

Excerpts from President John F. Kennedy's Inaugural Address, 1961

We observe today not a victory of party but a celebration of freedom—symbolizing an end as well as a beginning—signifying renewal as well as change. For I have sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn oath our forbears prescribed nearly a century and three-quarters ago.

The world is very different now. For man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life. And yet the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe—the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God.

In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility—I welcome it. I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it—and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.

And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.

My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.

1. Identify three goals of Kennedy's inaugural address:

a.

b.

c.

2. Kennedy said "ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country":

-What do you think Kennedy was trying to do with these words?

-How do you think this request would be accepted today by the American people? Why?

Document 9:

"Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty..."

Finally, to those nations who would make themselves our adversary, we offer not a pledge, but a request: that both sides begin anew the quest for peace, before the dark powers of destruction unleashed by science engulf all humanity in planned or accidental self-destruction.

We dare not tempt them with weakness. For only when our arms are sufficient beyond doubt can we be certain that they will never be employed. But neither can two great and powerful groups of nations take comfort from our present course—both sides overburdened by the cost of modern weapons, both rigidly alarmed by the steady spread of the deadly atom, yet both racing to alter that uncertain balance of terror that stays the hand of mankind's final war."

Source: *President John F. Kennedy*, inaugural address, January 1961.

1. Who gave this speech?

2. When was the speech given?

3. According to the speaker, what 5 things will the U.S. do for the success of liberty?

4. What request does the speaker make? Why?

5. According to the speaker, why must the U.S. be strong?
-Do you agree with the speaker's reasoning? Explain

6. Who do you think the audience was for this speech? Why?