1. **Assignments on Barack Obama’s address to the US summit September 23rd, 2014**
2. Comprehension
3. Obama says that people now understand climate change better than five years before. Explain how his understanding has changed.

* *The threat has become more urgent, it is not only a distant possibility any more, e.g. through more frequent extreme weather events (7-10)*

1. Name ways in which, according to Obama, the US has been affected by climate change.

* *The past decade has been the hottest on record*
* *Floods in Miami, wildfires in the west, drought in the “heartland” alternating with torrential rain*
* *hurricane caused massive floodings and power failure in NYC (11-7)*

1. Explain which steps Obama proposes to combat climate change.

* *Cut carbon emissions and try to offset the worst impacts with a global strategy (21-4)*
* *US pledges to reduce carbon emissions by 17% (2005-2020), also by technological advances (29-32)*
* *He demands that other countries must follow suit (33)*

1. Name reasons why you think this is a convincing speech.

* He states many obvious facts to underline that action must be taken immediately
* He often refers to “our” responsibility to act on “our” children and thereby also uses “we” to create a bond between orator and audience
* While giving evidence that the state of affairs is deplorable at present (11-7), he states that he firmly believes that climate change can be tackled through a united effort by everyone
* He cites very precise examples and facts, e.g. air and food, and thus evokes very concise images in the audience’s mind
* He also uses many figures of speech and stylistic devices

1. Stylistic devices

Read the information on stylistic devices (p. 74f., no. 6). Then re-read the speech and make yourself a list based on this model. You can find examples of all these devices.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| stylistic device | example | function and effect |
| alliteration | “We **c**annot **c**ondemn our children, and their children to a future … **c**apacity to repair.” (ll. 25-6) | harsh *c* sound stresses the severity of the situation |
| anaphora |  |  |
| …. |  |  |

Answer Key:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| stylistic device | example | function and effect |
| alliteration | “We **c**annot **c**ondemn our children, and their children to a future … **c**apacity to repair.” (ll. 25-6) | harsh *c* sound stresses the severity of the situation |
| anaphora | In America … In our west … In our heartland … (ll. 11-4)  Alt: we cannot pretend … we have to answer … we know what we … we have to cut (ll. 19-26) | emphasizes the ubiquity of the problem(s) |
| enumeration | examples showing how US has been affected by climate change (ll. 11-6) | emphasizes the extent of the problem |
| parallelism | we can act so see that the century ahead is marked not by conflict but by cooperation, not by human suffering but by human progress | contrasting two options and showing the advantages of the second one |
| repetition | the world we leave out children and our children’s children | showing long term effects and making it more understandable, easier to imagine |
| use of pronouns, usually “we” or “us” | passim | bond between orator and audience, underlining shared responsibility |
| metaphorical language | contours of this century (3f.)  sting of extreme weather (8f.)  swarm of current events (38)  fruits of our labour (42) |  |
| precise numbers and statistics | 17% below the levels of 2005 | credibility, factualness |

1. Strengths and Weaknesses

Discuss strengths and weaknesses of this speech by Barack Obama.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ☺ | ☹ |
| * It strengthens feelings of unity * It incites optimism and make people believe in the feasibility of the combat against climate change * It shows quite clearly which effect of climate change can already be seen in the US | * It does not explain responsibilities * It does explain *how* carbon emissions can be reduced |

1. **Assignments on Greta Thunberg’s Address to the UN climate summit, September 23rd, 2019**
2. Comprehension

Watch Greta Thunberg’s speech on the UN’s official YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9KxE4Kv9A8)> and fill in the blanks. Use the words from the box.

acceptable - betrayal - childhood - climate - consequences - degrees - evil - forgive - mature - money - ocean - science - solutions - urgency - 350 - 420

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 01  05  10  15  20  25  30  35 | My message is that we'll be watching you. This is all wrong. I shouldn't be up here. I should be back in school on the other side of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Yet you all come to us young people for hope. How dare you!  You have stolen my dreams and my \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with your empty words. And yet I'm one of the lucky ones. People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction, and all you can talk about is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!  For more than 30 years, the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has been crystal clear. How dare you continue to look away and come here saying that you're doing enough, when the politics and solutions needed are still nowhere in sight.  "You say you hear us and that you understand the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. But no matter how sad and angry I am, I do not want to believe that. Because if you really understood the situation and still kept on failing to act, then you would be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. And that I refuse to believe.  "The popular idea of cutting our emissions in half in 10 years only gives us a 50% chance of staying below 1.5 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and the risk of setting off irreversible chain reactions beyond human control.  Fifty percent may be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to you. But those numbers do not include tipping points, most feedback loops, additional warming hidden by toxic air pollution or the aspects of equity and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ justice. They also rely on my generation sucking hundreds of billions of tons of your CO2 out of the air with technologies that barely exist. So a 50% risk is simply not acceptable to us — we who have to live with the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  To have a 67% chance of staying below a 1.5 degrees global temperature rise – the best odds given by the IPCC– the world had \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ gigatons of CO2 left to emit back on Jan. 1st, 2018. Today that figure is already down to less than \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ gigatons. How dare you pretend that this can be solved with just 'business as usual' and some technical \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? With today's emissions levels, that remaining CO2 budget will be entirely gone within less than 8 1/2 years.  There will not be any solutions or plans presented in line with these figures here today, because these numbers are too uncomfortable. And you are still not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ enough to tell it like it is.  You are failing us. But the young people are starting to understand your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The eyes of all future generations are upon you. And if you choose to fail us, I say: We will never \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ you. |

1. Stylistic devices

Identify stylistic devices and rhetorical strategies used by Greta Thunberg and describe their effect.

*Answer Key*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| stylistic device | example | effect |
| anaphora | How dare you … ! (ll. 3f., 11, 29) | addresses world leaders/audience directly, underlines scale of ignorance displayed by people in the past |
| parallelism | people are suffering, people are dying (ll.6f.) | emphasizes dramatic consequences of climate crisis |
| repetition | CO2 (l. 23, 27, 31) |  |
| metaphorical language | you have stolen my dreams and my childhood (l. 5)  fairy tale of eternal economic growth (l. 8f.)  solutions are nowhere in sight (l. 12) | links politics to a crime  highlights that adult politicians try  to attain goals which are irrational  underlines that they do not exist |
| use of “we” and “you” | she uses “we” to talk about “us young people” (l. 3) and “future generations” (l. 36), while she addresses world leaders with “you” who fail to act (“are failing us”, l. 35) in the face of “mass extinction” (7f.) and still do not want to face “uncomfortable numbers” (33) and hence appear immature (34) | establishes a contrast between the responsible youth and her audience who she criticizes for their failure to act |
| exact numbers | ll. 24-30 | shows urgency of the problem and underlines that she, although a teenager, has a solid grasp of the facts |

1. Comparison

Name elements of a convincing speech.

A convincing speech …

… uses some rhetorical devices such as alliterations, anaphora …

… uses formal words without sounding pretentious and without being taxing

… is given by a credible speaker/orator.

… is factual to show that the speaker is knowledgeable

… creates a bond between the speaker and their audience without reverting to flattery

… names precise/concrete facts/answers/solutions to the problems discussed

….

Based on these criteria compare the speechs by Obama and Thunberg.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria | Obama | Thunberg |
| A convincing speech …  … uses some rhetorical devices such as alliterations, anaphora …  … uses formal words without sounding pretentious and without being taxing  … is given by a credible speaker/orator.  … is factual to show that the speaker is knowledgeable  … creates a bond between the speaker and their audience without reverting to flattery  … names precise/concrete facts/answers/solutions to the problems discussed | uses some/a lot of rhetorical devices, e.g. metaphors, alliteration, anaphora, parallelism, appears more elaborate  okay  US president  cites many examples of the consequences  quite expertly creates a bond using “we” etc. and makes his audience believe that together they can save the earth  not really, only points out that carbon emissions must be reduced | uses fewer rhetorical devices  okay  largely credible as she gave up school career, initiated mass movement and crossed the ocean in a small sailing boat  a lot of facts  appears far more confrontational, paints a more drastic picture and highlights politicians’ responsibility  not really, only criticizes that too little has been done so far |

1. **Creative Writing**

Write a speech in which you try to convince people to take action in view of the climate crisis.

* Remember to use topical paragraphs (as in a letter to the editor).
* Use at least three different rhetorical strategies (cf. p. 75).
* If it all possible, type your speech.