

Aufgaben für die Woche 23.3.-27.3.2020

**Revision: The American Dream**

Please study Kennedy's Inaugural Address (first and last parts). The speech can be listened to at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnEbFJY4MZk>

When you have finished your essay, compare it with the solutions following the assignments.

*Don't let coronavirus grip you. "Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed."*

**John F. Kennedy's Inaugural Address**  
**(delivered on January 20, 1961)**

We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution.<sup>1</sup> Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans — born in this century, tempered<sup>2</sup> by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace,<sup>3</sup> proud of our ancient heritage — and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this Nation has always been committed<sup>4</sup>, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world.

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 foes, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty. [...]

In your hands, my fellow citizens, more than in mine, will rest the final success or failure of our course. Since this country was founded, each generation of Americans has been summoned<sup>6</sup> to give testimony<sup>7</sup> to its national loyalty. The graves of young Americans who answered the call to service are found around the globe.

Now the trumpet summons us again — not as a call to bear arms<sup>8</sup>, though arms we need; not as a call to battle, though embattled<sup>9</sup> we are; but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in, and year out, "rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation"<sup>10</sup> — a struggle against the common

30 enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself.

Can we forge<sup>11</sup> against these enemies a grand and global alliance, North and South, East and West, that can assure a more fruitful life for all mankind? Will you join in that historic effort?

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<sup>12</sup> 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.*

Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own.

**Tasks:**

- 1) Point out Kennedy's global aims and how he defines America's role in the world. (*Comprehension*)
- 2) Analyse the way in which Kennedy tries to convince his audience to join him in America's "struggle against the common enemies of man" (II.29f.). Pay special attention to the way in which he uses rhetorical devices and the traditional concepts of the Frontier and Manifest Destiny. (*Analysis*)
- 3) 48 years later, President Obama says: "Know that America is a friend of each nation and every man, woman and child who seeks a future of peace and dignity, and we are ready to lead once more."

Point out the parallels between this quotation from Obama's Inaugural Address and Kennedy's speech and discuss their claim that it is America's right to lead the world. (*Evaluation*)

*and*

A group of American scouts (= *Pfadfinder*) is visiting Brilon. You are sitting around a campfire, and after all the songs have been sung, you start discussing America's role in the world. Your American partner is clearly a fan of Kennedy's and Obama's. You present your arguments from a European perspective.

Write the dialogue.

1 that revolution	the revolution of 1776, when the USA declared their independence of Great Britain
2tempered:	made hard
3 peace	<i>i.e.</i> after the Second World War
4to be committed to sth.	<i>einer Sache verpflichtet sein</i>
5foe ( <i>arch. or bibl.</i> ):	enemy
6 to be summoned to do sth.	<i>aufgerufen werden, etwas zu tun</i>
7to give testimony to sth.:	<i>für eine Sache Zeugnis ablegen</i>
8 arms	weapons
9embattled:	a) prepared to fight if necessary b) to be under attack, pressure; be subject to threats

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10 "rejoicing ... tribulation"

quotation from the New Testament (*St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, 12:12) [**Seid fröhlich in Hoffnung, geduldig in Trübsal**]

11 to forge:

*schmieden*

12 to shrink (back) from

*zurückweichen, -schrecken vor etw.*

Tasks:

- 1) Point out Kennedy's global aims and how he defines America's role in the world. (Comprehension) **16 pts**

introduction (2pts)

Global aims: (7pts)

- human rights
- liberty
- fight against tyranny, poverty, disease, war
- forging of a global alliance

America's role in the world: (7pts)

- fight for human rights and liberty all over the world
- America has always been granted the role of struggling for these rights (American tradition)
- leadership in this struggle
- K. gladly accepts this role
- America is to be the centre of a global development towards more liberty / human rights etc.

- 2) Analyse the way in which Kennedy tries to convince his audience to join him in America's "struggle against the common enemies of man" (II.29f.). Pay special attention to the way in which he uses rhetorical devices and the traditional concepts of the Frontier and Manifest Destiny. (Analysis) **24 pts**

- rhetorical devices: (16pts)
  - **reference** to the American revolution (1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph): the USA of today (i.e. 1961) is the heir of that revolution; deep obligation to continue the struggle their forefathers began; underlined by the metaphor of the torch being passed down the line to the present)
  - **quotation** from the Bible (II.28f.) (emphasizes the idea that the struggle Kennedy mentions is God's will; fight acquires almost cosmic dimensions [reinforced by **personifying** "history" as the "final judge" of America's deeds {I.56})
  - **appeal** to noble emotions such as patriotism, pride, nationalism
  - **metaphors:**
    - **light and darkness** (**torch** [I.4]: association of a torch relay race: K. and his generation have to uphold the tradition, continue the fight, otherwise defeat would follow; torch as a symbol of culture, civilization, enlightenment; **long, twilight struggle** [I.27]: emphasis on hardship, hard, possibly unrewarded work / fight; not easily won; **light – glow – fire – light the world** [II.43ff.]: USA = haven of everything the revolution stands for; from this centre, freedom / the recognition of the human rights as unalienable and given by God will spread from there)
    - **military** (**tempered by war, hard and bitter peace, graves, trumpet, bear arms, call to battle, embattled**: emphasis on the idea that liberty etc. are sth. that has to be fought for / defended by all means, that this task cannot be avoided; also emphasizes America's readiness to fight for these rights since they have always been called upon to come to the rescue of these rights despite the fact that they have to sacrifice everything to assure the survival of liberty)
  - **enumeration** / triad / hendiadys: e.g. **II. 5-10** (climactic development, the last element(s) being those that are most important to Kennedy: ancient heritage (I.7), unwilling to witness or permit ... (II. 7-10); **II.13-15**: emphasis on K's willingness to

- do absolutely everything necessary to defend and fight for liberty and that no one can stop them); II.24-29, II.31f.; I.42;
- these enumerations are often combined with **alliteration** (e.g. I.3 (friend-foe); pay-price (I.13), bear-burden (II.13f.), survival-success (II.15f.), **parallelism and anaphora** (let the word – let every nation know; not as a call ... (II. 24ff); **antithesis** (II.24ff.) in order to make the statement more forceful, memorable, to put special emphasis on the most important aspects of his speech)
  - **rhetorical questions** (II.32-35): Having expounded the problems besetting America and the world, having conjured up the urgency of action, of America following in their ancestors' footsteps he seemingly asks his audience for a decision, but he can be sure that this decision has already been taken; any other answer but "yes" would mean leaving America in the lurch, reneging on their obligations towards their ancestors and towards liberty and human rights)
  - **chiasmus** (II.46-51): emphasizing the fact that the world of today is not a cushy place but a one that requires action, determination, hard work
  - **use of personal pronouns**: emphasizes that the President and the American people are in the same boat; evoking the spirit of community, solidarity, unity
  - Frontier (4 pts)
    - Spirit of the frontier
    - Characteristic features of the pioneers of old
    - Challenges
    - Enemies
  - Manifest Destiny (4 pts)
    - Literal frontiers + figurative frontiers
    - The globe as the place for America to enforce human rights, liberty etc. as they have been given by God
    - America as God's chosen people / as God's tool to do God's work
    - Imagery (light and darkness) identical to images used to distinguish between civilization and wilderness (e.g. Gast's *American Progress*)

- 3) 48 years later, President Obama says: "Know that America is a friend of each nation and every man, woman and child who seeks a future of peace and dignity, and we are ready to lead once more."

Point out the parallels between this quotation from Obama's Inaugural Address and Kennedy's speech and discuss their claim that it is America's right to lead the world. (Evaluation) 20 pts

**Introduction:** summing up Obama's and Kennedy's ideas and comparing them (4pts)

**Main part:** (12pts)

- **Yes:** (e.g. A.=most powerful nation in the world; representing values of the Western world; historical reasons (World Wars etc.); leader of the Free World defending its values against enemies of these values (e.g. terrorism, fundamentalism, dictatorships)
- **no:** (e.g. outmoded concept since the world has become much more pluralistic after the end of the Cold War; EC as an alternative to America's claim of leadership; America's abuses of their power in the past; contradictions between what they profess and what they do [in the past: slavery, Native-Americans etc.; in the present: Guantanamo, Iraq etc.]

**conclusion;** summing up the main points and arriving at a logical conclusion (4pts)

and

A group of American scouts (= *Pfadfinder*) is visiting Brilon. You are sitting around a campfire, and after all the songs have been sung, you start discussing America's role in

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the world. Your American partner is clearly a fan of Kennedy's and Obama's. You present your arguments from a European perspective.

Write the dialogue. **20 pts**

- Introduction and conclusion (5pts)
- The American's point of view (5pts)
- The European point of view (5pts)
- Appropriateness of the behaviour in the situation (5pts)