When you return to school in August, we will be examining argument in literature. Written arguments attempt to convince a reader to agree with a particular point of view, to make a particular decision, or to pursue a particular course of action. The following six paired articles or essays have been selected for you to analyze. The first two are famous speeches, the second two tackle the issue of success and failure in school, and the third two offer opposing points of view on the value of Affirmative Action. **Print out each of the following six argumentative essays. Annotate (highlight and label) the major components of the argument and attach it to a typed SOAPSTone analysis.** Directions for a SOAPSTone analysis are on page two. You will be turning in six separate analysis packets.

1. *Declaration of Independence* by Thomas Jefferson  

2. *I Have a Dream* by Martin Luther King Jr.  
   [http://www.usconstitution.net/dream.html](http://www.usconstitution.net/dream.html)

3. *Diversity is Essential* by Lee C. Bolllinger  
   [http://www.newsweek.com/id/62912](http://www.newsweek.com/id/62912)

4. *...But Not at This Cost* by Armstrong Williams  

5. *In Praise of the F Word* by Mary Sherry  

   [http://www6.district125.k12.il.us/~rtompson/TheRightToFail.pdf](http://www6.district125.k12.il.us/~rtompson/TheRightToFail.pdf)

*The box on the right side of the second page is not included.*
SOAPS and Argument Analysis

In order to thoroughly analyze the essays, use the following questions to guide you in answering each category. Set each essay analysis up by answering the following five categories of questions. There is a graphic organizer you may use on the following page. Write in complete, correct sentences and vary the verbs you use for describing the author’s attitude. The following link will get you to a page with some great alternatives to “said” and “talked about”: http://umanitoba.ca/student/u1/images/Verbs_Describ_Auth_Mood.pdf

Speaker  Who is the speaker who produced this piece? What is his or her background and why are they making the points they are making? Is there a bias (a tendency toward one opinion) in what was written? You must be able to cite evidence from the text that supports your answer. No independent research is allowed on the speaker.

Occasion  What is the occasion? In other words, what is the time and place of the piece? What prompted the author to write this piece? How do you know from the text? What event led to its publication or development? It is particularly important that you understand the context that encouraged the writing to happen.

Audience  Who is the audience? This refers to the group of readers to whom this piece is directed. The audience may be one person, a small group or a large group, a specific person or group. What assumptions can you make about the audience? Is it a mixed racial or gender group? What social class? What political party? Who was the document created for and how do you know? Are there any words or phrases that are unusual or different? Does the speaker use language specific for a unique audience?

Purpose  What is the purpose? In other words, what is the reason behind the text? In what ways does he or she convey this message? How would you perceive the speaker giving this speech? What is the document saying? What is the emotional state of the speaker? How is the speaker trying to spark a reaction in the audience? What words or phrases show the speaker’s tone? How is the document supposed to make you feel? This helps you examine the argument or its logic.

Subject  What is the subject of the document, the general topic, content, and ideas contained in the text? How do you know this? How has the subject been selected and presented by the author?

Tone  What is the author’s tone? How is the author perceived by the audience? What is the author’s mood? What is the author’s point-of-view?
SOAPSTone Analysis Graphic Organizer

If you use this, remember to type.

Article Title:
Author:

1. Speaker:

2. Occasion:

3. Audience:

4. Purpose

5. Subject

6. Tone
Con: ... But Not At This Cost

Admissions Policies Like Michigan's Focus Not On Who, But What, You Are--Perpetuating A Culture Of Victimhood

By Armstrong Williams | NEWSWEEK

From the magazine issue dated Jan 27, 2003

Back in 1977, when I was a senior in high school, I received scholarship offers to attend prestigious colleges. The schools wanted me in part because of my good academic record--but also because affirmative action mandates required them to encourage more black students to enroll. My father wouldn't let me take any of the enticements. His reasoning was straightforward: scholarship money should go to the economically deprived. And since he could pay for my schooling, he would. In the end, I chose a historically black college--South Carolina State.

What I think my father meant, but was perhaps too stern to say, was that one should always rely on hard work and personal achievement to carry the day--every day. Sadly, this rousing point seems lost on the admissions board at the University of Michigan, which wrongly and unapologetically discriminates on the basis of skin color. The university ranks applicants on a scale that awards points for SAT scores, high-school grades and race. For example, a perfect SAT score is worth 12 points. Being black gets you 20 points. Is there anyone who can look at those two numbers and think they are fair?

Supporters maintain that the quota system is essential to creating a diverse student body. And, indeed, there is some validity to this sort of thinking. A shared history of slavery and discrimination has ingrained racial hierarchies into our national identity, divisions that need to be erased. There is, however, a very real danger that we are merely reinforcing the idea that minorities are first and foremost victims. Because of this victim status, the logic goes, they are owed special treatment. But that isn't progress, it's inertia.

If the goal of affirmative action is to create a more equitable society, it should be need-based. Instead, affirmative action is defined by its tendency to reduce people to fixed categories: at many universities, it seems, admissions officers look less at who you are than what you are. As a result, affirmative-action programs rarely help the least among us. Instead, they often benefit the children of middle- and upper-class black Americans who have been conditioned to feel they are owed something.

This is alarming. We have finally, after far too long, reached a point where black Americans have pushed into the mainstream--and not just in entertainment and sports. From politics to corporate finance, blacks succeed. Yet many of us still feel entitled to special benefits--in school, in jobs, in government contracts.

It is time to stop. We must reach a point where we expect to rise or fall on our own merits. We just can't continue to base opportunities on race while the needs of the poor fall by the wayside. As a child growing up on a farm, I was taught that personal responsibility was the lever that moved the world. That is why it pains me to see my peers rest their heads upon the warm pillow of victim status.

WILLIAMS IS A SYNDICATED COLUMNIST.

Find this article at http://www.newsweek.com/id/62913 © 2003
Declaration of Independence

Here is the complete text of the Declaration of Independence. The original spelling and capitalization have been retained.

(Adopted by Congress on July 4, 1776)

The Unanimous Declaration
of the Thirteen United States of America

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive to these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. -- Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former systems of government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his assent to laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of representation in the legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.
He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for their exercise; the state remaining in the meantime exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavored to prevent the population of these states; for that purpose obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migration hither, and raising the conditions of new appropriations of lands.

He has obstructed the administration of justice, by refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.

He has made judges dependent on his will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of new offices, and sent hither swarms of officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, standing armies without the consent of our legislature.

He has affected to render the military independent of and superior to civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation:

For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by mock trial, from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these states:

For cutting off our trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing taxes on us without our consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of trial by jury:

For transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offenses:

For abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighboring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule in these colonies:

For taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments:

For suspending our own legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.
He has abdicated government here, by declaring us out of his protection and waging war against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burned our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow citizens taken captive on the high seas to bear arms against their country, to become the executioners of their friends and brethren, or to fall themselves by their hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare, is undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms: our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have we been wanting in attention to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends.

We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name, and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these united colonies are, and of right ought to be free and independent states; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as free and independent states, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do. And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor.
Pro: Diversity Is Essential...

He Knew He Was In For A Fight. But It's A Battle The Former University Of Michigan President Believes Must Be Won.

By Bollinger Is President Of Columbia University. | NEWSWEEK

From the magazine issue dated Jan 27, 2003

When I became president of the University of Michigan in 1997, affirmative action in higher education was under siege from the right. Buoyed by a successful lawsuit against the University of Texas Law School's admissions policy and by ballot initiatives such as California's Proposition 209, which outlawed race as a factor in college admissions, the opponents set their sights on affirmative-action programs at colleges across the country.

The rumor that Michigan would be the next target in this campaign turned out to be correct. I believed strongly that we had no choice but to mount the best legal defense ever for diversity in higher education and take special efforts to explain this complex issue, in simple and direct language, to the American public. There are many misperceptions about how race and ethnicity are considered in college admissions. Competitive colleges and universities are always looking for a mix of students with different experiences and backgrounds--academic, geographic, international, socioeconomic, athletic, public-service oriented and, yes, racial and ethnic.

It is true that in sorting the initial rush of applications, large universities will give "points" for various factors in the selection process in order to ensure fairness as various officers review applicants. Opponents of Michigan's undergraduate system complain that an applicant is assigned more points for being black, Hispanic or Native American than for having a perfect SAT score. This is true, but it trivializes the real issue: whether, in principle, race and ethnicity are appropriate considerations. The simple fact about the Michigan undergraduate policy is that it gives overwhelming weight to traditional academic factors--some 110 out of a total of 150 points. After that, there are some 40 points left for other factors, of which 20 can be allocated for race or socioeconomic status.

Race has been a defining element of the American experience. The historic Brown v. Board of Education decision is almost 50 years old, yet metropolitan Detroit is more segregated now than it was in 1960. The majority of students who each year arrive on a campus like Michigan's graduated from virtually all-white or all-black high schools. The campus is their first experience living in an integrated environment.

This is vital. Diversity is not merely a desirable addition to a well-rounded education. It is as essential as the study of the Middle Ages, of international politics and of Shakespeare. For our students to better understand the diverse country and world they inhabit, they must be immersed in a campus culture that allows them to study with, argue with and become friends with students who may be different from them. It broadens the mind, and the intellect--essential goals of education.

Reasonable people can disagree about affirmative action. But it is important that we do not lose the sense of history, the compassion and the largeness of vision that defined the best of the civil-rights era, which has given rise to so much of what is good about America today.

Find this article at http://www.newsweek.com/id/62912
In Praise Of The F Word

By Mary Sherry | NEWSWEEK

From the magazine issue dated May 6, 1991

Tens of thousands of 18-year-olds will graduate this year and be handed meaningless diplomas. These diplomas won't look any different from those awarded their luckier classmates. Their validity will be questioned only when their employers discover that these graduates are semiliterate.

Eventually a fortunate few will find their way into educational-repair shops--adult-literacy programs, such as the one where I teach basic grammar and writing. There, high-school graduates and high-school dropouts pursuing graduate-equivalency certificates will learn the skills they should have learned in school. They will also discover they have been cheated by our educational system.

As I teach, I learn a lot about our schools. Early in each session I ask my students to write about an unpleasant experience they had in school. No writers' block here! "I wish someone would have had made me stop doing drugs and made me study." "I liked to party and no one seemed to care." "I was a good kid and didn't cause any trouble, so they just passed me along even though I didn't read and couldn't write." And so on.

I am your basic do-gooder, and prior to teaching this class I blamed the poor academic skills our kids have today on drugs, divorce and other impediments to concentration necessary for doing well in school. But, as I rediscover each time I walk into the classroom, before a teacher can expect students to concentrate, he has to get their attention, no matter what distractions may be at hand. There are many ways to do this, and they have much to do with teaching style. However, if style alone won't do it, there is another way to show who holds the winning hand in the classroom. That is to reveal the trump card of failure.

I will never forget a teacher who played that card to get the attention of one of my children. Our youngest, a worldclass charmer, did little to develop his intellectual talents but always got by. Until Mrs. Stifter.

Our son was a high-school senior when he had her for English. "He sits in the back of the room talking to his friends," she told me. "Why don't you move him to the front row?" I urged, believing the embarrassment would get him to settle down. Mrs. Stifter looked at me steely-eyed over her glasses."I don't move seniors," she said. "I flunk them." I was flustered. Our son's academic life flashed before my eyes. No teacher had ever threatened him with that before. I regained my composure and managed to say that I thought she was right. By the time I got home I was feeling pretty good about this. It was a radical approach for these times, but, well, why not? "She's going to flunk you," I told my son. I
did not discuss it any further. Suddenly English became a priority in his life. He finished out the semester with an A.

I know one example doesn't make a case, but at night I see a parade of students who are angry and resentful for having been passed along until they could no longer even pretend to keep up. Of average intelligence or better, they eventually quit school, concluding they were too dumb to finish. "I should have been held back," is a comment I hear frequently. Even sadder are those students who are high-school graduates who say to me after a few weeks of class, "I don't know how I ever got a high-school diploma."

Passing students who have not mastered the work cheats them and the employers who expect graduates to have basic skills. We excuse this dishonest behavior by saying kids can't learn if they come from terrible environments. No one seems to stop to think that--no matter what environments they come from--most kids don't put school first on their list unless they perceive something is at stake. They'd rather be sailing.

Many students I see at night could give expert testimony on unemployment, chemical dependency, abusive relationships. In spite of these difficulties, they have decided to make education a priority. They are motivated by the desire for a better job or the need to hang on to the one they've got. They have a healthy fear of failure.

People of all ages can rise above their problems, but they need to have a reason to do so. Young people generally don't have the maturity to value education in the same way my adult students value it. But fear of failure, whether economic or academic, can motivate both. Flunking as a regular policy has just as much merit today as it did two generations ago. We must review the threat of flunking and see it as it really is--a positive teaching tool. It is an expression of confidence by both teachers and parents that the students have the ability to learn the material presented to them. However, making it work again would take a dedicated, caring conspiracy between teachers and parents. It would mean facing the tough reality that passing kids who haven't learned the material--while it might save them grief for the short term--dooms them to longterm illiteracy. It would mean that teachers would have to follow through on their threats, and parents would have to stand behind them, knowing their children's best interests are indeed at stake. This means no more doing Scott's assignments for him because he might fail. No more passing Jodi because she's such a nice kid.

This is a policy that worked in the past and can work today. A wise teacher, with the support of his parents, gave our son the opportunity to succeed--or fail. It's time we return this choice to all students.

*Sherry lives near Minneapolis, Minn.*

Find this article at [http://www.newsweek.com/id/122058](http://www.newsweek.com/id/122058)
William Zinsser

The Right to Fail

William K. Zinsser (b. 1922), American critic and writer, was born in New York and educated at Princeton. A former columnist for Look and Life, he has been on the faculty of Yale University since 1970. His books include Pop Goes America (1966), The Lunacy Boom (1970), On Writing Well (1980), and Writing with a Word Processor (1983).

1 I like “dropout” as an addition to the American language because it’s brief and it’s clear. What I don’t like is that we use it almost entirely as a dirty word.

2 We only apply it to people under twenty-one. Yet an adult who spends his days and nights watching mindless TV programs is more of a dropout than an eighteen-year-old who quits college, with its frequently mindless courses, to become, say, a VISTA volunteer. For the young, dropping out is often a way of dropping in.

3 To hold this opinion, however, is little short of treason in America. A boy or girl who leaves college is branded a failure--and the right to fail is one of the few freedoms that this country does not grant its citizens. The American dream is a dream of “getting ahead,” painted in strokes of gold wherever we look. Our advertisements and TV commercials are a hymn to material success, our magazine articles a toast to people who made it to the top. Smoke the right cigarette or drive the right car--so the ads imply--and girls will be swooning into your deodorized arms or caressing your expensive lapels. Happiness goes to the man who has the sweet smell of achievement. He is our national idol, and everybody else is our national fink.

4 I want to put in a word for the fink, especially the teen-age fink, because if we give him time to get through his flunkdom--if we release him from the pressure of attaining certain goals by a certain age--he has a good chance of becoming our national idol, a Jefferson or a Thoreau, a Buckminster Fuller of an Adlai Stevenson, a man with a mind of his own. We need mavericks and dissenters and dreamers far more than we need junior vice-presidents, but we paralyze them by insisting that every step be a step up to the next rung of the ladder. Yet in the fluid years of youth, the only way for boys and girls to find their proper role is often to take a hundred side trips, poking out in different directions, faltering, drawing back, and starting again.

5 “But what if we fail?” they ask, whispering the dreadful word across the Generation Gap to their parents, who are back home at the Establishment nursing their “middle-class values” and cultivating their “goal-oriented society.” The parents whisper back: “Don’t!”

6 What they should say is “Don’t be afraid to fail!” Failure isn’t fatal. Countless people have had a bout with it and come out stronger as a result. Many have even come out famous. History is strewn with eminent dropouts, “loners” who followed their own trail, not worrying about its odd twists and turns because they had faith in their own sense of direction. To read their biographies is always exhilarating, not only because they beat the system, but because their system was better than the one that they beat.

7 Luckily, such rebels still turn up often enough to prove that individualism, though badly threatened, is not extinct. Much has been written, for instance, about the fitful scholastic career of Thomas P. F. Hoving, New York’s former Parks Commissioner and now director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Hoving was a dropout’s dropout, entering and leaving schools as if they were motels, often at the request of the management. Still, he must have learned something during those unorthodox years, for he dropped in again at the top of his profession.

8 His case reminds me of another boyhood-that of Holden Caulfield in J. D. Salinger’s The Catcher in the Rye, the most popular literary hero of the postwar period. There is nothing accidental about the grip that this dropout continues to hold on the affections of an entire American generation. Nobody else, real or invented, has made such an engaging shambles of our “goal-oriented society,” so gratified our secret belief that the “phonies” are in power and the good guys up the creek. Whether Holden has also reached the top of his chosen field today is one of those speculations that delight fanciers of good fiction. I speculate that he has.

9 Holden Caulfield, incidentally, is now thirty-six.

10 I’m not urging everyone to go out and fail just for the sheer therapy of it, or to quit college just to coddle some vague discontent. Obviously it’s better to succeed than to flop, and in general a long education is more helpful than a short one. (Thanks to my own education, for example, I can tell George Eliot from T. S. Eliot, I can handle the pluperfect tense in French, and I know that Caesar beat the Helvetii because he had enough frumentum.) I only mean that failure isn’t bad in itself, or success automatically good.

11 Fred Zinnemann, who has directed some of Hollywood’s most honored movies, was asked by a reporter, when A Man for All Seasons won every prize, about his previous film, Behold a Pale Horse, which was a box-office disaster. “I don’t feel any obligation to be successful,” Zimmerman replied. “Success can be dangerous--you feel you know it all. I’ve learned a great deal from my failures.” A similar point was made by Richard Brooks about his ambitious money loser, Lord Jim. Recalling the three years of his life that went into it, talking almost with elation about the troubles that befell his unit in Cambodia, Brooks told me that he learned more about his craft from this considerable failure than from his many earlier hits.

12 It’s a point, of course, that applies throughout the arts. Writers, playwrights, painters and composers work in the expectation of periodic defeat, but they wouldn’t keep going back into the arena if they thought it was the end of the world. It isn’t the end of the world. For an artist—and perhaps for anybody—it is the only way to grow.
12 Today’s younger generation seems to know that this is true, seems willing to take the risks in life that artists take in art. “Society,” needless to say, still has the upper hand—it sets the goals and condemns as a failure everybody who won't play. But the dropouts and the hippies are not as afraid of failure as their parents and grandparents. This could mean, as their elders might say, that they are just plumb lazy, secure in the comforts of an affluent state. It could also mean, however, that they just don’t buy the old standards of success and are rapidly writing new ones.

13 Recently it was announced, for instance, that more than two hundred thousand Americans have inquired about service in VISTA (the domestic Peace Corps) and that, according to a Gallup survey, “more than 3 million American college students would serve VISTA in some capacity if given the opportunity.” This is hardly the road to riches or to an executive suite. Yet I have met many of these young volunteers, and they are not pining for traditional success. On the contrary, they appear more fulfilled than the average vice-president with a swimming pool.

14 Who is to say, then, if there is any right path to the top, or even to say what the top consists of? Obviously the colleges don’t have more than a partial answer—otherwise the young would not be so disaffected with an education that they consider vapid. Obviously business does not have the answer—otherwise the young would not be so scornful of its call to be an organization man.

15 The fact is, nobody has the answer, and the dawning awareness of this fact seems to me one of the best things happening in America today. Success and failure are again becoming individual visions, as they were when the country was younger, not rigid categories. Maybe we are learning again to cherish this right of every person to succeed on his own terms and to fail as often as necessary along the way.

CHICAGO TRIBUNE 5/19/97

These words—they are almost a poem—belong on posters in schools and kids’ bedrooms everywhere:

I’ve missed more than 9,000 shots in my career / I’ve lost almost 300 games / 26 times I’ve been trusted to take the game winning shot / and missed. / I’ve failed over, and over and over again in my life. / And that is why I succeed.

--Michael Jordan

You may recognize them from the script of a recent Nike commercial showing Jordan exiting his car under the United Center and entering the arena. The spot may or may not be a good way to sell shoes, but it’s a great way to promote a critical and often overlooked truth about failure and its integral relation to success.

Those who are afraid to fail will coast through life and never come close to their potential. Failure—honest failure despite genuine effort—is an underrated teacher and motivator as well as a sign that one is striving at close to full capacity.

If you’re not failing from time to time, you’re not pushing yourself. And if you’re not pushing yourself, your life, when you look back on it, is destined to be a sorry litany of mightas and couldas.

Of all the ways this sentiment has been expressed by great writers and thinkers through the ages (“A man’s reach should exceed his grasp . . .” and all that), none is likely to resonate in our culture as well as this formulation by Jamie Barrett, who wrote the ad.

Barrett’s words, reproduced above with line breaks supplied by Nike, were “the result of conversations with Jordan,” said Nike spokeswoman Vizhier Corpuz. “They reflect exactly how Jordan feels.”
The I Have a Dream Speech

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. So we have come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we have come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. So we have come to cash this check — a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice. We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quick sands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. Those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred.
We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We
must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again
we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force. The
marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a
distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their
presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny.
They have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We
cannot walk alone.

As we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn
back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be
satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the
unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied, as long as our bodies,
heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and
the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is
from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children
are stripped of their selfhood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating "For Whites
Only". We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro
in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and
we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a
mighty stream.

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations.
Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas
where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and
staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative
suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.

Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to
Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities,
knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the
valley of despair.

I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and
tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its
creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the
sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat
of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of
freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will
not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today.
I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification; one day right there in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with a new meaning, "My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring."

And if America is to be a great nation this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!

Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado!

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California!

But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia!

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee!

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! free at last! thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"