

## STEP 3: READING A SPEECH.



### A/ « YES WE CAN », the speech.

It was a creed written into the founding documents that declared the destiny of a nation: Yes, we can.

It was whispered by slaves and abolitionists as they blazed a trail towards freedom through the darkest of nights: Yes, we can.

It was sung by immigrants as they struck out from distant shores and pioneers who pushed westward against an unforgiving wilderness: Yes, we can.

It was the call of workers who organized, women who reached for the ballot, a president who chose the moon as our new frontier, and a king who took us to the mountaintop and pointed the way to the promised land: Yes, we can, to justice and equality.

Yes, we can, to opportunity and prosperity. Yes, we can heal this nation. Yes, we can repair this world. Yes, we can.

And so, tomorrow, as we take the campaign south and west, as we learn that the struggles of the textile workers in Spartanburg are not so different than the plight of the dishwasher in Las Vegas, that the hopes of the little girl who goes to the crumbling school in Dillon are the same as the dreams of the boy who learns on the streets of L.A., we will remember that there is something happening in America, that we are not as divided as our politics suggest, that we are one people, we are one nation.

And, together, we will begin the next great chapter in the American story, with three words that will ring from coast to coast, from sea to shining sea: Yes, we can.

Thank you new Hampshire!

Senator Barack Obama, January 2008, New Hampshire

#### VOCABULARY :

- A **creed** = une croyance
- To **whisper** = chuchoter
- To **blaze** = filer à toute allure
- Struck out (to streak out)** =
- Shores** = les côtes
- Westward** = vers l'ouest
- Unforgiving wilderness** = la Nature implacable
- To **heal** = soigner, guérir
- Ahead** = devant
- No matter** = quelque soit
- Loud** = fort, bruyant
- Reality check** = faire le point de manière réaliste
- To **warn against** = mettre en garde contre
- Unlikely** = improbable
- Crumbling** = qui tombe en miettes

**LOOK at the text:** When did Obama make this speech? What was Obama's job at that time? What does it mean?

- 2. LISTEN:** → Underline the words that are STRESSED by Obama.  
 → Mark the PAUSES: / for a simple pause, // for long pauses.  
 → What is the effect of these pauses?

**3; ANALYSIS:** Read the speech and pick up the repetitions, the places Obama quotes and the references to American History.

1. REPETITIONS	2. PLACES OF THE USA	3. REFERENCES TO AMERICAN HISTORY	

→ Do you think Barack Obama was inspired by MLK's speech? Why?

→ Can you spot the direct references to Martin Luther King in this speech?

## B/ "YES WE CAN", the song.

It was a creed written into the founding documents that declared the destiny of a nation.

Yes we can.

It was whispered by slaves and abolitionists as they blazed a trail toward freedom.

Yes we can. Yes we can.

It was sung by immigrants as they struck out from distant shores  
and pioneers who pushed westward against an unforgiving wilderness.

Yes we can. Yes we can.

It was the call of workers who organized;

women who reached for the ballots;

a president who chose the moon as our new frontier;

and a King who took us to the mountain-top and pointed the way to the Promised Land.

Yes we can to justice and equality

(*yes we can, yes we can, yes we can, yes we can...*)

Yes we can to opportunity and prosperity (x2)

Yes we can heal this nation.

Yes we can repair this world.

Yes we can. Ken Anu Yekholim. Si Se Puede. (*yes we can, yes we can, yes we can, yes we can...*)

We know the battle ahead will be long,

but always remember that no matter what obstacles stand in our way,

nothing can stand in the way of the power of millions of voices calling for change.

We want change!

(*We want change! We want change! We want change...*)

We have been told we cannot do this by a chorus of cynics who will only grow louder and more  
dissonant.

We've been asked to pause for a reality check.

We've been warned against offering the people of this nation false hopes.

But in the unlikely story that is America, there has never been anything false about hope. We want  
change!

(*We want change! I want change! We want change! I want change...*)

The hopes of the little girl who goes to a crumbling school in Dillon are the same as the the dreams of  
the boy who learns on the streets of LA;

we will remember that there is something happening in America;

that we are not as divided as our politics suggests;

that we are one people;

we are one nation

and together, we will begin the next great chapter in America's story with three words that will ring from  
coast to coast; from sea to shining sea - **Yes. We. Can.**

*Will.I.am & various artists, Yes We Can, 2008*

### 4. Read and listen to the song.

### 5. Compare the pauses of the song and the speech. Compare the text.

→ What differences do you find? Why?

→ What do you think about this song? How does it empower Obama's speech?

### 6. CONCLUSION: What common point is there between a song and a speech?

### 7. RECORD YOURSELF:

Practice reading Barack Obama's speech in an eloquent manner. When you're satisfied, RECORD yourself on the MP3 player.

