

American Speaker's
100
BEST
QUOTES
FOR 2005

*Compiled by Aram Bakshian Jr.
Editor in chief*



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Dear public speaker,

First impressions can *really* matter. So, what better way to start off your next speech than with a powerful, memorable quotation?

We've searched scores of sources to identify these 100 powerful quotations that will help you bond with your audience, start your speech off on the right foot or add a little humor to your talk.

For quick reference, check out the table of contents, organized by topic. Or go to the index in the back of this booklet for a listing by author.

And for even more, *American Speaker* subscribers may search the subscribers-only Web site at **www.americanspeaker.com** for a virtual encyclopedia of thousands of powerful and effective quotations. FREE for *American Speaker* subscribers only.

To your successful speaking,



William G. Dugan
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A **ACTING**

“People keep asking me, ‘What evil lurks in you to play such bad characters?’ There is no evil in me, I just wear tight underwear.”

— *Dennis Hopper, actor (1936-)*

AGE

“All that I know I learned after I was thirty.”

— *Georges Clemenceau, French statesman (1841-1929)*

AMERICANS

“You can kind of hit us and make us stumble a little ... but we have a way of coming back.”

— *Ray Charles, American musician and composer (1918-2004)*

ARGUMENT

“I love argument. I love debate. I don’t expect anyone just to sit there and agree with me. That’s not their job.”

— *Margaret Thatcher, former British prime minister (1925-)*

**B
BEVERLY HILLS**

“Drug kingpin Amado Carrillo Fuentes ... died from nine hours of liposuction and plastic surgery—or, as it’s commonly known here in Beverly Hills, natural causes.”

— *Bill Maher, contemporary TV talk show host (1956-)*

BIGAMY

“Bigamy is one way of avoiding the painful publicity of divorce and the expense of alimony.”

— *Oliver Herford, humorist and illustrator (1863-1935)*

BREVITY

“Good things, when short, are twice as good.”

— *Baltasar Gracián, Spanish writer and Jesuit (1601-1658)*

“I have made this letter longer than usual, only because I have not had the time to make it shorter.”

— *Blaise Pascal, French mathematician and philosopher (1623-1662)*

C**CHILDREN**

“Before I got married I had six theories about bringing up children; now I have six children and no theories.”

— *John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, English poet and wit (1647-1680)*

CIVILITY

“I have had a lot of adversaries in my political life, but no enemies that I can remember.”

— *Gerald R. Ford, 38th President of the United States (1913-)*

CLASS REUNIONS

“I just went to my 60th reunion at Smith College and hated every minute of it. Everyone was old and let their hair go gray and didn’t wear any makeup. I hated it. I’m never going back to another one.”

— *Julia Child, chef and author (1912-)*

COMEDY

“Comedy, we may say, is society protecting itself— with a smile.”

— *J.P. Priestley, English novelist and dramatist (1894-1984)*

CONFORMITY

“When people are free to do as they please, they usually imitate each other.”

— *Eric Hoffer, longshoreman and philosopher (1902-1983)*

CONGRESS

“With Congress, every time they make a joke it’s a law; and every time they make a law it’s a joke.”

— *Will Rogers, humorist and actor (1879-1935)*

CONSERVATIVES

“A conservative is a man with two perfectly good legs who has never learned to walk.”

— *Franklin D. Roosevelt, 32nd President of the United States (1882-1945)*

D **DEATH**

“Death is an acquired trait.”

— *Woody Allen, humorist, actor and director*
(1935-)

DIETING

“My advice if you insist on slimming: Eat as much as you like—just don’t swallow it.”

— *Harry Secombe, British entertainer*
(1921-2001)

DINING

“The best number for a dinner party is two—myself and a damn good head waiter.”

— *Nubar Gulbenkian, Anglo-Armenian oil magnate and bon vivant* (1896-1972)

DIPLOMACY

“I have discovered the art of fooling diplomats; I speak the truth and they never believe me.”

— *Count Camillo Benso di Cavour, Italian statesman (1810-1861)*

“Diplomacy: lying in state.”

— *Oliver Herford, humorist and illustrator (1863-1935)*

“A diplomat is a man who always remembers a woman’s birthday but never remembers her age.”

— *Robert Frost, poet (1875-1963)*

DOGS

“If dogs could talk, perhaps we’d find it just as hard to get along with them as we do people.”

— *Karel Capek, Czech journalist and author (1890-1938)*

E **ECONOMISTS**

“If all economists were laid end to end, they would not reach a conclusion.”

— *George Bernard Shaw, Irish playwright (1856-1950)*

EGOTISM

“The greatest of faults, I should say, is to be conscious of none.”

— *Thomas Carlyle, Scottish author (1795-1881)*

EUTHANASIA

“Euthanasia is a long, smooth-sounding word, and it conceals its danger as long, smooth words do. But the danger is there, nevertheless.”

— *Pearl S. Buck, novelist (1892-1973)*

F **FAILURE**

“When you’re down and out, something always turns up—and it’s usually the noses of your friends.”

— *Orson Welles, actor, director and producer (1915-1985)*

FAITH

“I know in my heart that man is good. That what is right will always eventually triumph. And there’s purpose and worth to each and every life.”

— *Ronald Reagan, 40th President of the United States (1911-2004)*

FANTASIES

“I have fantasies about being a suburban housewife.”

— *Madonna, American singer and actress (1959-)*

FLATTERY

“Flatterers look like friends, as wolves like dogs.”
— *George Chapman, English poet and dramatist*
(1559?-1634)

FOREIGN AID

“Our foreign dealings are an open book—generally a check book.”
— *Will Rogers, humorist and actor* (1879-1935)

G**GENERALIZATIONS**

“To generalize is to be an idiot.”
— *William Blake, English poet* (1757-1827)

“All generalizations are dangerous, even this one.”
— *Alexandre Dumas the Younger, French writer*
(1824-1895)

GREED

“He that is of the opinion money will do everything may well be suspected of doing everything for money.”

— *Benjamin Franklin, Founding Father, inventor and philosopher (1706-1790)*

H
HAPPINESS

“Happiness is a mystery like religion, and should never be rationalized.”

— *G.K. Chesterton, English writer (1874-1936)*

HATRED

“If you hate a person, you hate something in him that is part of yourself. What isn't part of ourselves doesn't disturb us.”

— *Hermann Hesse, German novelist and poet (1877-1962)*

HUSBANDS

“Husbands are like fires. They go out when unattended.”

— *Zsa Zsa Gabor, Hungarian-American actress (1918?-)*

HYPOCRISY

“Hypocrisy is the homage paid by vice to virtue.”

— *Duc de la Rochefoucauld, French aphorist (1613-1680)*

**IDLENESS**

“The less one has to do, the less time one finds to do it in.”

— *Lord Chesterfield, English statesman and man of letters (1694-1773)*

IMAGE

“I was born at the age of 12 on a Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer lot.”

— *Judy Garland, film actress and singer*
(1922-1969)

INFLATION

“Having a little inflation is like being a little pregnant.”

— *Leon Henderson, economist (1895-1986)*


JACKASSES

“I have never seen an ass who talked like a human being, but I have met many human beings who talked like asses.”

— *Heinrich Heine, German poet and essayist*
(1797-1856)

JAZZ

“The basic difference between classical music and jazz is that in the former the music is always greater than the performance—whereas the way jazz is performed is always more important than what is being played.”

— *André Previn, conductor (1929-)*

K
KINDNESS

“The purpose of human life is to serve and to show compassion and the will to help others.”

— *Albert Schweitzer, German medical missionary, musician and humanitarian (1875-1965)*

KNOWLEDGE

“Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.”

— *Hebrew proverb*

L
LAW

“Where law ends, tyranny begins.”

— *William Pitt the Elder, English statesman and orator (1708-1778)*

“The trouble with law is lawyers.”

— *Clarence Darrow, lawyer (1857-1938)*

LIBERALS

“I tell people don’t kill all the liberals, leave enough around so we can have two on every campus—living fossils—so we will never forget what these people stood for.”

— *Rush Limbaugh, talk radio host (1951-)*

LIFE

“Life is made up of sobs, sniffles and smiles, with sniffles predominating.”

— *O. Henry (pen name of William Sydney Porter), short story writer (1862-1910)*

LOOK-ALIKES

“Jon Bon Jovi and I have a lot in common. Jon Bon Jovi plays the guitar; I like to play the guitar. Jon Bon Jovi wears a leather jacket; I like to wear a leather jacket. Jon Bon Jovi was one of the 50 most beautiful people in *People* magazine; I like to read *People* magazine.”

— *John Kerry, (1943-), U.S. senator and 2004 Democratic presidential candidate*

M **MACHINES**

“One machine can do the work of 50 ordinary men. No machine can do the work of one extraordinary man.”

— *Elbert Hubbard, writer and philosopher*
(1856-1915)

MARRIAGE

“Marriage is a feast where the grace is sometimes better than the dinner.”

— *Charles Caleb Colton, English clergyman*
(1780-1832)

MIDDLE AGE

“Middle age: when you begin to exchange your emotions for symptoms.”

— *Irwin S. Cobb, journalist and humorist*
(1876-1944)

MIRACLES

“It would have approached nearer the idea of a miracle if Jonah had swallowed the whale.”

— *Thomas Paine, Anglo-American political philosopher and pamphleteer (1737-1809)*

MOVIES

“A wide screen just makes a bad film twice as bad.”

— *Samuel Goldwyn, Polish-American film producer (1882-1974)*

MURDER

“I made a remark a long time ago. I said I was very pleased that television was now showing murder stories, because it’s bringing murder back into its rightful setting—in the home.”

— *Alfred Hitchcock, British film director (1899-1980)*

N NEW YORK CITY

“When people come together, flowers always flourish—the air is rich with the aroma of a new spring. Take New York, the dynamic metropolis. What makes New York so special? It’s the invitation of the Statue of Liberty—give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses who yearn to breathe free. Not restricted to English only.”

— *Rev. Jesse Jackson, American clergyman and activist (1941-)*

“OK, sure there’s gridlock, sure there’s pollution, sure there’s noise, but where else can you get a hot dog for \$7?”

— *David Letterman, TV talk-show host (1947-)*

NIGHT

“Night was created so that we might consider what we did during the day.”

— *Hebrew proverb*

O OSCAR AWARDS

“I never had so many women ask me, ‘Can I touch it?’ Sadly, they were talking about the statuette.”

— *Ben Affleck, American actor and screenwriter (1972-)*

P PERSISTENCE

“Consider the postage stamp: Its usefulness consists in the ability to stick to one thing till it gets there.”

— *Josh Billings (pen name of Henry Wheeler Shaw), humorist (1818-1885)*

PLATITUDES

“I think our tolerance of political platitudes has increased. I call it the guffaw threshold. We need to guffaw more at what politicians say.”

— *Arianna Huffington, contemporary commentator (1950-)*

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

“Reciting the Pledge, or listening to others recite it, is a patriotic exercise, not a religious one. Participants promise fidelity to our flag and our nation, not to any particular God, faith or church.”

— *William H. Rehnquist, U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice (1924-)*

POETRY

“Even when poetry has a meaning, as it usually has, it may be inadvisable to draw it out ... Perfect understanding will sometimes almost extinguish pleasure.”

— *A.E. Houseman, British poet (1859-1936)*

PRESIDENCY

“No man is good enough to be president but someone has to be.”

— *Abraham Lincoln, 16th President of the United States (1809-1865)*

“The president hears a hundred voices telling him that he is the greatest man in the world. He must listen carefully to hear the one voice that tells him he is not.”

— *Harry S. Truman, 33rd President of the United States (1884-1972)*

“Oh, that lovely title, ex-President.”

— *Dwight D. Eisenhower, 34th President of the United States (1890-1969)*

PROSTATE CANCER

“Half of the U.S. Congress has prostate cancer because they express their male energy only through predatory intelligence.”

— *Deepak Chopra, contemporary pop guru (1947-)*

Q QUOTATIONS

“The nicest thing about quotes is that they give us a nodding acquaintance with the originator, which is often socially impressive.”

— *Kenneth Williams, British comic actor*
(1926-1988)

R RACISM

“Being a star has made it possible for me to get insulted in places where the average Negro could never hope to get insulted.”

— *Sammy Davis Jr., American entertainer*
(1925-1990)

RACONTEURS

“A good storyteller is a person who has a good memory and hopes other people haven’t.”

— *Irwin S. Cobb, journalist and humorist (1876-1944)*

READING

“It amazes me when I talk to people in their 20s and they’ve never read the classics ... When you don’t have knowledge and understanding, then fear rises in you. Knowledge ... gives people the tools to deal with change.”

— *Madonna, American singer and actress (1959-)*

RECESSION

“Recession is when a neighbor loses his job; depression is when you lose yours.”

— *Ronald Reagan, 40th President of the United States (1911-2004)*

REPUTATION

“I had rather men should ask why no statue has been erected in my honor, than why one has.”

— *Cato, Roman statesman (234-149 B.C.)*

RISK

“Take calculated risks. That is quite different from being rash.”

— *Gen. George S. Patton Jr., World War II commander (1885-1945)*

“Take a chance! All life is a chance. The man who goes furthest is generally the one who is willing to do and dare.”

— *Dale Carnegie, self-help book author (1888-1955)*

S **SENATE**

“Do you pray for the senators, Dr. Hale?’ ‘No, I look at the senators and I pray for the country.’”

— *Rev. Edward Everett Hale, clergyman and writer (1822-1909)*

SKYDIVING

“I just have one question: Why does he keep jumping out of perfectly good airplanes?”

— *Former first lady Barbara Bush (1925-), commenting on her husband’s parachute jumps on his 75th and 80th birthdays*

SLIP OF THE TONGUE

“A slip of the foot is better than a slip of the tongue.”

— *Hebrew proverb*

SMOKING

“I must point out that my rule of life prescribes as an absolutely sacred rite smoking cigars and also the drinking of alcohol before, after, and if need be during all meals and in the intervals between them.”

— *Sir Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister and statesman (1874-1965)*

“If you resolve to give up smoking, drinking and loving, you don’t actually live longer; it just seems longer.”

— *Clement Freud, British politician, writer and broadcaster (1924-)*

SOCIALISM

“It is a socialist idea that making profits is a vice; I consider the real vice is making losses.”

— *Sir Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister and statesman (1874-1965)*

SNUB

“Your works will be read after Shakespeare and Milton are forgotten—and not till then.”

— *Richard Porson, English classicist (1759-1808), giving his opinion of his writing to poet Robert Southey*

SOLAR POWER

“If sunbeams were weapons of war, we would have had solar energy centuries ago.”

— *Sir George Porter, English chemist and Nobel laureate (1920-)*

STATESMANSHIP

“A politician thinks of the next election; a statesman, of the next generation.”

— *James Freeman Clarke, clergyman (1810-1888)*

T **TELEVISION NEWS**

“Look, half the time when I see the evening news, I wouldn’t be for me either.”

— *Bill Clinton, 42nd President of the United States (1946-)*

THRIFT

“He that is rich need not live sparingly, and he that can live sparingly need not be rich.”

— *Benjamin Franklin, Founding Father, inventor and philosopher (1706-1790)*

TIME

“We must use time as a tool, not as a couch.”

— *John F. Kennedy, 35th President of the United States (1917-1963)*

U**UNDERSTANDING**

“I used to tell my husband that, if he could make me understand something, it would be clear to all the other people in the country.”

— *Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of President Franklin Roosevelt (1884-1962)*

V**VICE**

“Whenever I’m caught between two evils, I take the one I’ve never tried.”

— *Mae West, actress (1892-1980)*

W WEALTH

“Many speak the truth when they say that they despise riches, but they mean the riches possessed by other men.”

— *Charles Caleb Colton, English clergyman (1780-1832)*

WESTERNS

“It is easier to get an actor to be a cowboy than to get a cowboy to be an actor.”

— *John Ford, film director (1895-1973)*

WINE

“Who loves not wine, woman and song,
Remains a fool his whole life long.”

— *Martin Luther, German Protestant leader and founder of Lutheranism (1483-1546)*

“The dipsomaniac and the abstainer both make the same mistake: They both regard wine as a drug and not as a drink.”

— *G.K. Chesterton, English man of letters (1874-1936)*

WINNING

“Winning isn’t everything, but wanting to win is.”

— *Vince Lombardi, football coach (1913-1970)*

WOMEN

“All women are good—good for nothing, or good for something.”

— *Miguel de Cervantes, Spanish author (1547-1616)*

“Very ugly or very beautiful women should be flattered on their understanding, mediocre ones on their beauty.”

— *Lord Chesterfield, English statesman and man of letters (1694-1773)*

“I’m not denying that women are foolish; God Almighty made them to match the men.”

— *George Eliot (pen name of Mary Ann Evans), English novelist (1819-1880)*

Y **YOUTH**

“Almost everything that is great has been done by youth.”

— *Benjamin Disraeli, British Prime Minister and writer (1804-1881)*

“It is the malady of our age that the young are so busy teaching us that they have no time left to learn.”

— *Eric Hoffer, longshoreman and philosopher (1902-1983)*

Z
ZEAL

“You are never dedicated to something you have complete confidence in. No one is fanatically shouting that the sun is going to rise tomorrow. They know it’s going to rise tomorrow. When people are fanatically dedicated to political or religious faiths or any other kind of dogmas or goals, it’s always because these dogmas or goals are in doubt.”

— *Robert T. Pirsig, writer (1928-)*

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“You can kind of hit us [Americans] and make us stumble a little ... but we have a way of coming back.”

— *Ray Charles, American musician and composer (1918-2004)*

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