

## 7 Vocabulary: Style and Tone – Answer Key

Text: “The ‘American Dream’ in Political Rhetoric”, from: Peter Freese, *The American Dream*, Viewfinder Topics (München: Langenscheidt, 2011), pp. 12-16

### B TASKS

1. **Sum up the content of the excerpt from Richard Nixon’s second Inaugural Address (20 January 1973).**

**Suggested answer:**

Nixon says that recently there has been a general trend not to be proud of the US and its achievements. Now it is time to believe in this country again and to be more self-confident. He reminds his listeners of America’s tradition and vision and states that he needs their help to realize this vision.

2. **Analyze the style and tone of this excerpt.**

**Suggested answer:**

The register Nixon uses is formal and elevated. Instead of using “believe again”, he says “renew our faith”. He calls the spot where the inauguration takes place “hallowed by history”, which in neutral register might be phrased “historically important”. Both these examples also show that his diction contains expressions from the word field of religion (“faith”, “hallowed”); the expression “help far beyond himself” may be an allusion to the divine support that he hopes for (in addition to support from America’s citizens). As might be expected in a public speech, the syntax is relatively simple. Nixon does use hypotactical sentences, but nothing too complex. If a sentence is longer than two lines, it contains an enumeration (“ashamed of their country, ashamed of their parents, ashamed of America’s record ...”, ll. 24f.). This example also makes use of repetition (“ashamed”), a rhetorical device that occurs more than once (cf. “I think ...”, ll. 27f.).

Nixon’s tone in this excerpt is serious, sometimes even somewhat pompous where he uses religious terminology.

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