



# OBAMA

IN PURSUIT OF A  
MORE PERFECT UNION

## LESSON SIX

**A CHANGED POLITICAL AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE**  
THE ONGOING LEGACY OF THE 44TH PRESIDENT

## OVERVIEW

In this two-day lesson, students reflect on the meaning and impact of Barack Obama's administration on the political and cultural landscape of our nation. Students will begin with a close examination of President Obama's own point of view through his farewell address of January 10, 2017. They will then choose one of the topics President Obama identified as part of his legacy and investigate what has changed or evolved in that area since the end of his administration. Finally, inspired by President Obama's legacy and his gift for oration, students will write and deliver a speech on their own vision for the work that remains to be done to create a more perfect union.



### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- > How did President Obama's two terms change the political and cultural landscape of America?
- > What does Obama's life story and presidency reveal about race and racism in America?
- > How would you describe America today, and the work that remains to be done to strive toward a more perfect union?



### LESSON OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- > Conduct a close read of President Obama's farewell address to analyze his vision for America's future after his administration, including his own future work as a citizen.
- > Investigate our nation's evolution and progress since Obama's administration ended.
- > Review the Venn diagram exercises to synthesize their learning about President Obama and his administration's work toward a more perfect union.
- > Write and deliver a speech communicating their own ideas about a more perfect union.



### MATERIALS

Listed in order as they appear in the lesson:

- > Equipment to screen film clips curated for this lesson
- > Excerpts from Handouts One-Six: Excerpts of Obama's Farewell Address
- > Handout Seven: The More Perfect Union Venn Diagram
- > Handout Eight: Speech-Writing Prompts



Two or three  
55-minute  
class periods



U.S. Government, Civics, U.S. History,  
English Language Arts



All Handouts can be copied as PDFs  
or uploaded to a shared online  
platform.

# ACTIVITIES



“How much had America changed because it had finally gotten rid of this hereditary barrier to occupancy of the White House that is race?”

— **HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.**  
OBAMA: IN PURSUIT OF A MORE PERFECT UNION

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# DAY ONE: OPENING

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## Introduction — The Farewell Address

Let students know that Obama delivered his final address to the nation as president in Grant Park in Chicago, IL, just days before the inauguration of his successor. President Obama used his farewell address to name what he saw as his administration's biggest successes and articulate his hope for the future of the nation.



### DISCUSS

- > What do you think is the role of a president's farewell address?
- > How might the address be related to how the president wants their administration to be remembered?

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## ANALYZING FILM AS TEXT

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Let students know that you are going to watch a clip from **Obama: In Pursuit of a More Perfect Union** that includes excerpts of Obama's final address as president. After they watch this clip, students will be working with additional excerpts of the speech to learn more.

### > Film Clip One: Obama's Farewell Address (4:05)

This clip is an excerpt of Obama's final speech as president, delivered at Grant Park in Chicago, Illinois on January 10, 2017.



### DISCUSS

- > In your own words, what would you say is the main message of this speech?
- > What do you think Obama hopes is the impact of his administration on the nation?

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# ANALYZING IMAGES

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## THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE STATIONS

Project or share the [images online](#) and ask students to “read” them critically, the same way they would if they were reading text or film.



### DISCUSS

- > What do you see in the image?
- > What is the emotional impact of the image?
- > What do you think happened just before or after the image was taken?
- > What question might you ask the photographer about the image?
- > Taken together, what story do these images tell about the impact of Obama’s administration?

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# SMALL GROUP

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## REPORTING ON OBAMA’S PERSPECTIVE

Let students know that the part of the speech in the film is an excerpt from Obama’s full address (video of the full speech available at [obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/farewell](http://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/farewell)).

Have students number off into six groups and assign each group to conduct a close read of one part of Obama’s farewell address to gain a deeper understanding of Obama’s vision of the threats and opportunities for America’s future:

- > Handout One: Introduction, The Capacity for Change
- > Handout Two: Economic Opportunity and Equality
- > Handout Three: Racial Equity
- > Handout Four: Healthy Debate
- > Handout Five: The Institutions of Democracy
- > Handout Six: Conclusion, Yes We Can

In their groups, have students complete a close read of their assigned part of the speech, underlining words and phrases they identify as Obama’s beliefs about the impact of his administration and his vision for the future of America. While reading for ideas, ask students to also look for patterns and repetitions in the speech that Obama uses for rhetorical power or emphasis.

Each group will prepare answers to the following questions to report to the rest of the class:

- What does Obama see as the impact of his administration?
- How does he characterize the challenges he sees ahead of us as a nation? How does he believe we can act to address those challenges?
- *Media Literacy prompt:* After reading about or hearing the full speech, why do you think the filmmakers chose the excerpt they did to capture it? Would you have chosen to add anything or cut it differently?

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## CONCLUSION

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Distribute **Handout Seven: The More Perfect Union Venn**. Fill in their thoughts and notes in the “Obama” circle the main ideas they heard about Obama’s hopes and vision for the impacts his administration had.



**Teacher Note:** If you are teaching the lessons in a series, students will already have this Venn diagram handout.



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# DAY TWO: OPENING

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## PAIR AND SHARE

Ask students to share with a partner about the main points that Obama articulated in his farewell address:

- > Of all the themes and ideas he raised in his address, which parts are still relevant today?
- > What do you see as the impacts of his administration that can still be felt today?

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## YOUR VISION OF A MORE PERFECT UNION

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Have students choose one of the themes from Obama's farewell address, or another topic that arose from the film clips and interviews, to learn more about what has happened and evolved in that area since Obama left office January 20, 2017. Using information sources that students are able to corroborate or verify, or books and articles written by the interviewees in the film, students can investigate events, laws, people, or other influences that illustrate how their chosen aspect of Obama's legacy has changed or evolved, where it is today, how it is seen by different groups.

Students will use what they learn to fill in the "America" circle of their Venn diagrams, and what they think about it themselves in the "You" circle of their Venn diagrams.

*Extended learning suggestion: Students may write short essays about their findings.*

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# CONCLUDING EXERCISE

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President Obama worked with a team on writing all of his speeches.

## > Watch Interview Segment - Jon Favreau, Speechwriter

Introduce the segment (runtime 3:54) letting students know that Jon Favreau, Obama's speechwriter, is going to describe the process of writing the "More Perfect Union" speech with Barack Obama and other members of the campaign team, where Obama provided the main ideas, and the team would work together to polish the phrasing and the cadence.

## > Enter the Speech-Writing Room

Let students know they are each going to write an inspirational speech, two to three minutes in length, in which they will choose from the topic prompts on Handout Eight: Speech-Writing Prompts (or create their own) and describe what they've learned about that topic from the lessons, film, and interview threads, as well as their own ideas about the work that remains to be done toward achieving a more perfect union. Speeches will incorporate their thoughts about why the topic matters to them, include points of view from the film, interviews, or President Obama himself, and communicate their vision of the work we need to do as a nation to realize their ideal.

In the style of President Obama's speech-writing team, students will work together to bounce ideas and thoughts off one another for topics and themes, and offer constructive feedback. In small groups, students will review content from their Venn diagrams and help each other identify key issues and patterns that emerge for each person.

The speeches can be presented in many creative ways:

### > In school:

- Students can record their speech and upload it to a shared online classroom space. Later, small groups can assemble and watch assigned speeches.
- Students can prepare and deliver their speech live in front of the class.
- In an assembly for multiple classes or grades.

### > In community:

- Students can submit recordings of their speeches to community radio programs or podcasts that report on the topics that they chose.
- Students can reach out to local nonprofit organizations or local governments who work with the topic of each students' choosing.
- Class members can post the speeches to a social media account made for this assignment and tweet them to President Obama or other relevant policy makers.

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## HANDOUT ONE, LESSON SIX

# FAREWELL ADDRESS: INTRODUCTION, THE CAPACITY FOR CHANGE<sup>1</sup>

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THE PRESIDENT: Hello, Chicago! It's good to be home!...

So I first came to Chicago when I was in my early 20s. And I was still trying to figure out who I was, still searching for a purpose in my life. And it was a neighborhood not far from here where I began working with church groups in the shadows of closed steel mills. It was on these streets where I witnessed the power of faith, and the quiet dignity of working people in the face of struggle and loss....

This is where I learned that change only happens when ordinary people get involved and they get engaged, and they come together to demand it. After eight years as your President, I still believe that. And it's not just my belief. It's the beating heart of our American idea — our bold experiment in self-government. It's the conviction that we are all created equal, endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights, among them life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It's the insistence that these rights, while self-evident, have never been self-executing; that We, the People, through the instrument of our democracy, can form a more perfect union.

What a radical idea. A great gift that our Founders gave to us: The freedom to chase our individual dreams through our sweat and toil and imagination, and the imperative to strive together, as well, to achieve a common good, a greater good.

For 240 years, our nation's call to citizenship has given work and purpose to each new generation. It's what led patriots to choose republic over tyranny, pioneers to trek west, slaves to brave that makeshift railroad to freedom. It's what pulled immigrants and refugees across oceans and the Rio Grande. It's what pushed women to reach for the ballot. It's what powered workers to organize. It's why GIs gave their lives at Omaha Beach and Iwo Jima, Iraq and Afghanistan. And why men and women from Selma to Stonewall were prepared to give theirs, as well.

So that's what we mean when we say America is exceptional — not that our nation has been flawless from the start, but that we have shown the capacity to change and make life better for those who follow. Yes, our progress has been uneven. The work of democracy has always been

hard. It's always been contentious. Sometimes it's been bloody. For every two steps forward, it often feels we take one step back. But the long sweep of America has been defined by forward motion, a constant widening of our founding creed to embrace all and not just some.

If I had told you eight years ago that America would reverse a great recession, reboot our auto industry, and unleash the longest stretch of job creation in our history, if I had told you that we would open up a new chapter with the Cuban people, shut down Iran's nuclear weapons program without firing a shot, take out the mastermind of 9/11, if I had told you that we would win marriage equality, and secure the right to health insurance for another 20 million of our fellow citizens, if I had told you all that, you might have said our sights were set a little too high. But that's what we did. That's what you did.

You were the change. You answered people's hopes, and because of you, by almost every measure, America is a better, stronger place than it was when we started. In 10 days, the world will witness a hallmark of our democracy.

AUDIENCE: Nooo —

THE PRESIDENT: No, no, no, no — the peaceful transfer of power from one freely elected President to the next. I committed to President-elect Trump that my administration would ensure the smoothest possible transition, just as President Bush did for me. Because it's up to all of us to make sure our government can help us meet the many challenges we still face. We have what we need to do so. We have everything we need to meet those challenges. After all, we remain the wealthiest, most powerful, and most respected nation on Earth. Our youth, our drive, our diversity and openness, our boundless capacity for risk and reinvention means that the future should be ours. But that potential will only be realized if our democracy works. Only if our politics better reflects the decency of our people. Only if all of us, regardless of party affiliation or particular interests, help restore the sense of common purpose that we so badly need right now.

<sup>1</sup><https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/farewell>



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## HANDOUT TWO, LESSON SIX

# FAREWELL ADDRESS THEME: ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY<sup>2</sup>

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That's what I want to focus on tonight: The state of our democracy. Understand, democracy does not require uniformity. Our founders argued. They quarreled. Eventually they compromised. They expected us to do the same. But they knew that democracy does require a basic sense of solidarity — the idea that for all our outward differences, we're all in this together; that we rise or fall as one.

There have been moments throughout our history that threaten that solidarity. And the beginning of this century has been one of those times. A shrinking world, growing inequality; demographic change and the specter of terrorism — these forces haven't just tested our security and our prosperity, but are testing our democracy, as well. And how we meet these challenges to our democracy will determine our ability to educate our kids, and create good jobs, and protect our homeland. In other words, it will determine our future.

To begin with, our democracy won't work without a sense that everyone has economic opportunity. And the good news is that today the economy is growing again. Wages, incomes, home values, and retirement accounts are all rising again. Poverty is falling again. The wealthy are paying a fairer share of taxes even as the stock market shatters records. The unemployment rate is near a 10-year low. The uninsured rate has never, ever been lower. Healthcare costs are rising at the slowest rate in 50 years. And I've said and I mean it — if anyone can put together a plan that is demonstrably better than the improvements we've made to our healthcare system and that covers as many people at less cost, I will publicly support it.

Because that, after all, is why we serve. Not to score points or take credit, but to make people's lives better.

But for all the real progress that we've made, we know it's not enough. Our economy doesn't work as well or grow as fast when a few prosper at the expense of a growing middle class and ladders for folks who want to get into the middle class. That's the economic argument. But stark inequality is also corrosive to our democratic ideal. While the top one percent has amassed a bigger share of wealth and income, too many families, in inner cities and in rural counties, have been left behind — the laid-off factory worker; the waitress or health care worker who's just barely getting by and struggling to pay the bills — convinced that the game is fixed against them, that their government only serves the interests of the powerful — that's a recipe for more cynicism and polarization in our politics.

But there are no quick fixes to this long-term trend. I agree, our trade should be fair and not just free. But the next wave of economic dislocations won't come from overseas. It will come from the relentless pace of automation that makes a lot of good, middle-class jobs obsolete.

And so we're going to have to forge a new social compact to guarantee all our kids the education they need to give workers the power to unionize for better wages; to update the social safety net to reflect the way we live now, and make more reforms to the tax code so corporations and individuals who reap the most from this new economy don't avoid their obligations to the country that's made their very success possible.

We can argue about how to best achieve these goals. But we can't be complacent about the goals themselves.

For if we don't create opportunity for all people, the disaffection and division that has stalled our progress will only sharpen in years to come.

<sup>2</sup><https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/farewell>

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## HANDOUT THREE, LESSON SIX

# FAREWELL ADDRESS THEME: RACIAL EQUITY<sup>3</sup>

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There's a second threat to our democracy — and this one is as old as our nation itself. After my election, there was talk of a post-racial America. And such a vision, however well-intended, was never realistic. Race remains a potent and often divisive force in our society. Now, I've lived long enough to know that race relations are better than they were 10, or 20, or 30 years ago, no matter what some folks say. You can see it not just in statistics, you see it in the attitudes of young Americans across the political spectrum.

But we're not where we need to be. And all of us have more work to do. If every economic issue is framed as a struggle between a hardworking white middle class and an undeserving minority, then workers of all shades are going to be left fighting for scraps while the wealthy withdraw further into their private enclaves. If we're unwilling to invest in the children of immigrants, just because they don't look like us, we will diminish the prospects of our own children — because those brown kids will represent a larger and larger share of America's workforce. And we have shown that our economy doesn't have to be a zero-sum game. Last year, incomes rose for all races, all age groups, for men and for women.

So if we're going to be serious about race going forward, we need to uphold laws against discrimination — in hiring, and in housing, and in education, and in the criminal justice system. That is what our Constitution and our highest ideals require.

But laws alone won't be enough. Hearts must change. It won't change overnight. Social attitudes oftentimes take generations to change. But if our democracy is to work in this increasingly diverse nation, then each one of us need to try to heed the advice of a great character in American fiction — Atticus Finch — who said, "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view...until you climb into his skin and walk around in it."

For blacks and other minority groups, it means tying our own very real struggles for justice to the challenges that a lot of people in this country face — not only the refugee, or the immigrant, or the rural poor, or the transgender American, but also the middle-aged white guy who, from the outside, may seem like he's got advantages, but has seen his world upended by economic and cultural and technological change. We have to pay attention, and listen.

For white Americans, it means acknowledging that the effects of slavery and Jim Crow didn't suddenly vanish in the '60s, that when minority groups voice discontent, they're not just engaging in reverse racism or practicing political correctness. When they wage peaceful protest, they're not demanding special treatment but the equal treatment that our Founders promised.

For native-born Americans, it means reminding ourselves that the stereotypes about immigrants today were said, almost word for word, about the Irish, and Italians, and Poles — who it was said we're going to destroy the fundamental character of America. And as it turned out, America wasn't weakened by the presence of these newcomers; these newcomers embraced this nation's creed, and this nation was strengthened.

So regardless of the station that we occupy, we all have to try harder. We all have to start with the premise that each of our fellow citizens loves this country just as much as we do; that they value hard work and family just like we do; that their children are just as curious and hopeful and worthy of love as our own. And that's not easy to do.

<sup>3</sup><https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/farewell>

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## HANDOUT FOUR, LESSON SIX

# FAREWELL ADDRESS: HEALTHY DEBATE<sup>4</sup>

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For too many of us, it's become safer to retreat into our own bubbles, whether in our neighborhoods or on college campuses, or places of worship, or especially our social media feeds, surrounded by people who look like us and share the same political outlook and never challenge our assumptions. The rise of naked partisanship, and increasing economic and regional stratification, the splintering of our media into a channel for every taste — all this makes this great sorting seem natural, even inevitable. And increasingly, we become so secure in our bubbles that we start accepting only information, whether it's true or not, that fits our opinions, instead of basing our opinions on the evidence that is out there.

And this trend represents a third threat to our democracy. But politics is a battle of ideas. That's how our democracy was designed. In the course of a healthy debate, we prioritize different goals, and the different means of reaching them. But without some common baseline of facts, without a willingness to admit new information, and concede that your opponent might be making a fair point, and that science and reason matter then we're going to keep talking past each other, and we'll make common ground and compromise impossible.

And isn't that part of what so often makes politics dispiriting? How can elected officials rage about deficits when we propose to spend money on preschool for kids, but not when we're cutting taxes for corporations? How do we excuse ethical lapses in our own party, but pounce when the other party does the same thing? It's not just dishonest, this selective sorting of the facts; it's self-defeating. Because, as my mother used to tell me, reality has a way of catching up with you.

Take the challenge of climate change. In just eight years, we've halved our dependence on foreign oil; we've doubled our renewable energy; we've led the world to an agreement that has the promise to save this planet. But without bolder action, our children won't have time to debate the existence of climate change. They'll be busy dealing with its effects: more environmental disasters, more economic disruptions, waves of climate refugees seeking sanctuary.

Now, we can and should argue about the best approach to solve the problem. But to simply deny the problem not only betrays future generations, it betrays the essential spirit of this country — the essential spirit of innovation and practical problem-solving that guided our Founders.

It is that spirit, born of the Enlightenment, that made us an economic powerhouse — the spirit that took flight at Kitty Hawk and Cape Canaveral; the spirit that cures disease and put a computer in every pocket.

It's that spirit — a faith in reason, and enterprise, and the primacy of right over might — that allowed us to resist the lure of fascism and tyranny during the Great Depression; that allowed us to build a post-World War II order with other democracies, an order based not just on military power or national affiliations but built on principles — the rule of law, human rights, freedom of religion, and speech, and assembly, and an independent press.

<sup>4</sup><https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/farewell>

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## HANDOUT FIVE, LESSON SIX

# FAREWELL ADDRESS: THE INSTITUTIONS OF DEMOCRACY<sup>5</sup>

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Which brings me to my final point: Our democracy is threatened whenever we take it for granted. All of us, regardless of party, should be throwing ourselves into the task of rebuilding our democratic institutions. When voting rates in America are some of the lowest among advanced democracies, we should be making it easier, not harder, to vote. When trust in our institutions is low, we should reduce the corrosive influence of money in our politics, and insist on the principles of transparency and ethics in public service. When Congress is dysfunctional, we should draw our congressional districts to encourage politicians to cater to common sense and not rigid extremes.

But remember, none of this happens on its own. All of this depends on our participation; on each of us accepting the responsibility of citizenship, regardless of which way the pendulum of power happens to be swinging.

Our Constitution is a remarkable, beautiful gift. But it's really just a piece of parchment. It has no power on its own. We, the people, give it power. We, the people, give it meaning. With our participation, and with the choices that we make, and the alliances that we forge. Whether or not we stand up for our freedoms. Whether or not we respect and enforce the rule of law. That's up to us. America is no fragile thing. But the gains of our long journey to freedom are not assured.

In his own farewell address, George Washington wrote that self-government is the underpinning of our safety, prosperity, and liberty, but "from different causes and from different quarters much pains will be taken...to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth." And so we have to preserve this truth with "jealous anxiety;" that we should reject "the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest or to enfeeble the sacred ties" that make us one.

America, we weaken those ties when we allow our political dialogue to become so corrosive that people of good character aren't even willing to enter into public service; so coarse with rancor that Americans with whom we disagree are seen not just as misguided but as malevolent. We weaken those ties when we define some of us as more American than others; when we write off the whole system as inevitably corrupt, and when we sit back and blame the leaders we elect without examining our own role in electing them.

It falls to each of us to be those anxious, jealous guardians of our democracy; to embrace the joyous task we've been given to continually try to improve this great nation of ours. Because for all our outward differences, we, in fact, all share the same proud title, the most important office in a democracy: Citizen. Citizen.

So, you see, that's what our democracy demands. It needs you. Not just when there's an election, not just when your own narrow interest is at stake, but over the full span of a lifetime. If you're tired of arguing with strangers on the Internet, try talking with one of them in real life. If something needs fixing, then lace up your shoes and do some organizing. If you're disappointed by your elected officials, grab a clipboard, get some signatures, and run for office yourself. Show up. Dive in. Stay at it.

Sometimes you'll win. Sometimes you'll lose. Presuming a reservoir of goodness in other people, that can be a risk, and there will be times when the process will disappoint you. But for those of us fortunate enough to have been a part of this work, and to see it up close, let me tell you, it can energize and inspire. And more often than not, your faith in America — and in Americans — will be confirmed.

Mine sure has been.

<sup>5</sup><https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/farewell>

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## HANDOUT SIX, LESSON SIX

# FAREWELL ADDRESS: CONCLUSION, YES WE CAN<sup>6</sup>

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Over the course of these eight years, I've seen the hopeful faces of young graduates and our newest military officers. I have mourned with grieving families searching for answers, and found grace in a Charleston church. I've seen our scientists help a paralyzed man regain his sense of touch. I've seen wounded warriors who at points were given up for dead walk again. I've seen our doctors and volunteers rebuild after earthquakes and stop pandemics in their tracks. I've seen the youngest of children remind us through their actions and through their generosity of our obligations to care for refugees, or work for peace, and, above all, to look out for each other.

So that faith that I placed all those years ago, not far from here, in the power of ordinary Americans to bring about change — that faith has been rewarded in ways I could not have possibly imagined. And I hope your faith has, too. Some of you here tonight or watching at home, you were there with us in 2004, in 2008, 2012, maybe you still can't believe we pulled this whole thing off. Let me tell you, you're not the only ones.

Michelle — Michelle LaVaughn Robinson, girl of the South Side, for the past 25 years, you have not only been my wife and mother of my children, you have been my best friend. You took on a role you didn't ask for and you made it your own, with grace and with grit and with style and good humor. You made the White House a place that belongs to everybody. And the new generation sets its sights higher because it has you as a role model. So you have made me proud. And you have made the country proud.

Malia and Sasha, under the strangest of circumstances, you have become two amazing young women. You are smart and you are beautiful, but more importantly, you are kind and you are thoughtful and you are full of passion. You wore the burden of years in the spotlight so easily. Of all that I've done in my life, I am most proud to be your dad.

To Joe Biden, the scrappy kid from Scranton who became Delaware's favorite son, you were the

first decision I made as a nominee, and it was the best. Not just because you have been a great Vice President, but because in the bargain, I gained a brother. And we love you and Jill like family, and your friendship has been one of the great joys of our lives.

To my remarkable staff: For eight years, and for some of you, a whole lot more, I have drawn from your energy, and every day I tried to reflect back what you displayed — heart, and character, and idealism. I've watched you grow up, get married, have kids, start incredible new journeys of your own. Even when times got tough and frustrating, you never let Washington get the better of you. You guarded against cynicism. And the only thing that makes me prouder than all the good that we've done is the thought of all the amazing things that you're going to achieve from here.

And to all of you out there — every organizer who moved to an unfamiliar town, every kind family who welcomed them in, every volunteer who knocked on doors, every young person who cast a ballot for the first time, every American who lived and breathed the hard work of change — you are the best supporters and organizers anybody could ever hope for, and I will be forever grateful. Because you did change the world. You did.

And that's why I leave this stage tonight even more optimistic about this country than when we started. Because I know our work has not only helped so many Americans, it has inspired so many Americans — especially so many young people out there — to believe that you can make a difference — to hitch your wagon to something bigger than yourselves.

Let me tell you, this generation coming up — unselfish, altruistic, creative, patriotic — I've seen you in every corner of the country. You believe in a fair, and just, and inclusive America. You know that constant change has been America's hallmark; that it's not something to fear but something to embrace. You are willing to carry this hard work of democracy forward. You'll soon outnumber all of us, and I believe as a result the future is in good hands.

<sup>6</sup><https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/farewell>

My fellow Americans, it has been the honor of my life to serve you. I won't stop. In fact, I will be right there with you, as a citizen, for all my remaining days. But for now, whether you are young or whether you're young at heart, I do have one final ask of you as your President — the same thing I asked when you took a chance on me eight years ago. I'm asking you to believe. Not in my ability to bring about change — but in yours.

I am asking you to hold fast to that faith written into our founding documents; that idea whispered by slaves and abolitionists; that spirit sung by immigrants and homesteaders and those who marched for justice; that creed reaffirmed by those who planted flags from foreign battlefields to the surface of the moon; a creed at the core of every American whose story is not yet written: Yes, we can. Yes, we did. Yes, we can.

Thank you. God bless you. May God continue to bless the United States of America.

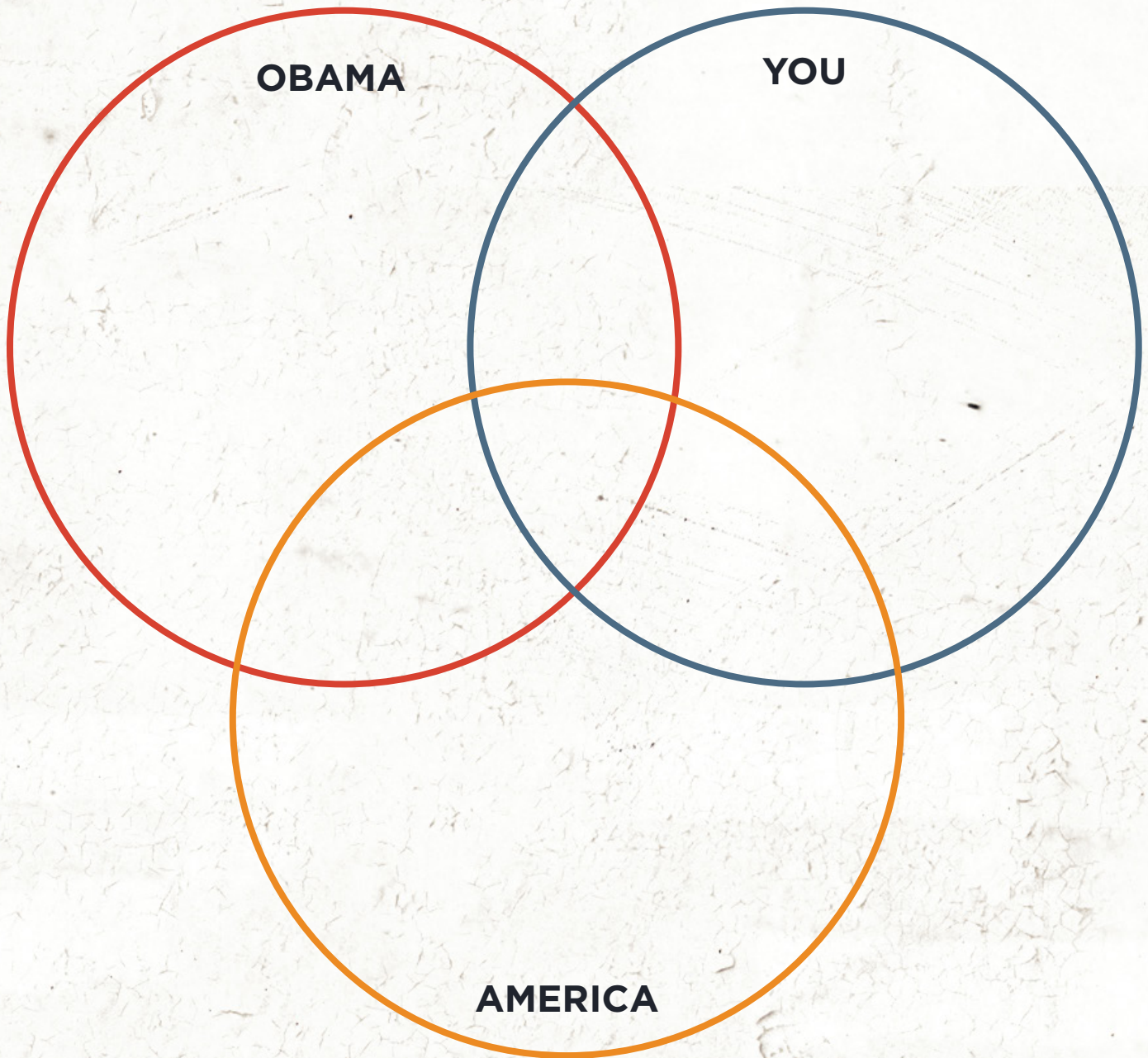
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## HANDOUT SEVEN, LESSON SIX

# THE MORE PERFECT UNION VENN DIAGRAM

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*Directions:* Use your notes from the farewell address and your original research to begin filling out the Venn diagram, noting what you learned about the lasting impacts of the Obama administration.



**Keep in mind:**

- > How does this information relate to Obama's vision of a more perfect union?
- > How does it relate to your vision of a more perfect union?

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## HANDOUT EIGHT, LESSON SIX

# SPEECH WRITING PROMPTS

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*"[President Obama] is a writer, and he has the gift of being able to see the scenes that he is participating in and stepping back and evaluating them."*

— David Axelrod

## SPEECH WRITING PROMPTS

1. PRESIDENT OBAMA'S ADMINISTRATION DID \_\_\_\_\_ IN MOVING US TOWARD A MORE PERFECT UNION. \_\_\_\_\_ IS WHAT WE NEED TO DO IN ORDER TO CONTINUE AND BUILD ON THAT WORK....

2. RACE AND RACIAL IDENTITY PLAY \_\_\_\_\_ ROLE IN OUR POLITICAL SYSTEMS, AND IN ORDER TO STRIVE TOWARD A MORE PERFECT UNION, WE WILL NEED TO SHIFT THAT ROLE SO THAT THEY \_\_\_\_\_....

3. TODAY, THE INSTITUTIONS OF OUR DEMOCRACY, SUCH AS THE RIGHT TO VOTE, ARE \_\_\_\_\_. IN ORDER TO WORK TOWARD A MORE PERFECT UNION, WE MUST.....

4. THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION HAS \_\_\_\_\_ RELATIONSHIP TO THE HISTORY OF CIVIL RIGHTS IN AMERICA. I BELIEVE THAT \_\_\_\_\_ NEEDS TO HAPPEN IN ORDER TO CARRY THAT LEGACY FORWARD.

5. CHANGE IN AMERICA HAPPENS WHEN \_\_\_\_\_. THE MOST IMPORTANT THING WE CAN WORK ON NOW TO BRING US CLOSER TO A MORE PERFECT UNION IS \_\_\_\_\_.

6. PRESIDENT OBAMA HAS PARTICIPATED IN OUR DEMOCRACY AS A WRITER, COMMUNITY ORGANIZER, HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER, SENATOR, PRESIDENT, CITIZEN, FATHER, AND FRIEND. HERE ARE THE WAYS EACH INDIVIDUAL CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE CREATION OF A MORE PERFECT UNION: \_\_\_\_\_.

7. TODAY \_\_\_\_\_ THE MOST PRESSING ISSUE OUR NATION FACES IS \_\_\_\_\_. IN ORDER FOR US TO LIVE UP TO THE IDEALS SET FORTH BY OUR FOUNDERS TO CREATE A "MORE PERFECT UNION" WE MUST CONTINUE TO \_\_\_\_\_. HERE'S HOW WE DO IT...