

SOTU* TRIVIA

* State of the Union

CAMERA READY

Cameras used for the Super Bowl, America's most-viewed football game, provide the best, high-definition footage. Operators memorize where individuals will sit in case the president mentions them.

SPOKEN V. WRITTEN

In 1801, President Jefferson broke with tradition and sent a written State of the Union message to Congress. A speech, he felt, smacked of monarchy. President Wilson restarted the spoken tradition in 1913.

TV SPOTLIGHT

President Truman gave the first televised State of the Union in 1947. Eighteen years later, President Johnson moved his address from the customary midday spot to evening, when millions of Americans would be watching.

A WOMAN'S PLACE

In 2007, President Bush marked a historic moment, acknowledging Speaker Nancy Pelosi: "Tonight I have a high privilege ... as the first president to begin the State of the Union message with these words: 'Madam Speaker.'"

Harnessing the 'Net
President Bush's 2002 address was the first streamed live on the Internet.

MULTILINGUAL REBUTTAL

The opposition party chooses a person — usually a member of Congress — to rebut the speech. In 2004, New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson offered the first rebuttal in Spanish.

SHORTEST
President Washington's address in 1790, only 1,088 words, lasted less than 10 minutes.

TWEET, TWEET

Some lawmakers use smartphones to comment on the speech via social media.

Making a Break for Bipartisanship
In an unusual move in 2011, senators crossed the aisle to sit beside a colleague from the opposite party.

LONGEST
President Clinton's 1995 address, at 9,910 words, lasted 1 hour, 25 minutes.

WELCOME INTERRUPTIONS
Applause has broken up a speech as many as 128 times.

(That happened to President Clinton.)

WARDROBE CHOICES

Presidents and lawmakers frequently wear neckties or scarves associated with their political party (blue or red). In 2011, President Obama's purple tie sent a message of bipartisanship. Often lawmakers wear ribbons to support a cause. In 2011, their black-and-white ribbons honored a colleague who survived a shooting.



Embassy of the United States of America



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION PROGRAMS