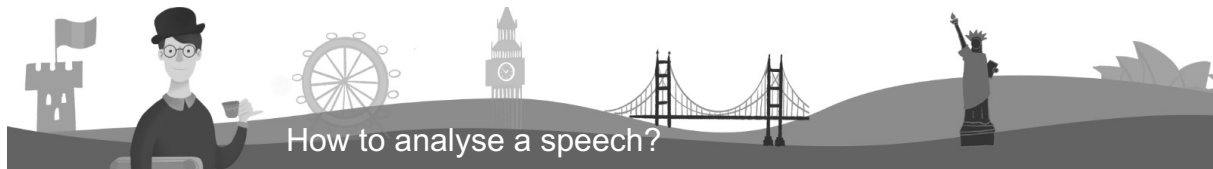


## General aspects of political rhetoric

The purpose of most political speeches is persuasion rather than information. There is always a (hidden, underlying) message involved, often related to certain attitudes and values of the speaker. A political statement intends to affect the listeners by making use of diverse structural and rhetorical devices. In order to understand and to be able to evaluate a political speech, one should consider the following aspects:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>first (general) impression:</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• topic, subject matter, general tone, issues and purpose of the speech</li> </ul>   |
| <b>contents and structure:</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• salient and striking topics, important aspects</li> <li>• organization of the text, arrangement of parts (e. g. introduction, main part or body, conclusion)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>circumstances of the speech / political context:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• time and place/medium (e.g. TV, radio, face-to-face, Internet)</li> <li>• position of the speaker (president, leader of a political party, leader of a protest movement, etc.)</li> <li>• audience (mass audience, a limited group of people)</li> <li>• occasion (election campaign, protest demonstration, political debate, informal gathering)</li> <li>• genre and type (presidential address to the nation, sermon, speech at a demonstration, campus speech, testimony)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>formal and stylistic devices:</b>                    |   |
| <b>a) language</b>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• keywords and phrases</li> <li>• word groups/clusters related to a certain topic</li> <li>• different registers for different addressees (e. g. sophisticated language, use of dialect, etc.)</li> <li>• choice of words (colloquialisms, slang expressions, poetic expressions)</li> </ul>   |
| <b>b) grammar</b>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sentence structure/syntax (use of main-/subclauses)</li> <li>• use of grammatical tenses (indirect references to history, future, etc.)</li> </ul>   |
| <b>c) rhetoric</b>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use of rhetorical questions and answers</li> <li>• use of contrast and oppositions</li> <li>• use of key symbols, slogans, stereotypes</li> <li>• abstractions and generalizations</li> <li>• use of grammatical persons (I, us, we - you, they: patterns of identification and solidarity or vice versa)</li> <li>• metaphors, personifications</li> <li>• allusions and references to history (American Dream, important political/historical issues, good/bad times, tradition, future, etc.); quotations</li> <li>• repetitions (alliterations, anaphora); parallelisms</li> <li>• comparisons, numbers, factual information</li> <li>• irony, exaggerations, simplifications</li> <li>• imperatives, emotionally-loaded words</li> <li>• concentration on essential points vs. wordy</li> <li>• insertions</li> </ul> |
| <b>d) manner of speaking/voice</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• volume, tempo, stress, intonation, abrupt changes, pauses, rhythm</li> </ul>   |

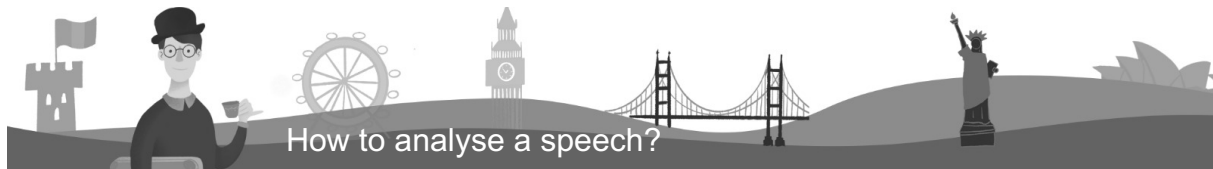


### evaluation:

- Comment on the personal integrity of the speaker, the general political circumstances, the impact on the listeners.
- Compare the speech/speaker to other political speeches/speakers. Was he/she convincing?

## Glossary of rhetorical / stylistic devices

	Task	Time
1.	Add more examples by your own	x
<b>alliteration</b> the repetition of a sound, usually a consonant, at the beginning of neighbouring words	-	“Somewhere at this very moment a child is being born in America. Let it be our cause to give that child a <b>h</b> appy <b>h</b> ome, a <b>h</b> ealthy family, and a <b>h</b> opeful future.” Bill Clinton, Democratic National Convention Acceptance Address, 1992
<b>allusion</b> indirect reference to a famous event, person or piece of literature	-	
<b>anaphora</b> successive sentences starting with the <u>same</u> word	-	<b>"We owe them</b> remembrance, and <b>we owe them</b> more. <b>We owe them</b> , and their children, and our own..." George W. Bush, <i>Our country is strong</i> , 11.09.2002
<b>antithesis</b> contrast; opposing words, phrases, views, characters, etc.	-	
<b>choice of words</b> the decision to use a particular word based on such aspects as style, register, connotation, etc.	-	
<b>enumeration</b> a list of three or more people, objects or ideas	-	“Our public interest depends on <b>private character, on civic duty and family bonds and basic fairness, on uncounted, unhonored acts of decency</b> which give direction to our freedom.” George W. Bush, 1 <sup>st</sup> Inaugural Address, 2001
<b>euphemism</b> using polite expressions for sth. unpleasant	-	“he’s been right here since he <b>passed away</b> (= died) last night”, Stan Ridgway, <i>Camouflage</i> , 1986
<b>exaggeration</b> <b>/hyperbole</b> making sth./sb. sound better, more exciting, dangerous, etc. than in reality	-	"The chamber is celebrating an important milestone this week: your 70th anniversary. <b>I remember the day you started.</b> " Ronald Reagan, Remarks at the Annual Meeting of the United States Chamber of Commerce, 1982
<b>image</b> a word intended to appeal to the reader's imagination and to bring a new perception to an object (-> figurative language, e. g. metaphors, similes)	-	
<b>Including 'we'</b> encloses the listener (I + you = we)	-	<b>"We</b> must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline.” Martin Luther King, <i>I Have a Dream</i> , 1963
<b>irony</b> saying the opposite of what you mean	-	
<b>inversion</b> the syntactic reversal of the normal order of the words and phrases in a sentence	-	"And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.” John F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address, 1961
<b>(leit) motif</b> a theme, expression or object which recurs throughout a text and which refers to a certain person, situation or atmosphere	-	
<b>manner of speaking</b>	-	



a style that is typical of a particular person, e.g. politician or worker, etc.

### metaphor

poetic comparison without using *like* or *as* (e. g. an ocean of love)

### paradox

seeming impossible at first glance but recognized as true on second thought

**parallelism** repeating similar or identical words/phrases in neighbouring lines/sentences/paragraphs

**personification** presenting ideas/objects/animals as persons (e.g. a smiling moon)

### pun

a play on words

### reference

a connection to sth. else (-> allusion)

### register/level of speech

the words, style and grammar used, e.g. formal/informal English, colloquialisms, slang, non-standard English, etc.; such aspects are typically adjusted according to the addressees

### repetition

deliberately using a word/phrase more than once

### rhetorical question

question to which the answer is obvious or to which no answer is possible/expected

### simile

comparison using *like* or *as*

- "And if a beachhead of cooperation may push back the **jungle of suspicion**," John F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address, 1961

- "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." John F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address, 1961

- "We are not this story's author, who fills time and eternity with his purpose." George W. Bush, 1<sup>st</sup> Inaugural Address, 2001

- "out of step, out of arguments and just about out of time ." Kofi Annan, Washington Post, 8.11.2006

- "Can anyone look at our reduced standing in the world today and say, '**Let's have four more years of this?**'" Ronald Reagan, 1980 Republican National Convention Acceptance Address

- "we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down **like** waters," Martin Luther King, / Have a Dream, 1963

## Writing a speech analysis

### Preparation:

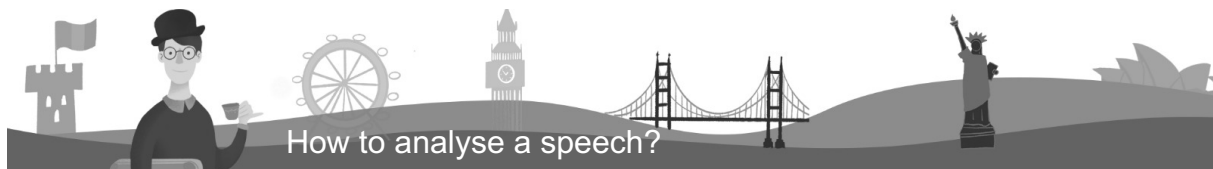
- Highlight important key words / key sentences
- Create a concept paper (e.g. bullet points of your argumentation and important points to mention, cause-effect-diagram, flowchart etc.)
- Be sure you understood the task and know where you have to focus on (e.g. analyse the content/structure, circumstances of the speech, language, grammar, rhetoric, manner of speaking/voice)

### Introduction:

- Start with a leading question / topic / theme / hook and include the w-questions
- Do not repeat the introductory part from your first assignment (w-questions).

### Main Part:

- Most elements in a speech have at least one of these four functions:
  1. To establish contact with the audience.
  2. To place emphasis on certain ideas.
  3. To present ideas understandably or memorably (illustration, memory aid).
  4. To convey a certain image of the speaker (self-presentation).



- Use the **four-step-method** for your analysis:

Step 1: Spot/name the passage / quote	Step 2: Use the correct <b>technical</b> term	Step 3: Explain the function	Step 4: Prove it with reference.
Obama starts off by...	... <b>alluding</b> to the <b>independence</b> gained by the former colonies,...	... a step which included <b>self-</b> <b>determination</b> ...	(p. x, line x- x).
He uses...	the personal pronoun "we"...	... to stress the team spirit and all the effort taken together	(p1, lx; p1, lxx etc.).
The idea of describing the living conditions for children in the future...	...alludes to the structure of MLK "I have a dream" speech...	... leading the listener to... (to be continued...)	(see page x line x f.).

- Do not just follow the chronological order of the text but also focus on relevant aspects, stylistic devices, characters. Be careful: It is not about listing rhetorical devices one after another, rather answer your leading question and write a text which will catch the reader's attention and interest.

### Conclusion:

- End your text by referring to your introduction and formulating a concluding sentence in which you for example refer to your leading question / theme / issue.
- Do not evaluate the text. Stay factual and concise.

Criteria	😊	😞