



**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**  
**Faculty of Arts**  
**Department of Languages**  
2019\_2 Examination

**COURSE CODE: ENG414**  
**COURSE TITLE: SPEECH WRITING**  
**CREDIT UNITS: 3**  
**TIME ALLOWED: THREE HOURS**

**INSTRUCTION: ANSWER THREE (3) QUESTIONS IN ALL. QUESTION FOUR (4) IS COMPULSORY**

1. You are the Valedictorian for your School's convocation ceremony.
  - a. Develop a draft outline for your speech.
  - b. Write the speech in not more than 4 paragraphs.

**(20 marks, 55 marks)**
  
2. Write a speech for a presentation to a youth group on the topic '*The Impact of Insecurity on the Nigerian Youth*'.

**(20 marks, 55 marks)**
  
3. Read the speech provided below, and do the following:
  - a. Summarise the speech in an outline format
  - b. Make sure you list the main points and supporting points

**(20 marks, 55 marks)**
  
4. Read the speech provided below and do the following:
  - a. Identify the major parts of the speech and the features that characterise each part.
  - b. According to the speaker, what is the purpose of the speech?
  - c. Identify one strategy the speaker uses to identify with the audience
  - d. Identify one strategy the speaker uses to highlight a point
  - e. Comment on the language and style

**(30 marks, 70 minutes)**

## Commencement address for American University College of Arts & Sciences by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

President Burwell, Chairman Board of Trustees, Jack Purcell, members of the Board of Trustees, Deans, Faculty, family, friends, eagles, and most importantly, graduating class of 2019, Good evening.

Many many congratulations!

I am very honored to be your commencement speaker, today. This is a platform that I have been given because of my writing. And years ago, when I started writing stories in little notebooks as a child, I was doing what I loved. I was escaping into an imaginative world, and I could not have possibly imagined that I would one day be standing here before you. It's a privilege to have received an honorary Doctorate degree. And for those of you who are graduates with actual Doctorate degrees, Congratulations again on all the hard work that you've put into it. And if it's any consolation, remember that people with honorary degrees will not be competing with you on the job market.

So not long after I published my second novel I received a message from a friend who was at a very good college here in the US. And the message was "Your book is on the syllabus, it's required reading! You've finally arrived"! This of course was wonderful news I was flattered and pleased. At the same time, I was applying to graduate school and one of the schools I was applying to, was the same College where my book was being studied. Now when I told my friend about this, she did not understand why. She asked, "Why would you go back to school when you finally arrived?" But I wanted to go back to school because I woke up every morning thinking of how little I knew, and how much I was yet to know. I still feel that way. I think of myself as a perpetual student because knowledge is never complete.

And so, as you prepare to soar away on your eagle wings today, as you graduate with your hard earned degrees, please don't think of today as the day you stopped being a student. Be a student for the rest of your life. And the best way to do this is to read everyday, preferably books, but otherwise anything continuous and relatively long, which means Twitter doesn't count. And what you read should also have proper punctuation and spellings, which means that text messages don't count. I know it's a little odd for me to be standing here telling **you about reading when you've been** immersed in reading for the past few years here at AU. But studies show that many educated people stop reading when they no longer have to read. And so I make the case for reading, not because I need to make a living as a writer, well it's not the only reason, but because reading is still the best way to understand our world reading makes empathy possible when we read we become alive in bodies that are not our own. And if there is anything that we need solely and greatly today, it is empathy. We can never know exactly what it's like to be another person, but we can approximate it by inhabiting the stories of other people.

So here's another story about another friend. This friend moved to the U.S. from a European country and got a job teaching at a College here. When he attended his first faculty orientation meeting he expected to be told about academic rigour and exam policy and that sort of thing. But the emphasis of the meeting was to tell the new instructors to make sure that their students were never made to feel uncomfortable in class. My friend found this strange. And so if expecting always to be comfortable has been a central part of your university experience here at AU, it's time to let that go. As you graduate today, I want to ask that you make peace with discomfort. There is

something perverse about expecting always to be comfortable. Life is messy, sometimes discomfort opens us up to growth, and to knowledge, and to meaning. And it's especially relevant today in America in a country with deep political divisions it is impossible to engage honestly without some discomfort.

So this is certainly not the best of times. I could tell you that our planet is dying, that we are killing it. I could tell you that the world is standing askew. But you already know these things because you've been well educated here at AU. And I'm sure that for most of you being here in Washington DC at the center of American political life has not just been about going monumenting, much as monumenting is of course a worthy pastime. And so instead I'd like to tell you about clichés, one of the most enduring lessons I learned as a writer is to avoid cliché because it seems that the biggest enemy of the literate person is cliché. When I teach writing I always ask my students to avoid cliché and I give them the usual reasons clichés are expressions that are overused and hackneyed and tired and on original and this is of course all true. But it is also true that there is something intrinsically democratic about cliché and anything that is democratic is appealing to me. The language might be tired but the sentiment is worth revisiting. So I could tell you for example that 'life is short', a cliché that you must have heard many times before, and it's a cliché that particularly lends itself to mockery and dismissal. So well, life is short so just blow your rent money, and don't repay your student loans, and don't be responsible for anything because life is short.

Actually, I have more complicated views on student loans but this might not be the best place this might not be the best place to them to air my thoughts on the burden that so many young Americans are forced to start their lives with, but moving on.

But to revisit that cliché, 'life is short', is really to say that to be alive is to hold something fragile and precious in the palm of your hand, and to consciously decide not to waste it. 'Life is short' really means, do something. It means, be skeptical but never cynical. To be skeptical is to say, I don't know

if it's true, I'm willing to explore, and learn, and question. And to be cynical, is to say it's not true because nothing ever true. To be cynical is to be closed, and to be skeptical is to be open life is short means be open it means decide what you will do with the regrets in your life here will always be something to regret you can waste more time regretting your regret or you can put it aside and learn from it life is short really means have a purpose and purpose does not have to be grand I think that the smaller the purpose the more meaningful to be kind to have empathy to avoid sanctimony to think of the humanity of other people to take one step to try.

And what about that other cliché that is so common around graduations, 'Go and change the world'. Yes, the language is a little grandiose actually bordering on meaninglessness. What does it even mean 'change the world'? But what if we revisited it not as the world but as one tiny slice of the world, the smallest sliver of the world, one person.

Last year, I met a remarkable woman called Vivian Bailey she was born in 1918 here in Washington DC, She's a tiny African-American woman, 100 years old, and since she retired from government in 1975, she's raised money to send care packages to several members of the Armed Forces, she's raised money to make sure that children from an underserved public school close to her get to go on field trips. And when she was asked why she did so much while having so little she said quite simply, 'I like to keep busy'. Vivian Bailey taught me that real human impact is never

about quantity it's always about quality. 'Change the world' really means do something. The world is full of unnecessary suffering. Washington DC is full of unnecessary suffering. Vote for a candidate whose policies will reduce suffering, tutor a child, mentor a younger person, volunteer, stand up for someone, speak up. There are women all over the world today who feel affirmed, at peace, emboldened and strengthened, simply because another woman somewhere dared to tell her story of sexual harassment. Sometimes, it takes one person's story to open someone's eyes to change a perspective, which can lead to a real and meaningful change. Sometimes to be reminded that we are not alone can propel us to keep going and remember that speaking up is often not just about you but also about all those who are not able to speak for themselves change the world can also be about what you choose not to do it can mean knowing when to walk on by knowing when to walk away knowing when to choose silence.

I recently read in the news that Instagram is trying out a new nudge feature on its platform, which will warn users if they're about to make or have made a comment that is considered hurtful or an attack. Change-the-world means try to be that person who doesn't need that nudge feature. If you don't like something, move on. 'Change the world' means if you can't make it better, then for goodness sakes don't make it worse. So yes, graduating class of 2019, so many of you so accomplished soaring Eagles, change the world or to renew that cliché by paraphrasing a wise saying, 'Be ashamed to die until you have done one act that benefits humanity', and humanity can be one person. Thank you

[Applause]

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e79DvWJ0m70>