

FDR And Hoover: Comparing Leadership Styles

Herbert Hoover



Franklin Roosevelt



What turn of phrase stands out in this speech - explain why it stands out.

Describe the delivery style of this speech using three words.

Does the speech specifically address the problems faced by Americans - explain and provide an example.

How do the speeches demonstrate a historical understanding of the 1920s and the causes of the Great Depression?

Imagine that you are someone who has been unemployed for two years. Does either speech give you hope for your future - explain.

Based on these speeches, which of these men would you vote for? Explain.

[The first part of Franklin Roosevelt's first inaugural address, 1933](#)

The complete speech can be accessed here: <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/fdrfirstinaugural.html>

The audio version of the speech here: <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/fdrfirstinaugural.html>

President Hoover, Mr. Chief Justice, my friends:

This is a day of national consecration. And I am certain that on this day my fellow Americans expect that on my induction into the Presidency, I will address them with a candor and a decision which the present situation of our people impels.

This is preeminently the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly. Nor need we shrink from honestly facing conditions in our country today. This great Nation will endure, as it has endured, will revive and will prosper.

So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself -- nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance. In every dark hour of our national life, a leadership of frankness and of vigor has met with that understanding and support of the people themselves which is essential to victory. And I am convinced that you will again give that support to leadership in these critical days.

In such a spirit on my part and on yours we face our common difficulties. They concern, thank God, only material things. Values have shrunk to fantastic levels; taxes have risen; our ability to pay has fallen; government of all kinds is faced by serious curtailment of income; the means of exchange are frozen in the currents of trade; the withered leaves of industrial enterprise lie on every side; farmers find no markets for their produce; and the savings of many years in thousands of families are gone. More important, a host of unemployed citizens face the grim problem of existence, and an equally great number toil with little return. Only a foolish optimist can deny the dark realities of the moment.

And yet our distress comes from no failure of substance. We are stricken by no plague of locusts. Compared with the perils which our forefathers conquered, because they believed and were not afraid, we have still much to be thankful for. Nature still offers her bounty and human efforts have multiplied it. Plenty is at our doorstep, but a generous use of it languishes in the very sight of the supply.

Primarily, this is because the rulers of the exchange of mankind's goods have failed, through their own stubbornness and their own incompetence, have admitted their failure, and have abdicated. Practices of the unscrupulous money changers stand indicted in the court of public opinion, rejected by the hearts and minds of men.

True, they have tried. But their efforts have been cast in the pattern of an outworn tradition. Faced by failure of credit, they have proposed only the lending of more money. Stripped of the lure of profit by which to induce our people to follow their false leadership, they have resorted to exhortations, pleading tearfully for restored confidence. They only know the rules of a generation of self-seekers. They have no vision, and when there is no vision the people perish.

Yes, the money changers have fled from their high seats in the temple of our civilization. We may now restore that temple to the ancient truths. The measure of that restoration lies in the extent to which we apply social values more noble than mere monetary profit.

Happiness lies not in the mere possession of money; it lies in the joy of achievement, in the thrill of creative effort. The joy, the moral stimulation of work no longer must be forgotten in the mad chase of evanescent profits. These dark days, my friends, will be worth all they cost us if they teach us that our true destiny is not to be ministered unto but to minister to ourselves, to our fellow men.

Recognition of that falsity of material wealth as the standard of success goes hand in hand with the abandonment of the false belief that public office and high political position are to be valued only by the standards of pride of place and personal profit; and there must be an end to a conduct in banking and in business which too often has given to a sacred trust the likeness of callous and selfish wrongdoing.

[The last three paragraphs of Herbert Hoovers acceptance speech for the Republican nomination to the presidency in 1932.](#)

The complete text of the speech can be accessed here: <http://publicpolicy.pepperdine.edu/faculty-research/new-deal/hover-speeches/hh081132.htm>

The audio version is available here: http://ia600500.us.archive.org/18/items/herbhoov1932/herbhoov1932_vbr.mp3

If it shall appear that while I have had the honor of the Presidency I have contributed the part required from this high office to bringing the Republic through this dark night, and if in my administration we shall see the break of dawn to a better day, I shall have done my part in the world. No man can have a greater honor than that.

I have but one desire: that is, to see my country again on the road to prosperity which shall be more sane and lasting through the lesson of experience, to see the principles and ideals of the American people perpetuated.

I rest the case of the Republican Party on the intelligence and the just discernment of the American people. Should my countrymen again place upon me the responsibilities of this high office, I shall carry forward the work of reconstruction. I shall hope long before another four years have passed to see the world prosperous and at peace and every American home again in the sunshine of genuine progress and genuine prosperity. I shall seek to maintain untarnished and unweakened those fundamental traditions and principles upon which our nation was founded and upon which it has grown. I shall invite and welcome the help of every man and woman in the preservation of the United States for the happiness of its people. This is my pledge to the nation and to Almighty God.