

Year 10 English work - Speeches

Greta Thunberg was just 16 when she made this passionate speech to the UN Climate Change Summit:

"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 ocean. Yet you all come to us young people for hope. How dare you!

"You have stolen my dreams and my childhood 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 money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!

"For more than 30 years, the science 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 urgency. 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 evil. 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 degrees [Celsius], and the risk of setting off irreversible chain reactions beyond human control.

"Fifty percent may be acceptable 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 climate 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 consequences.

"To have a 67% chance of staying below a 1.5 degrees global temperature rise – the best odds given by the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change] – the world had 420 gigatons of CO₂ left to emit back on Jan. 1st, 2018. Today that figure is already down to less than 350 gigatons.

"How dare you pretend that this can be solved with just 'business as usual' and some technical solutions? 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 mature enough to tell it like it is.

"You are failing us. But the young people are starting to understand your betrayal. The eyes of all future generations are upon you. And if you choose to fail us, I say: We will never forgive you.

"We will not let you get away with this. Right here, right now is where we draw the line. The world is waking up. And change is coming, whether you like it or not.

"Thank you."

Fill in the chart on the next page. Find an example of each technique in Greta's speech and explain what effect it has on the audience. Try to use some of the 'analytical verbs' on the chart!

Now join Greta! Write your own speech in which you try to convince politicians to do something about climate change!

Good luck! I look forward to reading your speeches. Mrs Brindle x

Technique	Meaning	Example from speech	Effect it has on the audience? Use analytical verb(s)
Pronouns	Words that replace names, "we", "you," "they".		
Repetition	Repeating words or ideas again and again		
Metaphor	Saying something is something else: the sky is a blue carpet.		
Statistics	Figures and numbers, including percentages.		
Emotive language	Words and phrases which give off powerful emotions to the audience: This is disgusting.		
Hyperbole	Using ideas or words that exaggerate how bad or how good something is.		
Short sentences	Sentences of a shorter length that stand out from the rest of a speech.		

Analytical verb	Meaning
Emphasises	Makes clearer to an audience by focusing on something
Connotes	implies something beyond a literal meaning to the audience
Conveys	To get across a message or idea to the audience
Highlights	Makes the audience focus on something by making an idea stand out
Exaggerates	To make something seem better or worse than it is to emphasise an idea to the audience.
Illustrates	Makes the audience see a particular image or idea
Amplifies	Emphasises something by making it clearer by adding more detail
Indicates	helps the audience to see a particular idea
Evoles	Make an audience feel a particular emotion
Provides	Makes the audience react to something
Forewarns	Provides hints to the audience about something that may happen in the future
Parallels	Seems to be similar or the same as another part of the play, character or theme.
Reiterates	To re-emphasise to the audience, to repeat, an idea for added emphasis.
Synonymises	Uses synonymous words to represent a deeper meaning for the audience

