Inauguration 2009:
A Call to Action for All Americans

Take the Oath of Citizenship

A Civic Education Lesson for Students, Grades 5-12

Source: Original design for "Be Patriotic" poster
By Paul Stahr, ca. 1917-18, Herbert Hoover Library,
National Archives and Records Administration

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January 4, 2009

Inauguration 2009: A Call to Action for All Americans
Take the Oath of Citizenship

Introduction:

On Tuesday, January 20, 2009 Barack Obama will take the Oath of Office to become the 44th President of the United States. Like all preceding presidents, Mr. Obama will pledge his commitment to fulfill the duties of the Office of President by stating the following in accordance with Article II, Section I of the U.S. Constitution:

> *"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."*

This historic event provides an extraordinary opportunity for students, teachers, parents, and all citizens to learn about the significance of the Presidential Inauguration and, like President Obama affirm their own commitment to act as informed, responsible citizens in our American democracy to *preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States*. Former Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis said: "The only title in our democracy superior to that of President is the title of citizen." In quoting Justice Brandeis, Lee Hamilton, former Congressman of Indiana and Director of The Center on Congress at Indiana University adds, "If that is so – and you and I believe that it is – then we must learn and teach what it means to be a good citizen. We must do this in the examples of our institutions – and in the examples of our own lives."

This concise lesson is designed to help students, grades 5-12 understand the history of the Oath of Office as an American tradition, the circumstances and significance of Inaugural Addresses, and the importance of fulfilling the responsibility of citizenship by calling upon citizens to create and uphold a commitment to practice responsible citizenship.

Enduring Understandings:

- The Oath of Office establishes the role of the president as the leader of the Executive Branch to preserve, protect, and defend the U.S. Constitution.
- The Presidential Address sets a vision for the nation and the world – goals and aspirations for all Americans based on current events and ongoing conditions prior to the election.
- All Americans are guaranteed fundamental rights of a democracy but also must uphold the responsibility of citizenship in a free society.

Essential Questions:

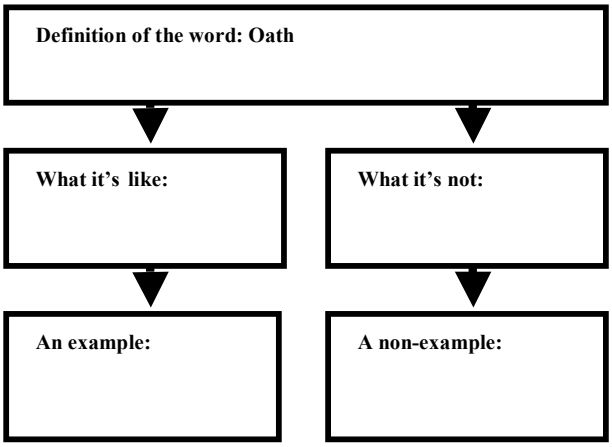
- What is the significance of the Oath of Office?
- How do current events and ongoing conditions impact the content of Inaugural Addresses?
- How can Inaugural Addresses challenge Americans to shape personal goals and commitments to uphold their responsibilities as informed, actively engaged citizens of the United States?

Part One: What does it mean to take an oath?
Procedure:

1. Introduction: Ask students, "What does it mean to take an oath?" Invite students to write their thoughts as a quickwrite activity and then share their thoughts in small group discussions.

2. Allow students to share thoughts with the entire class. Stretch the conversation by asking:
   - Why do people take oaths?
   - Why are they important?
   - Why is it important for people to follow through on an oath, in other words, to "keep their promise"?
   - How do we hold people accountable when they "break their promise"?

3. Vocabulary Development: Distribute copies of Handout #1. Ask students to think further about the concept of oaths by recording ideas in a graphic organizer similar to the one below. Encourage students to think of personal experiences when they or someone they knew took an oath to do something important.



Part Two: The Origin of the Oath of Office
Procedure:

1. Ask students, "Have you ever wondered how or why the Oath of Office was created? Engage students in dialogue to brainstorm how this American tradition began.

2. Distribute Handout #2 or direct students to the following web site to find the answers:
   Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies
   Presidential Swearing-In Ceremony
   http://inaugural.senate.gov/history/daysevents/potusswearingin01.cfm

3. Ask students to conduct research to answer the following questions:
   - When and where was the Oath of Office established?
   - What does it require Presidents to say and do?

Part Three: Inaugural Addresses: Why do Presidents say what they do?
Procedure:

1. Ask students to think about a time they had to give a speech or make an oral presentation. How much time did they spend preparing for the presentation? Why did it take so long?

2. Explain that when a President-elect prepares his Inaugural Address, he is paying careful attention to what he wants to say by thinking about the events that have occurred leading up to the Inauguration and what he wants to accomplish. This is his opportunity to explain his vision to the American public and the world. It is also an opportunity for him to call upon citizens to join him in his efforts.

3. Distribute Handout #3. Examine the first Inaugural Address from Franklin D. Roosevelt. Ask students to read the address and focus on the first paragraph that reads:

   ...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 vigor has met with that understanding and support of the people themselves which is essential to victory. I am convinced that you will again give that support to leadership in these critical days.

4. Distribute Handout #4 *A Call to Action* (located in *Take the Oath of Citizenship* Lesson Plan Part 2) and ask students to read through the remainder of FDR's Address to find clues to answer the following questions:
   - What events led up to the President's Inauguration Ceremony?
   - What was his vision and goals for America?
   - What did he ask the American public to do as responsible citizens? What was his *call to action*?

5. Distribute Handout #5. Examine the Inaugural Address of John F. Kennedy. Ask students to focus on the final paragraphs that read:

   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.

6. Again, using Handout #4 *A Call to Action,* ask students to read through the remainder of Kennedy's Address to find clues to answer the following questions:
   - What events led up to the President's Inauguration Ceremony?
   - What was his vision and goals for America?
   - What did he ask the American public to do as responsible citizens? What was his *call to action*?

Part Four: Create Your Own Oath of Citizenship
Procedure:

1. Ask students, "What do you think Barack Obama will talk about in his Inaugural Address?" Using Handout #4 ask students to collect information regarding the following:
   - What has occurred in recent history that has been of concern to President-elect Obama and the American people?
   - What is his vision and goals?

2. Ask students to brainstorm, "What will Barack Obama ask of the American public in his Inaugural Address?"

3. As students to listen or read Obama's Inaugural Speech on January 20, 2009. Ask them to record ideas on Handout #4.

4. Ask students to create their own Oath of Citizenship using Handout #6 *My Oath of Citizenship* by reflecting on the following questions:
   - For a democracy to be effective, what is the role of its citizens?
   - If our nation is committed to solving problems home and abroad, what must citizens commit themselves to do?
   - Ask yourself, "What can I do to be an informed, responsible citizen?"
   - Is there a service-learning project I can work on to solve a problem in my community? Describe it.
   - Are there things I can do or say on a daily basis that will end discrimination and ensure justice and equality for all people?
   - Are there things I can do to influence or create public policies that will solve problems and ensure fair treatment of all people?

5. Ask students to write out their personal Oath of Citizenship as a commitment to uphold their responsibility as a citizen of the United States. Encourage students to use art, music, and performance to present their oath aloud in either a small group or whole class setting.

Assessment:
Ask students to respond to the following prompts in a written, oral, or visual format. Review the directions and attached rubric with students to articulate the specific criteria for success. (The rubric is located in *Take the Oath of Citizenship* Lesson Plan Part 2)

1. What is the significance of the Oath of Office?
2. How do current events and ongoing conditions impact the content of Inaugural Addresses?
3. How can Inaugural Addresses challenge Americans to shape personal goals and commitments to uphold their responsibilities as informed, actively engaged citizens of the United States?
4. Why is it important for all Americans to take an Oath of Citizenship?

Handout #1

Name_____ Date_____

What Does It Mean to Take an Oath?

Definition of the word: Oath

What it's like:

What it's not:

An example:

A non-example:

Name_____ Date_____

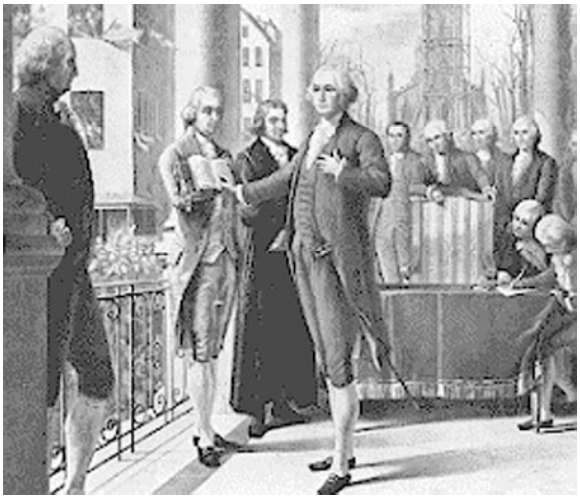
Presidential Swearing-In Ceremony

Part 1 of 6
Source: Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies
Presidential Swearing-In Ceremony
http://inaugural.senate.gov/history/daysevents/potusswearingin01.cfm

"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

—Presidential oath of office, Article II, Section 1, United States Constitution

Proceedings associated with the Presidential elections and Inaugurations, almost routine after two centuries, were entirely new and untried following the Constitutional Convention of 1787. The Constitution provides that the President be elected through an electoral college, with membership equal to the number of Senators and Representatives from each state. It authorizes Congress to determine when elections are held, when the Electoral College meets, and when the new President takes the oath of office. The Constitution also requires that the President must be a native born citizen of the United States, have lived in this country for at least fourteen years, and have attained the age of thirty-five.



April 30, 1789: George Washington taking Inaugural oath at Federal Hall, New York, NY
Source: National Archives

It even specifies the oath of office that the new President should swear or affirm. Beyond that, the Constitution says nothing about the Inaugural ceremony. The first Inauguration of George Washington occurred on April 30, 1789, in front of New York's Federal Hall. Our nation's first President took the oath of office on a balcony overlooking Wall Street. With the ceremony complete, the crowd below let out three big cheers and President Washington returned to the Senate chamber to deliver his brief Inaugural address. He called upon "That Almighty Being who rules over the universe" to assist the American people in finding "liberties and happiness" under "a government instituted by themselves."

1. *When and where was the Oath of Office established?*

2. *What does it require Presidents to say and do?*

First Inaugural Address of Franklin D. Roosevelt

SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 1933

I am certain that 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 Nation 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 vigor has met with that understanding and support of the people themselves which is essential to victory. 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 shrunken 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; 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.

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 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 know only the rules of a generation of self-seekers. They have no vision, and when there is no vision the people perish.

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 the 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 and moral stimulation of work no longer must be forgotten in the mad chase of evanescent profits. These dark days 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 and to our fellow men.

Recognition of the 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. Small wonder that confidence languishes, for it thrives only on honesty, on honor, on the sacredness of obligations, on faithful protection, on unselfish performance; without them it cannot live.

Restoration calls, however, not for changes in ethics alone. This Nation asks for action, and action now.

Our greatest primary task is to put people to work. This is no unsolvable problem if we face it wisely and courageously. It can be accomplished in part by direct recruiting by the Government itself, treating the task as we would treat the emergency of a war, but at the same time, through this employment, accomplishing greatly needed projects to stimulate and reorganize the use of our natural resources.

Hand in hand with this we must frankly recognize the overbalance of population in our industrial centers and, by engaging on a national scale in a redistribution, endeavor to provide a better use of the land for those best fitted for the land. The task can be helped by definite efforts to raise the values of agricultural products and with this the power to purchase the output of our cities. It can be helped by preventing realistically the tragedy of the growing loss through foreclosure of our small homes and our farms. It can be helped by insistence that the Federal, State, and local governments act forthwith on the demand that their cost be drastically reduced. It can be helped by the unifying of relief activities which today are often scattered, uneconomical, and unequal. It can be helped by national planning for and supervision of all forms of transportation and of communications and other utilities which have a definitely public character. There are many ways in which it can be helped, but it can never be helped merely by talking about it. We must act and act quickly.

Finally, in our progress toward a resumption of work we require two safeguards against a return of the evils of the old order; there must be a strict supervision of all banking and credits and investments; there must be an end to speculation with other people's money, and there must be provision for an adequate but sound currency.

There are the lines of attack. I shall presently urge upon a new Congress in special session detailed measures for their fulfillment, and I shall seek the immediate assistance of the several States.

Through this program of action we address ourselves to putting our own national house in order and making income balance outgo. Our international trade relations, though vastly important, are in point of time and necessity secondary to the establishment of a sound national economy. I favor as a practical policy the putting of first things first. I shall spare no effort to restore world trade by international economic readjustment, but the emergency at home cannot wait on that accomplishment.

The basic thought that guides these specific means of national recovery is not narrowly nationalistic. It is the insistence, as a first consideration, upon the interdependence of the various elements in all parts of the United States--a recognition of the old and permanently important manifestation of the American spirit of the pioneer. It is the way to recovery. It is the immediate way. It is the strongest assurance that the recovery will endure.

In the field of world policy I would dedicate this Nation to the policy of the good neighbor--the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the rights of others-- the neighbor who respects his obligations and respects the sanctity of his agreements in and with a world of neighbors.

If I read the temper of our people correctly, we now realize as we have never realized before our interdependence on each other; that we can not merely take but we must give as well; that if we are to go forward, we must move as a trained and loyal army willing to sacrifice for the good of a common discipline, because without such discipline no progress is made, no leadership becomes effective. We are, I know, ready and willing to submit our lives and property to such discipline, because it makes possible a leadership which aims at a larger good. This I propose to offer, pledging that the larger purposes will bind upon us all as a sacred obligation with a unity of duty hitherto evoked only in time of armed strife.

With this pledge taken, I assume unhesitatingly the leadership of this great army of our people dedicated to a disciplined attack upon our common problems.

Action in this image and to this end is feasible under the form of government which we have inherited from our ancestors. Our Constitution is so simple and practical that it is possible always to meet extraordinary needs by changes in emphasis and arrangement without loss of essential form. That is why our constitutional system has proved itself the most superbly enduring political mechanism the modern world has produced. It has met every stress of vast expansion of territory, of foreign wars, of bitter internal strife, of world relations.

It is to be hoped that the normal balance of executive and legislative authority may be wholly adequate to meet the unprecedented task before us. But it may be that an unprecedented demand and need for undelayed action may call for temporary departure from that normal balance of public procedure.

I am prepared under my constitutional duty to recommend the measures that a stricken nation in the midst of a stricken world may require. These measures, or such other measures as

the Congress may build out of its experience and wisdom, I shall seek, within my constitutional authority, to bring to speedy adoption.

But in the event that the Congress shall fail to take one of these two courses, and in the event that the national emergency is still critical, I shall not evade the clear course of duty that will then confront me. I shall ask the Congress for the one remaining instrument to meet the crisis--broad Executive power to wage a war against the emergency, as great as the power that would be given to me if we were in fact invaded by a foreign foe.

For the trust reposed in me I will return the courage and the devotion that befit the time. I can do no less.

We face the arduous days that lie before us in the warm courage of the national unity; with the clear consciousness of seeking old and precious moral values; with the clean satisfaction that comes from the stem performance of duty by old and young alike. We aim at the assurance of a rounded and permanent national life.

We do not distrust the future of essential democracy. The people of the United States have not failed. In their need they have registered a mandate that they want direct, vigorous action. They have asked for discipline and direction under leadership. They have made me the present instrument of their wishes. In the spirit of the gift I take it.

In this dedication of a Nation we humbly ask the blessing of God. May He protect each and every one of us. May He guide me in the days to come.

Inaugural Address of John F. Kennedy

FRIDAY, JANUARY 20, 1961

Vice President Johnson, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chief Justice, President Eisenhower, Vice President Nixon, President Truman, reverend clergy, fellow citizens, 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 forebears 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.

We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution. 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 by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, 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, 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 foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty.

This much we pledge--and more.

To those old allies whose cultural and spiritual origins we share, we pledge the loyalty of faithful friends. United, there is little we cannot do in a host of cooperative ventures. Divided, there is little we can do--for we dare not meet a powerful challenge at odds and split asunder.

To those new States whom we welcome to the ranks of the free, we pledge our word that one form of colonial control shall not have passed away merely to be replaced by a far more iron tyranny. We shall not always expect to find them supporting our view. But we shall always hope to find them strongly supporting their own freedom--and to remember that, in the past, those who foolishly sought power by riding the back of the tiger ended up inside.

To those peoples in the huts and villages across the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves, for whatever period is required--not because the Communists may be doing it, not because we seek their votes, but because it is right. If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.

To our sister republics south of our border, we offer a special pledge--to convert our good words into good deeds--in a new alliance for progress--to assist free men and free governments in casting off the chains of poverty. But this peaceful revolution of hope cannot become the prey of hostile powers. Let all our neighbors know that we shall join with them to oppose aggression or subversion anywhere in the Americas. And let every other power know that this Hemisphere intends to remain the master of its own house.

To that world assembly of sovereign states, the United Nations, our last best hope in an age where the instruments of war have far outpaced the instruments of peace, we renew our pledge of support--to prevent it from becoming merely a forum for invective--to strengthen its shield of the new and the weak--and to enlarge the area in which its writ may run.

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 beyond doubt 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 rightly 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.

So let us begin anew--remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof. Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate.

Let both sides explore what problems unite us instead of belaboring those problems which divide us.

Let both sides, for the first time, formulate serious and precise proposals for the inspection and control of arms--and bring the absolute power to destroy other nations under the absolute control of all nations.

Let both sides seek to invoke the wonders of science instead of its terrors. Together let us explore the stars, conquer the deserts, eradicate disease, tap the ocean depths, and encourage the arts and commerce.

Let both sides unite to heed in all corners of the earth the command of Isaiah--to "undo the heavy burdens ... and to let the oppressed go free."

And if a beachhead of cooperation may push back the jungle of suspicion, let both sides join in creating a new endeavor, not a new balance of power, but a new world of law, where the strong are just and the weak secure and the peace preserved.

All this will not be finished in the first 100 days. Nor will it be finished in the first 1,000 days, nor in the life of this Administration, nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin.

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 to give testimony to its national loyalty. The graves of young Americans who answered the call to service surround the globe.

Now the trumpet summons us again--not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need; not as a call to battle, though embattled 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"--a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself.

Can we forge 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 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.

Name_____ Date_____

My Oath of Citizenship

Directions: Work with your classmates to answer the following questions:

- For a democracy to be effective, what is the role of its citizens?

- If our nation is committed to solving problems home and abroad, what must citizens commit themselves to do?

- Ask yourself, "What can I do to be an informed, responsible citizen?"

- Is there a service-learning project I can work on to solve a problem in my community? Describe it.

- Are there things I can do or say on a daily basis that will end discrimination and ensure justice and equality for all people?

- Are there things I can do to influence or create public policies that will solve problems and ensure fair treatment of all people?

MY OATH OF CITIZENSHIP

I, _____ do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully fulfill the responsibilities of citizen of the United States of America and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. I will do this by…

_____ _____

Date Signature

Name_____ Date_____

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Assessment

Directions: Reflect upon the various activities you participated in and what you learned about Presidential Inaugural Ceremonies and why it is important for all citizens to make a commitment to act as responsible citizens in our American democracy. Answer the questions below using the notes and materials you gathered. Feel free to answer the questions by writing an essay, making an oral presentation and/or creating a display or poster. Your score will be based on your ability to include as much information as possible as described in the attached rubric.

1. What is the significance of the Oath of Office?

2. How do current events and ongoing conditions impact the content of Inaugural Addresses?

3. How can Inaugural Addresses challenge Americans to shape personal goals and commitments to uphold their responsibilities as informed, actively engaged citizens of the United States?

4. Why is it important for all Americans to take an Oath of Citizenship?

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By Paul Stahr, ca. 1917-18, Herbert Hoover Library,
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Developed by:

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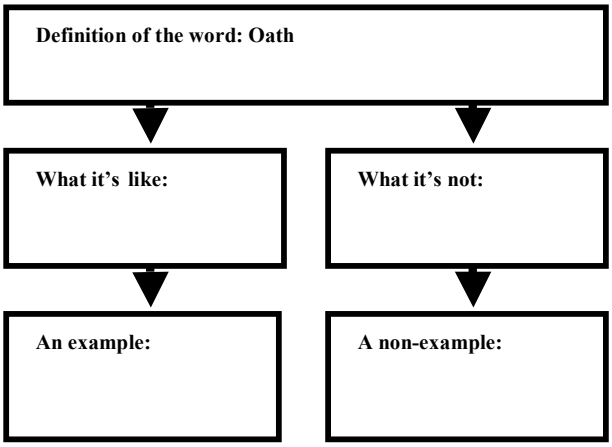
Procedure:

1. Introduction: Ask students, "What does it mean to take an oath?" Invite students to write their thoughts as a quickwrite activity and then share their thoughts in small group discussions.

2. Allow students to share thoughts with the entire class. Stretch the conversation by asking:
   - Why do people take oaths?
   - Why are they important?
   - Why is it important for people to follow through on an oath, in other words, to "keep their promise"?
   - How do we hold people accountable when they "break their promise"?

3. Vocabulary Development: Distribute copies of Handout #1. Ask students to think further about the concept of oaths by recording ideas in a graphic organizer similar to the one below. Encourage students to think of personal experiences when they or someone they knew took an oath to do something important.



Part Two: The Origin of the Oath of Office
Procedure:

1. Ask students, "Have you ever wondered how or why the Oath of Office was created? Engage students in dialogue to brainstorm how this American tradition began.

2. Distribute Handout #2 or direct students to the following web site to find the answers:
   Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies
   Presidential Swearing-In Ceremony
   http://inaugural.senate.gov/history/daysevents/potusswearingin01.cfm

3. Ask students to conduct research to answer the following questions:
   - When and where was the Oath of Office established?
   - What does it require Presidents to say and do?

Part Three: Inaugural Addresses: Why do Presidents say what they do?
Procedure:

1. Ask students to think about a time they had to give a speech or make an oral presentation. How much time did they spend preparing for the presentation? Why did it take so long?

2. Explain that when a President-elect prepares his Inaugural Address, he is paying careful attention to what he wants to say by thinking about the events that have occurred leading up to the Inauguration and what he wants to accomplish. This is his opportunity to explain his vision to the American public and the world. It is also an opportunity for him to call upon citizens to join him in his efforts.

3. Distribute Handout #3. Examine the first Inaugural Address from Franklin D. Roosevelt. Ask students to read the address and focus on the first paragraph that reads:

   ...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 vigor has met with that understanding and support of the people themselves which is essential to victory. I am convinced that you will again give that support to leadership in these critical days.

4. Distribute Handout #4 *A Call to Action* (located in *Take the Oath of Citizenship* Lesson Plan Part 2) and ask students to read through the remainder of FDR's Address to find clues to answer the following questions:
   - What events led up to the President's Inauguration Ceremony?
   - What was his vision and goals for America?
   - What did he ask the American public to do as responsible citizens? What was his *call to action*?

5. Distribute Handout #5. Examine the Inaugural Address of John F. Kennedy. Ask students to focus on the final paragraphs that read:

   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.

6. Again, using Handout #4 *A Call to Action,* ask students to read through the remainder of Kennedy's Address to find clues to answer the following questions:
   - What events led up to the President's Inauguration Ceremony?
   - What was his vision and goals for America?
   - What did he ask the American public to do as responsible citizens? What was his *call to action*?

Part Four: Create Your Own Oath of Citizenship
Procedure:

1. Ask students, "What do you think Barack Obama will talk about in his Inaugural Address?" Using Handout #4 ask students to collect information regarding the following:
   - What has occurred in recent history that has been of concern to President-elect Obama and the American people?
   - What is his vision and goals?

2. Ask students to brainstorm, "What will Barack Obama ask of the American public in his Inaugural Address?"

3. As students to listen or read Obama's Inaugural Speech on January 20, 2009. Ask them to record ideas on Handout #4.

4. Ask students to create their own Oath of Citizenship using Handout #6 *My Oath of Citizenship* by reflecting on the following questions:
   - For a democracy to be effective, what is the role of its citizens?
   - If our nation is committed to solving problems home and abroad, what must citizens commit themselves to do?
   - Ask yourself, "What can I do to be an informed, responsible citizen?"
   - Is there a service-learning project I can work on to solve a problem in my community? Describe it.
   - Are there things I can do or say on a daily basis that will end discrimination and ensure justice and equality for all people?
   - Are there things I can do to influence or create public policies that will solve problems and ensure fair treatment of all people?

5. Ask students to write out their personal Oath of Citizenship as a commitment to uphold their responsibility as a citizen of the United States. Encourage students to use art, music, and performance to present their oath aloud in either a small group or whole class setting.

Assessment:
Ask students to respond to the following prompts in a written, oral, or visual format. Review the directions and attached rubric with students to articulate the specific criteria for success. (The rubric is located in *Take the Oath of Citizenship* Lesson Plan Part 2)

1. What is the significance of the Oath of Office?
2. How do current events and ongoing conditions impact the content of Inaugural Addresses?
3. How can Inaugural Addresses challenge Americans to shape personal goals and commitments to uphold their responsibilities as informed, actively engaged citizens of the United States?
4. Why is it important for all Americans to take an Oath of Citizenship?

Handout #1

Name_____ Date_____

What Does It Mean to Take an Oath?

Definition of the word: Oath

What it's like:

What it's not:

An example:

A non-example:

Name_____ Date_____

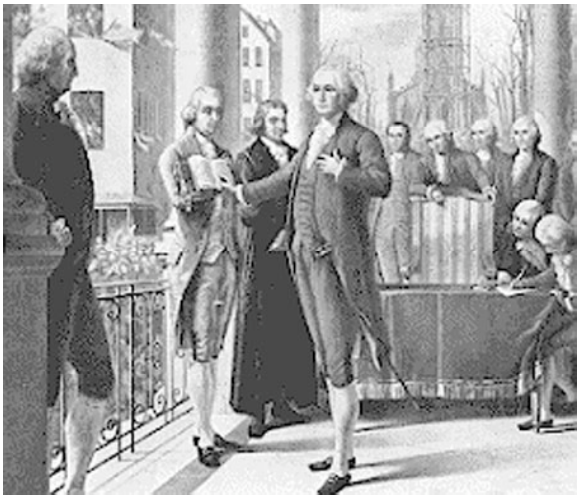
Presidential Swearing-In Ceremony

Part 1 of 6
Source: Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies
Presidential Swearing-In Ceremony
http://inaugural.senate.gov/history/daysevents/potusswearingin01.cfm

"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

—Presidential oath of office, Article II, Section 1, United States Constitution

Proceedings associated with the Presidential elections and Inaugurations, almost routine after two centuries, were entirely new and untried following the Constitutional Convention of 1787. The Constitution provides that the President be elected through an electoral college, with membership equal to the number of Senators and Representatives from each state. It authorizes Congress to determine when elections are held, when the Electoral College meets, and when the new President takes the oath of office. The Constitution also requires that the President must be a native born citizen of the United States, have lived in this country for at least fourteen years, and have attained the age of thirty-five.



April 30, 1789: George Washington taking Inaugural oath at Federal Hall, New York, NY
Source: National Archives

It even specifies the oath of office that the new President should swear or affirm. Beyond that, the Constitution says nothing about the Inaugural ceremony. The first Inauguration of George Washington occurred on April 30, 1789, in front of New York's Federal Hall. Our nation's first President took the oath of office on a balcony overlooking Wall Street. With the ceremony complete, the crowd below let out three big cheers and President Washington returned to the Senate chamber to deliver his brief Inaugural address. He called upon "That Almighty Being who rules over the universe" to assist the American people in finding "liberties and happiness" under "a government instituted by themselves."

1. *When and where was the Oath of Office established?*

2. *What does it require Presidents to say and do?*

First Inaugural Address of Franklin D. Roosevelt

SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 1933

I am certain that 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 Nation 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 vigor has met with that understanding and support of the people themselves which is essential to victory. 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 shrunken 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; 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.

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 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 know only the rules of a generation of self-seekers. They have no vision, and when there is no vision the people perish.

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 the 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 and moral stimulation of work no longer must be forgotten in the mad chase of evanescent profits. These dark days 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 and to our fellow men.

Recognition of the 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. Small wonder that confidence languishes, for it thrives only on honesty, on honor, on the sacredness of obligations, on faithful protection, on unselfish performance; without them it cannot live.

Restoration calls, however, not for changes in ethics alone. This Nation asks for action, and action now.

Our greatest primary task is to put people to work. This is no unsolvable problem if we face it wisely and courageously. It can be accomplished in part by direct recruiting by the Government itself, treating the task as we would treat the emergency of a war, but at the same time, through this employment, accomplishing greatly needed projects to stimulate and reorganize the use of our natural resources.

Hand in hand with this we must frankly recognize the overbalance of population in our industrial centers and, by engaging on a national scale in a redistribution, endeavor to provide a better use of the land for those best fitted for the land. The task can be helped by definite efforts to raise the values of agricultural products and with this the power to purchase the output of our cities. It can be helped by preventing realistically the tragedy of the growing loss through foreclosure of our small homes and our farms. It can be helped by insistence that the Federal, State, and local governments act forthwith on the demand that their cost be drastically reduced. It can be helped by the unifying of relief activities which today are often scattered, uneconomical, and unequal. It can be helped by national planning for and supervision of all forms of transportation and of communications and other utilities which have a definitely public character. There are many ways in which it can be helped, but it can never be helped merely by talking about it. We must act and act quickly.

Finally, in our progress toward a resumption of work we require two safeguards against a return of the evils of the old order; there must be a strict supervision of all banking and credits and investments; there must be an end to speculation with other people's money, and there must be provision for an adequate but sound currency.

There are the lines of attack. I shall presently urge upon a new Congress in special session detailed measures for their fulfillment, and I shall seek the immediate assistance of the several States.

Through this program of action we address ourselves to putting our own national house in order and making income balance outgo. Our international trade relations, though vastly important, are in point of time and necessity secondary to the establishment of a sound national economy. I favor as a practical policy the putting of first things first. I shall spare no effort to restore world trade by international economic readjustment, but the emergency at home cannot wait on that accomplishment.

The basic thought that guides these specific means of national recovery is not narrowly nationalistic. It is the insistence, as a first consideration, upon the interdependence of the various elements in all parts of the United States--a recognition of the old and permanently important manifestation of the American spirit of the pioneer. It is the way to recovery. It is the immediate way. It is the strongest assurance that the recovery will endure.

In the field of world policy I would dedicate this Nation to the policy of the good neighbor--the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the rights of others-- the neighbor who respects his obligations and respects the sanctity of his agreements in and with a world of neighbors.

If I read the temper of our people correctly, we now realize as we have never realized before our interdependence on each other; that we can not merely take but we must give as well; that if we are to go forward, we must move as a trained and loyal army willing to sacrifice for the good of a common discipline, because without such discipline no progress is made, no leadership becomes effective. We are, I know, ready and willing to submit our lives and property to such discipline, because it makes possible a leadership which aims at a larger good. This I propose to offer, pledging that the larger purposes will bind upon us all as a sacred obligation with a unity of duty hitherto evoked only in time of armed strife.

With this pledge taken, I assume unhesitatingly the leadership of this great army of our people dedicated to a disciplined attack upon our common problems.

Action in this image and to this end is feasible under the form of government which we have inherited from our ancestors. Our Constitution is so simple and practical that it is possible always to meet extraordinary needs by changes in emphasis and arrangement without loss of essential form. That is why our constitutional system has proved itself the most superbly enduring political mechanism the modern world has produced. It has met every stress of vast expansion of territory, of foreign wars, of bitter internal strife, of world relations.

It is to be hoped that the normal balance of executive and legislative authority may be wholly adequate to meet the unprecedented task before us. But it may be that an unprecedented demand and need for undelayed action may call for temporary departure from that normal balance of public procedure.

I am prepared under my constitutional duty to recommend the measures that a stricken nation in the midst of a stricken world may require. These measures, or such other measures as

the Congress may build out of its experience and wisdom, I shall seek, within my constitutional authority, to bring to speedy adoption.

But in the event that the Congress shall fail to take one of these two courses, and in the event that the national emergency is still critical, I shall not evade the clear course of duty that will then confront me. I shall ask the Congress for the one remaining instrument to meet the crisis--broad Executive power to wage a war against the emergency, as great as the power that would be given to me if we were in fact invaded by a foreign foe.

For the trust reposed in me I will return the courage and the devotion that befit the time. I can do no less.

We face the arduous days that lie before us in the warm courage of the national unity; with the clear consciousness of seeking old and precious moral values; with the clean satisfaction that comes from the stem performance of duty by old and young alike. We aim at the assurance of a rounded and permanent national life.

We do not distrust the future of essential democracy. The people of the United States have not failed. In their need they have registered a mandate that they want direct, vigorous action. They have asked for discipline and direction under leadership. They have made me the present instrument of their wishes. In the spirit of the gift I take it.

In this dedication of a Nation we humbly ask the blessing of God. May He protect each and every one of us. May He guide me in the days to come.

Inaugural Address of John F. Kennedy

FRIDAY, JANUARY 20, 1961

Vice President Johnson, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chief Justice, President Eisenhower, Vice President Nixon, President Truman, reverend clergy, fellow citizens, 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 forebears 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.

We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution. 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 by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, 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, 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 foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty.

This much we pledge--and more.

To those old allies whose cultural and spiritual origins we share, we pledge the loyalty of faithful friends. United, there is little we cannot do in a host of cooperative ventures. Divided, there is little we can do--for we dare not meet a powerful challenge at odds and split asunder.

To those new States whom we welcome to the ranks of the free, we pledge our word that one form of colonial control shall not have passed away merely to be replaced by a far more iron tyranny. We shall not always expect to find them supporting our view. But we shall always hope to find them strongly supporting their own freedom--and to remember that, in the past, those who foolishly sought power by riding the back of the tiger ended up inside.

To those peoples in the huts and villages across the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves, for whatever period is required--not because the Communists may be doing it, not because we seek their votes, but because it is right. If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.

To our sister republics south of our border, we offer a special pledge--to convert our good words into good deeds--in a new alliance for progress--to assist free men and free governments in casting off the chains of poverty. But this peaceful revolution of hope cannot become the prey of hostile powers. Let all our neighbors know that we shall join with them to oppose aggression or subversion anywhere in the Americas. And let every other power know that this Hemisphere intends to remain the master of its own house.

To that world assembly of sovereign states, the United Nations, our last best hope in an age where the instruments of war have far outpaced the instruments of peace, we renew our pledge of support--to prevent it from becoming merely a forum for invective--to strengthen its shield of the new and the weak--and to enlarge the area in which its writ may run.

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 beyond doubt 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 rightly 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.

So let us begin anew--remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof. Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate.

Let both sides explore what problems unite us instead of belaboring those problems which divide us.

Let both sides, for the first time, formulate serious and precise proposals for the inspection and control of arms--and bring the absolute power to destroy other nations under the absolute control of all nations.

Let both sides seek to invoke the wonders of science instead of its terrors. Together let us explore the stars, conquer the deserts, eradicate disease, tap the ocean depths, and encourage the arts and commerce.

Let both sides unite to heed in all corners of the earth the command of Isaiah--to "undo the heavy burdens ... and to let the oppressed go free."

And if a beachhead of cooperation may push back the jungle of suspicion, let both sides join in creating a new endeavor, not a new balance of power, but a new world of law, where the strong are just and the weak secure and the peace preserved.

All this will not be finished in the first 100 days. Nor will it be finished in the first 1,000 days, nor in the life of this Administration, nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin.

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 to give testimony to its national loyalty. The graves of young Americans who answered the call to service surround the globe.

Now the trumpet summons us again--not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need; not as a call to battle, though embattled 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"--a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself.

Can we forge 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 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.

Name_____ Date_____

My Oath of Citizenship

Directions: Work with your classmates to answer the following questions:

- For a democracy to be effective, what is the role of its citizens?

- If our nation is committed to solving problems home and abroad, what must citizens commit themselves to do?

- Ask yourself, "What can I do to be an informed, responsible citizen?"

- Is there a service-learning project I can work on to solve a problem in my community? Describe it.

- Are there things I can do or say on a daily basis that will end discrimination and ensure justice and equality for all people?

- Are there things I can do to influence or create public policies that will solve problems and ensure fair treatment of all people?

MY OATH OF CITIZENSHIP

I, _____ do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully fulfill the responsibilities of citizen of the United States of America and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. I will do this by…

_____ _____

Date Signature

Name_____ Date_____

Inauguration 2009: A Call to Action for All Americans
Take the Oath of Citizenship

Assessment

Directions: Reflect upon the various activities you participated in and what you learned about Presidential Inaugural Ceremonies and why it is important for all citizens to make a commitment to act as responsible citizens in our American democracy. Answer the questions below using the notes and materials you gathered. Feel free to answer the questions by writing an essay, making an oral presentation and/or creating a display or poster. Your score will be based on your ability to include as much information as possible as described in the attached rubric.

1. What is the significance of the Oath of Office?

2. How do current events and ongoing conditions impact the content of Inaugural Addresses?

3. How can Inaugural Addresses challenge Americans to shape personal goals and commitments to uphold their responsibilities as informed, actively engaged citizens of the United States?

4. Why is it important for all Americans to take an Oath of Citizenship?