

Historical Oration #1 – Anne Frank

1. **INTRODUCE** yourself and briefly state why you chose this selection.

2. **READ** the following:

Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl
by B. M. Mooyart-Doubleday

Anne was a young Jewish girl who with her family hid from the Nazi authorities in German occupied Holland during WWII. She documented her life with her family as they hid from the Nazi German soldiers from 1942 to 1944. She wrote letters in her diary to her friends and family along with other diary entries.

It was Wednesday, January 13, 1943 when Anne Frank wrote a letter to her friend Kitty about how they were living. She shared about how people were being dragged off and families were being torn apart. She wrote that children would come home from school and find their parents had disappeared.

Anne spoke about how everyone was afraid and every night hundreds of planes would fly over Holland and go into German towns. She tells her friend in this letter that every hour there are thousands and thousands of people killed in Russia and Africa. Anne said that the whole globe was waging war.

3. **MEMORIZE** the following: (You can begin by saying, “Here is an excerpt from her letter.”)

Dear Kitty,

The children here run about in just thin blouses and clogs; no coat, no hat, no stockings, and no one to help them. They go from cold homes out into the cold street, and when they get to school, find themselves in an even colder classroom.... countless children stop the passers-by and beg for a piece of bread. I could go on for hours about all the suffering the war has brought. There is nothing we can do but wait calmly as we can till the misery comes to an end. Jews and Christians wait, the whole earth waits; and there are many who wait for death.

Yours, Anne

Historical Oration #2 – Daniel Webster

1. **INTRODUCE** yourself and briefly state why you chose this selection.

2. **READ** the following:

The Bunker Hill Speech
by Daniel Webster

Daniel Webster was an American lawyer and statesman who represented New Hampshire and Massachusetts in the U.S. Congress and served as the U.S. Secretary of State under three Presidents.

It was June 17, 1825 when Daniel Webster delivered 'The Bunker Hill Speech' to an audience that included Veterans from the American Revolutionary War. He delivered this address when the corner-stone of the Bunker Hill Monument at Charlestown, Massachusetts, was being dedicated. The purpose of his speech was to move the listeners to remember the sacrifices of their ancestors.

He began his speech, not with the Battle of Bunker Hill, but with the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus. He spoke about the early English settlements of North America which included the Pilgrims who were Protestants and Maryland settlers who were Roman Catholics. He was drawing attention to the unity of the people that had settled in the New World.

Daniel Webster justified the building of the monument to the Bunker Hill Battle because it was the first battle of the American Revolutionary War. He pointed to the happiness and prosperity that America experienced in the fifty years after the war. It was important to him that people would not forget the people that paved the way to build the new nation they were all now living in.

3. **MEMORIZE** the following: (You can begin by saying, "Here is an excerpt from his speech.")

Those who established our liberty and our government are daily dropping from among us. The great trust now descends to new hands....Let our age be the age of improvement. In a day of peace, let us advance the arts of peace and the works of peace. Let us develop the resources of our land... promote all its great interests, and see whether we also, in our day and generation, may not perform something worthy to be remembered. Let us cultivate a true spirit of union and harmony.

Historical Oration #3 – Abraham Lincoln

1. **INTRODUCE** yourself and briefly state why you chose this selection.

2. **READ** the following:

The Gettysburg Address
By Abraham Lincoln

On November 19, 1863 President Abraham Lincoln spoke to 15,000 people seated at the new National Cemetery of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. This was the site of one of the bloodiest and most decisive battles of the Civil War. It was the place where 23,000 Union soldiers and 28,000 Confederate soldiers died. It was an epic battle of the Civil War that should President Lincoln believed should never be forgotten.

Even though Abraham Lincoln was not the main speaker that day, his brief address would be remembered as one of the most important speeches in American history.

In it, he invoked the principles of human equality contained in the Declaration of Independence and connected the sacrifices of the Civil War with the desire for “a new birth of freedom”, as well as the preservation of the American Republic created in 1776 and it’s concept of self-government.

3. **MEMORIZE** the following: (You can begin by saying, “Here is an excerpt from President Lincoln’s address.”)

Four-score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.... We are met on a great battlefield of war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live...

... we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it..... The world .. can never forget what they did here.

Historical Oration #4 – Patrick Henry

1. **INTRODUCE** yourself and briefly state why you chose this selection.

2. **READ** the following:

“Give Me Liberty, or Give Me Death”

By Patrick Henry

Patrick Henry was one of the Founding Fathers of the United States and the first governor of Virginia. He was a gifted orator and a major figure in the American Revolution. His rousing speeches – which included a 1775 speech to the Virginia legislature in which he famously declared, “Give me liberty, or give me death!” fired up America’s fight for independence.

He was trying to convince the Virginia House of Burgesses to pass a resolution to send Virginia troops into the Revolutionary War. Patrick Henry perceived that if the colonists did not fight against the British, they would all be slaves to the King of Great Britain.

Patrick Henry opposed the ratification of the U.S. Constitution, which he felt put too much power in the hands of a national government. His influence helped create the Bill of Rights, which guaranteed personal freedoms and set limits on the government’s power.

3. **MEMORIZE** the following: (You can begin by saying, “Here is an excerpt from Patrick Henry’s plea to the House of Burgesses.”)

MR. PRESIDENT: They tell us, sir, that we are weak... But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week, or the next year?

Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations!... Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!

Historical Oration #5 – Thomas Jefferson

1. **INTRODUCE** yourself and briefly state why you chose this selection.

2. **READ** the following:

The Declaration of Independence
Penned by Thomas Jefferson

On July 4, 1776, the Second Continental Congress, representing the thirteen original colonies of the United States, adopted a resolution unanimously declaring the colonies' independence from Great Britain. This document was penned by Thomas Jefferson.

Thomas Jefferson was the principal author of the Declaration of Independence, and a proponent of democracy, republicanism, and individual rights, motivating American colonists to break from the Kingdom of Great Britain and form a new nation.

He had dedicated his life to meeting the challenges of his age which was political freedom, religious freedom, and education. Although he knew that we would continue to face these challenges through time, he believed that America's democratic values would become a beacon for the rest of the world. He never wavered from his belief in the American experiment. Thomas Jefferson said, "I have no fear that the result of our experiment will be that men may be trusted to govern themselves.."

3. **MEMORIZE** the following: (You can begin by saying, "Here is an excerpt from the Declaration of Independence.")

We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness...

We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America.... appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world... solemnly publish and declare that these United Colonies are... FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown....and with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence; we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

Historical Oration #6 – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

1. **INTRODUCE** yourself and briefly say why you chose this selection.

2. **READ** the following:

I Have a Dream

By Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was an American Christian minister and activist who became the most visible spokesperson and leader in the Civil Rights movement from 1955 until his assassination in 1968.

Dr. King led the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott and later became the first president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. As president of this organization, he led an unsuccessful 1962 struggle against segregation in the state of Georgia and helped organize the nonviolent 1963 protests in Birmingham, Alabama.

Dr. King is best known for advancing civil rights through nonviolence and civil disobedience, inspired by his Christian beliefs and the nonviolent activism of Mahatma Gandhi.

Dr. King helped organize one of the largest marches on Washington D.C. where he delivered his speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on August 28, 1963. He was speaking to a huge crowd of nearly 250,000 people who had marched into Washington D.C. in support of civil rights legislation.

3. **MEMORIZE** the following: (You can begin by saying, “Here is an excerpt from Dr. King’s Speech.”)

... even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: “We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal.”

... I have a dream— That my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character; I have a dream today . . .

Historical Oration #7 – President John F. Kennedy

1. **INTRODUCE** yourself and briefly say why you chose this selection.

2. **READ** the following:

The Inaugural Address of John F. Kennedy

John F. Kennedy graduated from Harvard in 1940 and then joined the Navy. In 1943, during World War II, his Patrol Torpedo boat was sunk by a Japanese destroyer. Kennedy led the survivors through dangerous waters to safety and he also suffered injuries from the attack as well.

After he returned from the war, he became a Democratic Congressman from the Boston area, and then became a Senator. In 1955, while recuperating from a back operation, he wrote “Profiles in Courage”, which won him the Pulitzer Prize in history.

John F. Kennedy became the 35th President of the United States. He delivered his inaugural address on January 20, 1961. As President, he took action in the cause of equal rights, calling for new civil rights legislation. He wished for America to resume its mission as the first nation dedicated to the revolution of human rights. Like many others, he was inspired by the Declaration of Independence.

John F. Kennedy was the youngest President to be elected and the youngest President to die. He was assassinated on November 22, 1963 and the people of our nation grieved the loss of their President.

3. **MEMORIZE** the following: (You can begin by saying, “Here is an excerpt from his Inaugural Address”.)

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.

Historical Oration #8 – Frederick Douglass

1. **INTRODUCE** yourself and briefly say why you chose this selection.

2. **READ** the following:

Men of Color, to Arms!
By Frederick Douglass

Frederick Douglass was born a slave and escaped to the North at age nineteen where he was taken in by abolitionist David Ruggles. He became very involved in the antislavery movement. After overcoming an initial fear of public speaking, Frederick Douglass went on to become one of the anti-slavery movement's most eloquent speakers. During the Civil War he, and other black leaders, urged black men to enlist as soldiers in the Union Army.

Barely three months after Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation went into effect, Frederick Douglass gave a speech in Rochester, New York on March 2, 1863, titled "Men of Color, To Arms!" which urged African American men to join what was increasingly a war to make real what the Emancipation Proclamation only promised—complete freedom for all men.

3. **MEMORIZE** the following: (You can begin by saying, "Here is an excerpt from his speech.")

By every consideration which binds you to your enslaved fellow-countrymen, by every aspiration which you cherish for the freedom and equality of yourselves and your children; by all the ties of blood and identity which make us one, I urge you to fly to arms!.....

We can get at the throat of treason and slavery.... The day dawns; the morning star is bright upon the horizon! The iron gate of our prison stands half open. One gallant rush from the North will fling it wide open, while millions of our brothers and sisters shall march out into liberty. The chance is now given you to end ... the bondage of centuries....

Historical Oration #9 – Sojourner Truth

1. **INTRODUCE** yourself and briefly say why you chose this selection.

2. **READ** the following:

On Women's Rights
By Sojourner Truth

Sojourner Truth was born into slavery in New York State in 1797. She escaped with one of her many children in 1826 and later was emancipated by that state in 1828.

After gaining her freedom, Sojourner Truth became a Christian and believed that God was calling her to preach about abolitionism and equal rights for all. She traveled throughout the North preaching religion, anti-slavery, and specifically women's rights.

She had become an outspoken advocate for slaves and women in the nineteenth century and her Civil War work earned her an invitation to meet President Abraham Lincoln in 1864.

Sojourner Truth delivered a powerful speech to the Ohio Women's Right Convention in Akron, Ohio in 1851. It was direct and honest with a stark simplicity: that a woman is the equal of a man in every measure.

She used a technique called anaphora or phrase repetition. "Ain't I a woman?... Ain't I a woman?" In her repeating of the statement, she was making a plea, an accusation, and an affirmation all at the same time. She spoke with a very strong Southern dialect and her speech only lasted about three minutes. But she finished with a strong and commanding 'old Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say'.

3. **MEMORIZE** the following: (You can begin by saying, "Here is an excerpt from her speech.")

..what's all this here talking about? That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches..... NOBODY ever helps me into carriages, or over mudpuddles..... And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm. I have plowed and planted and gathered into barns.... And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man—when I could get it—and bear the lash as well.

Then that little man in black there..says women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a women. Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him.....and now old Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say.I