

The State of the Union Address

Exploring the Constitution

Instructions: Read the excerpt below from the U.S. Constitution. Mark any words or phrases that you do not understand. Then, rewrite the excerpt in your own words in the blank space below. Be prepared to share your answer with your classmates.

“[The president] shall from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union, and recommend to their Consideration such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient.”

– Article II, Section 3, Clause 1 of the U.S. Constitution

Facts about the State of the Union Address

- In 1790, George Washington began the tradition of delivering an annual address, then called the “Annual Message,” before a joint session of Congress.
- In 1801, Thomas Jefferson submitted an Annual Message to the House and Senate in writing instead of offering a speech.
- It was not until 1913, the year that Woodrow Wilson was inaugurated as president, that the Annual Message was delivered in person again.
- The Annual Message became known as the State of the Union Address in 1947.
- President Trump’s State of the Union Address on February 4, 2020 marks the 98th annual presidential speech given in person.