



ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION (QUEENSLAND)

Promoting International Understanding and Human Achievement through English
The English Speaking Union (Queensland Branch)
ACN 009 706 236 ABN 56 009 706 236

An independent not-for-profit community organization
Queensland President: Emeritus Professor Roland Sussex

rESUMPTION #1, April 2020 (by RS)

THE "SORRY SPEECH"

On 13 February 2008 Prime Minister Kevin Rudd delivered the "Sorry Speech" in Federal Parliament, as an apology to Australia's indigenous peoples. The speech was presented to Parliament in the form of a motion, and received bipartisan support. In addition to its social impact, it has become recognized as a landmark in Australian public speaking.

You can find video and audio (and written) versions of the "Sorry Speech" [here](https://www.videolan.org/vlc/). Mac users will need to download the free VLC software to view it (<https://www.videolan.org/vlc/>).

A copy of the written speech is on the next page of this document (DON'T look at the following coloured page yet!). It's best if you print it out. Find some differently coloured pens or pencils to mark up the written version as we explore it.

View it or listen to it at least twice, with or without the written version to track.

Using the written version, consider these questions:

1. The speech is only 364 words long. It covers a lot of ground. How does it do that?
2. What kind of words does it use? (Everyday words? High style words? A mixture?)
3. What kind of grammar does it use? (Simple or complex sentences?)
4. Music exploits pattern, rhythm and repetition. How do they work in the "Sorry Speech"?
5. What aspects of the "Sorry Speech" are particularly suited to being spoken?

Use your coloured pens to mark up parts of the "Sorry Speech" which stand out. Look for distinctive words and sentences, and for repetitions and patterns. Play the speech again, looking for these patterns.

Now here are some features to look for:

- a) start of sentences: what patterns are there?
- b) repetition of "we", "sorry", "future"

- c) use of “we” throughout the speech
- d) patterns of three (words, phrases)

Now have a look at my trial marked up version (last page below), using colour to highlight similar features. What did you see? Do you have more examples? Share your thoughts on the ESU Queensland Facebook page ([The-English-Speaking-Union-Queensland-151481784920387](https://www.facebook.com/The-English-Speaking-Union-Queensland-151481784920387)).

And now see a very famous example which also uses the rule of threes, Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address”, which was famously spoken by the actor Charles Laughton in the film “[Ruggles of Red Gap](#)” (from 2:59). Get a [written version](#) and search for threes.

THE SORRY SPEECH: Kevin Rudd

I move:

That today we honour the Indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing cultures in human history.

We reflect on their past mistreatment.

We reflect in particular on the mistreatment of those who were Stolen Generations - this blemished chapter in our nation's history.

The time has now come for the nation to turn a new page in Australia's history by righting the wrongs of the past and so moving forward with confidence to the future.

We apologise for the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians.

We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country.

For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry.

To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry.

And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry.

We the Parliament of Australia respectfully request that this apology be received in the spirit in which it is offered as part of the healing of the nation.

For the future we take heart; resolving that this new page in the history of our great continent can now be written.

We today take this first step by acknowledging the past and laying claim to a future that embraces all Australians.

A future where this Parliament resolves that the injustices of the past must never, never happen again.

A future where we harness the determination of all Australians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to close the gap that lies between us in life expectancy, educational achievement and economic opportunity.

A future where we embrace the possibility of new solutions to enduring problems where old approaches have failed.

A future based on mutual respect, mutual resolve and mutual responsibility.

A future where all Australians, whatever their origins, are truly equal partners, with equal opportunities and with an equal stake in shaping the next chapter in the history of this great country, Australia.

RUDD SORRY SPEECH, MARKED UP BY RS (partial only)

1. Today we honour the Indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing cultures in human history.
2. We reflect on their past mistreatment.
3. We reflect in particular on the mistreatment of those who were Stolen Generations – this blemished chapter in our nation's history.
4. The time has now come for the nation to turn a new page in Australia's history by righting the wrongs of the past and so moving forward with confidence to the future.
5. We apologise for the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians.
6. We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country.
7. For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry.
8. To the mothers and fathers, the brothers and sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry.
9. And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry.
10. We the Parliament of Australia respectfully request that this apology be received in the spirit in which it is offered as part of the healing of the nation.
11. For the future we take heart; resolving that this new page in the history of our great continent can now be written.
12. We today take this first step by acknowledging the past and laying claim to a future that embraces all Australian.
13. A future where this Parliament resolves that the injustices of the past must never, never happen again.
14. A future where we harness the determination of all Australians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to close the gap that lies between us in life expectancy, educational achievement and economic opportunity.
15. A future where we embrace the possibility of new solutions to enduring problems where old approaches have changed.
16. A future based on mutual respect, mutual resolve and mutual responsibility.
17. A future where all Australians, whatever their origins, are truly equal partners, with equal opportunities and with an equal stake in shaping the next chapter in the history of this great country.