

## Inter-pausal units in Obama and Trump

The number of words in a unit of speech between pauses is one of the criteria of eloquence. No speaker should cram too many words into a unit, as this will strain the processing capacities of the listeners. On the other hand, if the units are too short, the speech will sound disjointed and non-fluent. This is one of the reasons for the impression that Trump's oratory is poorer than Obama's, as these examples illustrate (the number of hyphens shows the relative length of a pause, with a very short pause shown by a period).

Trump tends to break a sentence up into small chunks (dashes show pause lengths):

For too long - a small group in our nation's Capital - has reaped the rewards of government - while the people - have borne - the cost -- Washington flourished - but the people . did not share - in its wealth -- Politicians prospered - but the jobs left - and the factories closed ---

Obama's often uses longer units:

-- there are many who won't agree with every decision or policy I make as president -- and we know the government can't solve every problem -- but I will always be honest with you about the challenges we face --

The only example in Trump's speech that approaches this is the single 16-wor-der:

- We will be protected by the great men and women of our military and law enforcement -

The table shows the number of words in each inter-pausal unit in the two inaugural speeches (excluding the conventional naming of addressees). Obama's average is 6.8 words per unit, Trumps' 4.1.

Number of words per unit	Obama: number of units	Obama: number of words	Trump: number of units	Trump: Number of words
1	7	7	18	18
2	23	46	63	126
3	39	107	77	231
4	36	144	68	272
5	37	185	36	180
6	34	204	46	276
7	19	133	19	133
8	22	176	13	104
9	20	180	2	18
10	12	120	3	30
11	11	121	2	22
12	5	60	2	24
13	8	104		
14	6	84		

15	11	161		
16	5	80	1	16
17	2	34		
20	1	20		
21	1	21		
26	1	26		
34	1	34		
<b>Total</b>	301	2,047	350	1,450