



**W**e hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Those simple words are our starting-point as Americans; they describe not only the foundation of our government but the substance of our common creed.

*Barack Obama, The Audacity of Hope*

# 1] YES WE CAN!

*George Washington:* 1st President of the USA (1789-97)

*Thomas Jefferson:* 3rd President of the USA (1801-09)

*Abraham Lincoln:* 16th President of the USA (1861-65)

*John F. Kennedy:* 35th President of the USA (1961-63)

*Jimmy Carter:* 39th President of the USA (1977-81)

*Ronald Reagan:* 40th President of the USA (1981-89)

*George Bush:* 41st President of the USA (1989-93)

*William Jefferson Clinton:* 42nd President of the USA (1993-2001)

*George W. Bush:* 43rd President of the USA (2001-09)

*Barack Hussein Obama:* 44th President of the USA (2009-



IT'S NOT DIFFICULT to spot the odd man out! After 43 white presidents came a black man. It's important to note that Obama is half-black, half white. But he is regarded by the world – and by himself – as being black. Also – he has a very different name:

**Barack:** his father's first name, from the Arabic and Jewish word 'baruch' (blessed)

**Hussein:** his grandfather's first name, from Arabic meaning 'good' or 'handsome'

**Obama:** his father's and grandfather's tribal name, from the Luo tribe of Kenya

Obama's father came from Kenya. His mother came from Kansas, USA. They met in a Russian language class at the University of Hawaii, USA, where Obama's father was a foreign student. Barack was born in Hawaii on August 4, 1961. His parents divorced when he was 3 years old.

His father died in a traffic accident in Nairobi, Kenya in 1982. His mother died of cancer in 1995.

Barack grew up in Hawaii and Indonesia. He studied law at Harvard University, and was a brilliant student. He joined the Democratic Party and became Senator for Illinois in 2004 in the US Congress in Washington.

He met Michelle Robinson in 1989 and married her in 1992. She is from a black working-class family in South Chicago with roots going back to slavery. They have two children, Malia Ann born in 1998 and Natasha ("Sasha") born in 2001.

Barack Obama became a national figure when he made a prime-time TV speech at the Democratic National Convention in 2004. In 2007 he decided to run for President at the 2008 election. His slogan was: "Yes we can." One of his supporters, a member of the rock group Black Eyed Peas, made a song about him. →

# Yes We Can

by *Will.i.am*

It was a creed written into the founding documents that declared the destiny of a nation.

**Yes we can.**

It was whispered by slaves and abolitionists as they blazed a trail toward freedom.

**Yes we can. Yes we can.**

It was sung by immigrants as they struck out from distant shores  
and pioneers who pushed westward against an unforgiving wilderness.

**Yes we can. Yes we can.**

It was the call of workers who organized;  
women who reached for the ballots;  
a President who chose the moon as our new frontier;  
and a King who took us to the mountain-top and pointed the way to the Promised Land.  
Yes we can to justice and equality.

**(yes we can, yes we can, yes we can, yes we can...)**

Yes we can to opportunity and prosperity.

Yes we can to opportunity and prosperity.

Yes we can heal this nation. Yes we can repair this world. Yes we can. Si Se Puede.

**(yes we can, yes we can, yes we can, yes we can...)**

We know the battle ahead will be long,  
but always remember that no matter what obstacles stand in our way,  
nothing can stand in the way of the power of millions of voices calling for change.

We want change!

**(We want change! We want change! We want change...)**

We have been told we cannot do this by a chorus of cynics  
who will only grow louder and more dissonant.

We've been asked to pause for a reality check.

We've been warned against offering the people of this nation false hope.

But in the unlikely story that is America, there has never been anything false about hope.

We want change! **(We want change! I want change! We want change! I want change...)**

The hopes of the little girl who goes to a crumbling school in Dillon  
are the same as the dreams of the boy who learns on the streets of LA;  
we will remember that there is something happening in America;  
that we are not as divided as our politics suggests;  
that we are one people; we are one nation; and together,  
we will begin the next great chapter in the American story with three words  
that will ring from coast to coast;

from sea to shining sea - **Yes. We. Can.** **(yes we can, yes we can, yes we can, yes we can, yes we can, yes we can, yes we can, yes we can...)**



### 1. "YES WE CAN" ON THE INTERNET

Watch the video on [focuson.alinea.dk](http://focuson.alinea.dk)

Answer these questions:

- A. How many people do you see in the video?
- B. How many different nationalities do you see?
- C. Do you recognize any of the people in the video? Who?

Discuss your answer with your partner and agree on the best answers.

Share your answers with your class.

### 2. INSIDE-OUTSIDE CIRCLE® PRESENTATIONS

The rap mentions a lot of historical facts:

1. the founding documents
2. immigrants from distant shores
3. pioneers who pushed westward
4. workers who organized
5. women who reached for the ballots
6. a President who chose the moon as our new frontier

Choose one of the facts above and try to explain what it refers to. E.g. explain what 'the founding documents' might be. Your presentation must be about 1 minute long.

The Inside-Outside Circle structure is presented on page 70.

**JANUARY 18, 2009:**

Will.i.am performs at the ceremony of President elect Barack Obama's inauguration as the 44th President of the United States.