

# Queen Elizabeth's 1601 Speech to her Parliament

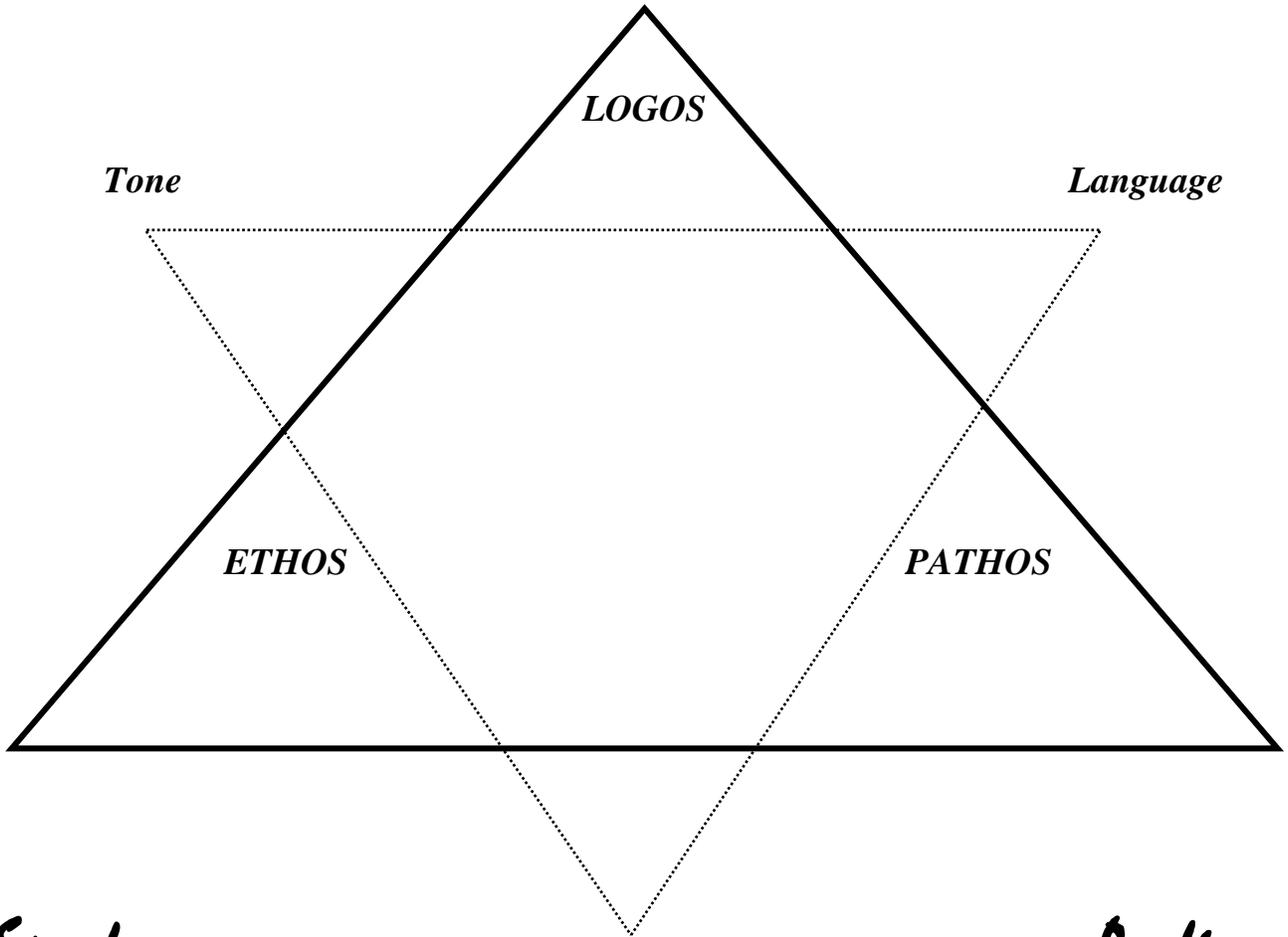
*The passage below is from the speech given by Queen Elizabeth I to her last Parliament.*

To be a king, and wear a crown, is a thing more glorious to them that see it, than it is pleasant for them that bear it: for myself, I never was much inticed with the glorious name of a King, or the royal authority of a Queen, as delighted that God hath made me His instrument to maintain His Truth and Glory, and to defend this kingdom from dishonor, damage, tyranny, and oppression. But should I ascribe any of these things to myself, or my sexly weakness, I were not worthy to live, and of all most unworthy of the mercies I have received at God's hands, but to God only and wholly all is given and ascribed.

The cares and troubles of a Crown I cannot more fitly resemble than to the drugs of a learned physician, perfumed with some aromatical savour, or to bitter pills gilded over, by which they are made more acceptable or less offensive, which indeed are bitter and unpleasant to take, and for my own part, were it not for conscience sake to discharge the duty that God hath laid upon me, and to maintain His glory and keep you in safety, in mine own disposition I should be willing to resign the place I hold to any other, and glad to be freed of the glory with the labors, for it is not my desire to live nor to reign longer than my life and reign shall be for your good. And though you have had and many have many mightier and wiser Princes sitting in the Seat, yet you never had nor shall have any that will love you better.

Thus Mr. Speaker, I commend me to your loyal loves, and yours to my best care and your further counsels, and I pray you Mr. Controller, and Mr. Secretary, and you of my Councill, that before these Gentlemen depart unto their countries, you bring them all to kiss my hand.

Message



Speaker

*Rhetorical  
Purpose*

Audience

# Queen Elizabeth's 1601 Speech to her Parliament

1. The point of Elizabeth's statement that "to wear a crown is a thing more glorious to them that see it than it is pleasant to them that bear it" (lines 1-3) is to
  - A. suggest that it is difficult to look upon power without being dazzled by it
  - B. assert that she is fulfilled and happy in her service to her people
  - C. emphasizing the burdensome responsibility of her position
  - D. reveal the foreknowledge she has of the treachery and betrayal of some of her captains
  - E. refute the charges of those who think she is weak
2. In using the word "instrument" (line 6), Elizabeth emphasizes
  - A. her obedience to God's will
  - B. her political power as the monarch
  - C. her resolve to discharge her duties in a regal manner
  - D. her ambition to surpass the achievements of her predecessors
  - E. the equality of men and women in God's eyes
3. In lines 3-8, Elizabeth contrasts what she sees as the sources of true delight with
  - A. religious devotion
  - B. exalted earthly power
  - C. the evils that can befall a kingdom
  - D. her own weaknesses of character
  - E. her political and diplomatic skills
4. Elizabeth asserts that she would not be "worthy to live" (lines 9-10) if she were to
  - A. less imperious than certain male rulers
  - B. fail to take responsibility for all her actions
  - C. take personal credit for all her successes as ruler
  - D. fail to maintain the outward appearances of royalty
  - E. show mercy to the enemies of her kingdom
5. As controlled by context, "fitly resemble" (lines 13-14) is best understood to mean
  - A. precisely describe
  - B. truthfully speak
  - C. justly assume
  - D. angrily refute
  - E. accurately compare
6. The metaphor developed in the second paragraph suggests primarily that
  - A. a ruler must often make decisions that the people find sacrilegious
  - B. God's will is really inscrutable to people in power
  - C. the privileges of power are really insignificant compensation for the burdens associated with the office
  - D. power often corrupts rulers and leads them toward a life of self-indulgence and luxury
  - E. weak monarchs who rule indecisively are an offense in God's sight

7. Pills that are "bitter and unpleasant to take" (lines 17-18) are best understood as a metaphor for
- A. the advice and diagnosis of doctors
  - B. attacks on a monarch from foreign enemies
  - C. the jealousy and envy of other princes
  - D. the duties and obligations of a sovereign
  - E. the pain and suffering that characterizes an illness
8. As used in line 19, "discharge" most nearly means
- A. fire
  - B. cancel
  - C. fulfill
  - D. remove from
  - E. pour forth
9. The most probable reason Elizabeth says, "In mine own disposition I should be willing to resign the place I hold to any other," (lines 20-22) is to
- A. defend herself against charges that she has usurped the power from anyone else
  - B. strengthen the idea that she rules in accordance to divine will
  - C. hint at her plan to resign and make way for another ruler
  - D. suggest that her confidence in her own ability to be a strong ruler is weakening
  - E. signal the fact that she is gradually losing the support of her people
10. In line 22, the line "other" most likely refers to
- A. the challengers in her audience
  - B. any potential and viable ruler
  - C. former rulers now deposed
  - D. any leader among her subjects
  - E. any designated royal office
11. The rhetorical strategy employed in lines 25-27 can best be described as
- A. extending a metaphor to close an argument
  - B. reducing the argument to an acceptable paradox
  - C. marshalling facts to support a central idea
  - D. making an abstraction concrete by using an analogy
  - E. counterbalancing a possible weakness with a greater virtue
12. In context, "thus... I commend me to your loyal loves (line 28) most likely means
- A. because of this you must obey me
  - B. this proves my devotion to you
  - C. for this reason I ask you to do your part
  - D. I ask your friends and families to think well of me
  - E. in this way I ask your continued allegiance
13. The most apparent goal of Elizabeth's rhetoric and reasoning is to
- A. explain the need to share her authority with her Parliament
  - B. elicit sympathy and support for her foreign policies in spite of her mistakes
  - C. establish her kinship with members of her Parliament
  - D. convince her audience of the purity and altruism of her motives
  - E. dissipate the increasing hostility of her subjects

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION  
SECTION II  
Total time - 2 hours

**Question 1**

(Suggested time - 40 minutes. This question counts one-third of the total essay section score.)

Queen Elizabeth delivered the following speech to her last Parliament in 1601, just two years before her death and the end of her reign. Read the speech carefully. Then write an essay in which you express how Queen Elizabeth uses language to convey to her Parliament (and her royal subjects) her motives and intentions as their queen.

To be a king, and wear a crown, is a thing more glorious to them that see it, than it is pleasant for them that bear it: for myself, I never was much inticed with the glorious name of a King, or the royal authority of a Queen, as delighted that God hath made me His instrument to maintain His Truth and Glory, and to defend this kingdom from dishonor, damage, tyranny, and oppression. But should I ascribe any of these things to myself, or my sexly weakness, I were not worthy to live, and of all most unworthy of the mercies I have received at God's hands, but to God only and wholly all is given and ascribed.

The cares and troubles of a Crown I cannot more fitly resemble than to the drugs of a learned physician, perfumed with some aromatical savour, or to bitter pills gilded over, by which they are made more acceptable or less offensive, which indeed are bitter and unpleasant to take, and for my own part, were it not for conscience sake to discharge the duty that God hath laid upon me, and to maintain His glory and keep you in safety, in mine own disposition I should be willing to resign the place I hold to any other, and glad to be freed of the glory with the labors, for it is not my desire to live nor to reign longer than my life and reign shall be for your good. And though you have had and many have many mightier and wiser Princes sitting in the Seat, yet you never had nor shall have any that will love you better. Thus Mr. Speaker, I commend me to your loyal loves, and yours to my best care and your further counsels, and I pray you Mr. Controller, and Mr. Secretary, and you of my Councell, that before these Gentlemen depart unto their countries, you bring them all to kiss my hand.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION  
SECTION II  
Total time - 2 hours

**Question 2**

(Suggested time - 40 minutes. This question counts one-third of the total essay section score.)

Queen Elizabeth delivered the following speech to her last Parliament in 1601, just two years before her death and the end of her reign. Read the speech carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze the methods Queen Elizabeth used to convince to her Parliament (and her royal subjects) of her altruistic motives and pure intentions as their queen.

To be a king, and wear a crown, is a thing more glorious to them that see it, than it is pleasant for them that bear it: for myself, I never was much inticed with the glorious name of a King, or the royal authority of a Queen, as delighted that God hath made me His instrument to maintain His Truth and Glory, and to defend this kingdom from dishonor, damage, tyranny, and oppression. But should I ascribe any of these things to myself, or my sexly weakness, I were not worthy to live, and of all most unworthy of the mercies I have received at God's hands, but to God only and wholly all is given and ascribed.

The cares and troubles of a Crown I cannot more fitly resemble than to the drugs of a learned physician, perfumed with some aromatical savour, or to bitter pills gilded over, by which they are made more acceptable or less offensive, which indeed are bitter and unpleasant to take, and for my own part, were it not for conscience sake to discharge the duty that God hath laid upon me, and to maintain His glory and keep you in safety, in mine own disposition I should be willing to resign the place I hold to any other, and glad to be freed of the glory with the labors, for it is not my desire to live nor to reign longer than my life and reign shall be for your good. And though you have had and many have many mightier and wiser Princes sitting in the Seat, yet you never had nor shall have any that will love you better.

Thus Mr. Speaker, I commend me to your loyal loves, and yours to my best care and your further counsels, and I pray you Mr. Controller, and Mr. Secretary, and you of my Councill, that before these Gentlemen depart unto their countries, you bring them all to kiss my hand.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II

Total time - 2 hours

**Question 3**

(Suggested time - 40 minutes. This question counts one-third of the total essay section score.)

Queen Elizabeth delivered the following speech to her last Parliament in 1601, just two years before her death and the end of her reign. In this eloquent speech, the queen attempted to convince her audience that the duties of a sovereign ruler far outweigh the "perks" of the position. Read the speech carefully. Then write an essay in which you defend, challenge, or qualify Queen Elizabeth's ideas about the nature of power, authority, and responsibility.

To be a king, and wear a crown, is a thing more glorious to them that see it, than it is pleasant for them that bear it: for myself, I never was much inticed with the glorious name of a King, or the royal authority of a Queen, as delighted that God hath made me His instrument to maintain His Truth and Glory, and to defend this kingdom from dishonor, damage, tyranny, and oppression. But should I ascribe any of these things to myself, or my sexly weakness, I were not worthy to live, and of all most unworthy of the mercies I have received at God's hands, but to God only and wholly all is given and ascribed.

The cares and troubles of a Crown I cannot more fitly resemble than to the drugs of a learned physician, perfumed with some aromatical savour, or to bitter pills gilded over, by which they are made more acceptable or less offensive, which indeed are bitter and unpleasant to take, and for my own part, were it not for conscience sake to discharge the duty that God hath laid upon me, and to maintain His glory and keep you in safety, in mine own disposition I should be willing to resign the place I hold to any other, and glad to be freed of the glory with the labors, for it is not my desire to live nor to reign longer than my life and reign shall be for your good. And though you have had and many have many mightier and wiser Princes sitting in the Seat, yet you never had nor shall have any that will love you better.

Thus Mr. Speaker, I commend me to your loyal loves, and yours to my best care and your further counsels, and I pray you Mr. Controller, and Mr. Secretary, and you of my Councill, that before these Gentlemen depart unto their countries, you bring them all to kiss my hand.