

DID YOU KNOW?

On Tuesday, President Trump is scheduled to give the 2020 State of the Union speech.

PLEASE READ THE INFORMATION BELOW. Pay attention to any questions I ask you to answer as you read.



The State of the Union is an **annual** speech (given every year) by the President of the United States to the U.S. Congress. The President reports on how the U.S. is doing and shares his or her future plans and priorities. George Washington gave the first State of the Union address on January 8, 1790. How long ago was that? _____

Did you know there is a proper protocol to the State of the Union Address? It goes like this:

A formal invitation is made to the President from the Congress. He or she cannot give the speech without the invitation. At approximately 8:30 p.m., on the evening of the address, Congress gathers in their seats for a **joint session**. A joint session is when both the House of Representatives *and* the Senate get together. Notice the word join is in the word joint. Joint sessions only happen on special occasions like the presidential inauguration or the State of the Union. The House Majority Leader loudly announces the Vice President and members of the Senate. They enter and take assigned seats. More formal announcements are made and then just after 9 p.m., as the President reaches the door to the chamber, it is announced, "Mister [or Madam] Speaker... The President of the United States!"

As applause and cheering begin, the President walks toward the podium. It takes him (or her) a while because he has to pause to shake hands, hug, kiss, and autograph copies of his speech. Finally, the Speaker of the House states, **"Members of Congress, I have the high privilege and distinct honor of presenting to you the President of the United States."** This leads to a further round of applause and, after much clapping; it is time for the President's address.

George Washington's first speech was 1089 words. From what I can see, they got longer and longer as they headed into the late 1800's and early 1900's - when some were close to 30,000 words. Those were written and not spoken. The longest spoken state of the union was Bill Clinton's in 1995. It lasted 1 hour 25 minutes. You can see the amount of words each president spoke by clicking the link

<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/presidential-documents-archive-guidebook/annual-messages-congress-the-state-the-union-3>

These days, State of the Union speeches usually last a little over an hour. There is a lot of applause so it takes a long time for the President to get through it. Traditionally democrats and republicans sit separately and clap at different times. The Supreme Court rarely applauds in order to look unbiased. In 2011, after U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords was shot, Senator Mark Udall asked for members of congress from different political parties to sit together, and it worked! Congress mixed it up. Unfortunately it hasn't happened since then. What do you think I will focus on in my state of the union? Please write your ideas here or in your scribblers.