always be honest with you about the challenges we face. I will listen to you, especially when we disagree.



And above all, I will ask you to join in the work of remaking this nation the only way it's been done in America for 221 years - block by block, brick by brick, calloused hand by calloused hand.

Winston Churchill - *We shall fight on the beaches 1940* (Prime minister of Britain during WWII)

...we shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender, and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this Island or a large part of it were **subjugated** and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British **Fleet**, would carry on the struggle, until, in God's good time, the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old.



subjugated - taken control of, dominated

Fleet - A number of warships

Elizabeth I - *Speech to the Troops 1588* (Queen of England during Tudor times)

I am come amongst you, as you see, at this time, not for my **recreation and disport**, but being resolved, in the midst and heat of the battle, to live and die amongst you all; to lay down for my God, and for my kingdom, and my people, my honour and my blood, even in the dust. I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too. I myself will take up arms, I myself will be your general, judge, and rewarder of every one of your **virtues** in the field.



recreation and disport - amusement, fun

virtues - good qualities

Retrieval and Inferential Questions

John F. Kennedy

1. What is Kennedy explaining?
2. Why do you think he repeats the phrase "We choose to go to the moon"?
...not because they are easy, but because they are hard...
3. Does this reason surprise you? Why do you think he uses contrasts such as *easy* and *hard* in his speech?

Barack Obama

4. Who is Obama talking to?
The road ahead will be long. Our climb will be steep.
5. Is he really talking about an actual road?
What is he describing with this image?
...block by block, brick by brick...
6. What affect does this alliteration (repeating the beginning sound) have and why does he use it?

Winston Churchill

7. What phrase is repeated most in this speech? Why do you think that he uses repetition?
...in God's good time...
8. What effect is created by this alliteration?
9. What difficulty does Churchill predict and how does he make it seem less of a problem? HINT: 3 different ways.

Elizabeth I

10. What images to do with the human body does she use and why do you think she uses these?
11. Find an example of Elizabeth using contrast in her speech.
Why do you think she uses it?
12. What problem does Elizabeth have as a leader of this time and how does she make it seem less important?

All Speeches

13. Why do you think that two of the speeches refer to God?
How do they use this to make their speeches more persuasive?
14. Which speech do you think is most persuasive? Explain why, using the text to support your answer.

Grammar challenges:

- highlight all of the modal verbs (modal verbs tell you the possibility of something happening, for example: would, could, should).
- substitute them for other modal verbs to change the tone (uncertain, advisory)