

U.S. Presidential Oath of Office

The inauguration of the president of the United States will always be a milestone event for the nation and, in many ways, for the world. The Inauguration Day ceremony, which is held on a large, flag-draped platform set up at the Capitol on January 20th of every fourth year, represents the beginning of one person's four-year commitment to act as chief executive for the nation as a whole.

According to Article II of the U.S. Constitution, the president-elect must make the following affirmation before taking office.

I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.

It is customary, though not officially required, for the phrase "So help me God" to be added to the end of the oath. In the ceremony, the president-elect recites the oath with his or her left hand on the Bible and right hand slightly raised. Following the oath of office, the president then delivers an Inaugural Address, a speech listened to by people throughout the world.



Thinking Critical ly

1. In your own words, explain the promise that the president-elect is making by reciting the oath of office.
2. To whom is the president-elect making this promise?
3. Why do you think the founders of this nation included the presidential oath of office in the U.S. Constitution?

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