

# DID YOU KNOW?

**On Tuesday, at 9 pm, President Trump gave his 2nd State of the Union speech.**

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

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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. In 2014, four years ago, President Obama's speech began this way:

**Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, Members of Congress, my fellow Americans: Today in America, a teacher spent extra time with a student who needed it, and did her part to lift America's graduation rate to its highest level in more than three decades. An entrepreneur flipped on the lights in her tech startup, and did her part to add to the more than eight million new jobs our businesses have created over the past four years. An autoworker fine-tuned some of the best, most fuel-efficient cars in the world, and did his part to help America wean itself off foreign oil.**

(The whole speech was 6718 words.) George Washington's first speech was 1089. What was the difference between the amount of words each president spoke? You can see the length of every State of the Union Address by clicking the link

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. This year, many women wore white to honor women suffragists. I decided that on the occasion of the State of the Union, it would be good if I wrote one for you too. What do you think I will focus on? Please write your ideas in your scribblers. You do not need to write in complete sentences. Did your ideas match?