Hannah Harvey P.1

AoW 37

Directions:
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Think Congress is Sophomoric? A Study Says You're Right

Oratory in the House and Senate has dropped a full grade, to the high school sophomore level, an analysis finds.

Source: Lisa Mascaro, Los Angeles Times/ May 27, 2012

If it sounds like the debates in Congress have devolved into those of teenagers, it's because they have.

Discourse in the House and Senate has dropped a full grade level — to the equivalent of high school sophomore, according to a new study.

Call this the dumbing down of Congress in a partisan age. Or a shift to plain-spoken populism ignited by the new class of tea party Republicans.

But what has become clear in the new research is that the soaring oratory that once filled the floors of the House and Senate with million-dollar diction and sophisticated syntax is making way for a more modest approach.

"Congress is changing as an institution, and what you see is more and more members gearing their speeches as sound bites or YouTube clips," said Lee Drutman, a senior fellow at the nonpartisan Sunlight Foundation, which compiled the study released Monday.

"You can [hark] back to a golden age of Congress when members quoted Shakespeare on the floor and really engaged in debate and talked to each other and tried to reason back and forth," he said.

Consider Everett M. Dirksen, the legendary Republican senator from Illinois, who defended a civil rights bill in 1964 by paraphrasing 19th century French writer Victor Hugo: "Stronger than all the armies is an idea whose time has come."

But that was then.

In an analysis of floor debates over the last several years, the study found that newer lawmakers tended to speak at a lower grade level than the veterans of congressional speechifying. And political moderates among both Republicans and Democrats tended to carry on at a higher grade level than those more partisan liberals or conservatives.

With that framework in mind, it should come as no surprise that the lawmakers at the bottom of the list, speaking at the lowest grade level, are among the most ardent tea party Republicans in the freshman class. Rep. Mick Mulvaney of South Carolina, Rep. Robert Woodall of Georgia and Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky were the bottom three — speaking at about an eighth-grade level, the study found.

"We look at it as a badge of honor," said Mulvaney, a graduate of Georgetown University and the University of North Carolina Law School, who notes that he often speaks on the floor "extemporaneously."

"It's a conscious decision on my part. We are trying to be clear and trying to be concise," he added. He said he and his wife had been known to diagram sentences at the dinner table, a byproduct of having schoolteacher parents.

"I can explain the difference between 'fewer' and 'less,'" Mulvaney said, but he acknowledged that he still stumbled over the difference between "farther" and "further."

I don't think I want people at the level of teenagers running the country.

What's dropped? I didn't know you could be in the Senate in High School.

What does this mean

They were like Juniors before? That worries me

What level is this? Elementary? Middle?

What new study? Is this IQ?

Did they together stand what to this? It sounds like a time period.

Is it referring to new members, or laziness of the previous ones?

Definition please?

Is this a good or bad thing?

Seriously? Are you to dog me? How low is that? However, I suppose because this society, my generation is becoming very techy. I can still understand.

Isn't this a proper noun?

They could at least try to see each other's Points and they may get somewhere. They need to be so proud.

Why have they gotten lazy? Why do they just not care anymore? Are they really like teens in the way of quoting things like Shakespeare is stupid? and not cool? Why do they care?

I know who that is! I completely spaced what he wrote!

So they're hiring people who are less knowledgeable? Who may make stupid decisions? As lawmakers?

Is this a matter of their education and how the core has changed? I learned more about politics because of it. Most of this is going right over my head. Yet it still sounds ridiculous.

Don't know what this is either.

I really can't tell any more if this is real or not.

I've never heard of these people before.

Wow. Looks like someone is attempting to give he is NOT among that lower grade level groups. This also makes him sound desperate. Doesn't seem like a very good trait for someone in Law.

BAHA! Even I know how to do this. Not sure how much I remember learned in 6th grade! SO THERE!

Thank goodness I'm not the only one! These choose me so bad! A commercial on the radio almost told me the answer once, but I missed it. I only heard "..... ou!. Now I know the difference between "further" and farther." Thanks mom! Goodness. so close

Also, law students shouldn't admit mistakes. It can too easily be turned against them... depending on their opponent. At good for him as well for admitting he doesn't know everything.

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As a case in point, he cites fellow Republican Rep. Dan Lungren of Gold River, a seasoned politician who topped the list as the lawmaker with the highest level of speech that of a college senior.

That makes Lungren almost a throwback — on par with the Federalist Papers (a 17.1 grade level) or the U.S. Constitution (17.8 grade level) — though it is not clear his speeches are easier to understand.

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The best and worst speeches may be in the ear of the listener, and the study noted that President Obama's 2012 State of the Union address was judged by other researchers to rank at the eighth-grade level for the third year in a row.

As for those high-powered words from the Scholastic Assessment Test, memorized and recited by legions of high schoolers, they go virtually unspoken in Congress.

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The most-used SAT word — "compromise" — was said the most by Sen. Harry Reid (D-Nev.), the majority leader, who is fond of declaring, "Legislation is the art of compromise."

But in this partisan environment, as the study noted, even saying the word 142 times "does not make it so."

Possible WN topics

- Why do you think lawmakers are using simpler language? Explain.
- Choose a "hot spot" from the article and write a reflection.
- Research SAT scores over the past 50 years. What trend do you find? Thoughts?

7th P: Some quotes can be very Powerful when it is used by powerful people in Powerful speeches.

Michael Skonnard P.8
9/30/12

AoW 37

So the Senate has dropped a full grade? Surprizing...

Directions:

1. Mark your confusion.
2. Show evidence of a close reading. Mark up the text with questions and/or comments.
3. ~~Write a one-page reflection on your own sheet of paper.~~

Before I read this... I think It will be about how congress talk.

I've never really listen to congress so I would have no idea

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That would be my level next year!

Source: Lisa Mascaro, Los Angeles Times/ May 27, 2012

maybe congress are speaking at a lower grade level

teenagers as in High-school

If it sounds like the debates in Congress have devolved into those of teenagers, it's because they have.

I dont know what devolved means,

Sophomores are getting involved with the debates in congress

Discourse in the House and Senate has dropped a full grade level — to the equivalent of high school sophomore, according to a new study.

Do they want to be thought of as not smart?

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Internet referals makes essay better because it relates to something we know

"Congress is changing as an institution, and what you see is more and more members gearing their speeches as sound bites or YouTube clips," said Lee Drutman, a senior fellow at the nonpartisan Sunlight Foundation, which compiled the study released Monday.

The time when congress were excellent

"You can [hark] back to a golden age of Congress when members quoted Shakespeare on the floor and really engaged in debate and talked to each other and tried to reason back and forth," he said.

Republicans and democrats speak at a higher grade level than lawmakers which means lawmakers are aiming to speak to high-schools

Consider Everett M. Dirksen, the legendary Republican senator from Illinois, who defended a civil rights bill in 1964 by paraphrasing 19th century French writer Victor Hugo: "Stronger than all the armies is an idea whose time has come."

Im guessing these are people who make laws

But that was then.

In an analysis of floor debates over the last several years, the study found that newer lawmakers tended to speak at a lower grade level than the veterans of congressional speechifying.

I was right!

What are the veterans of congressional speechifying?

And political moderates among both Republicans and Democrats tended to carry on at a higher grade level than those more partisan liberals or conservatives.

The two main partys "The Rivalry"

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what does ardent even mean?

It's not an "honor" to speak at an 8th grade level

I'm wondering why this is if 8th graders can't even vote

"We look at it as a badge of honor," said Mulvaney, a graduate of Georgetown University and the University of North Carolina Law School, who notes that he often speaks on the floor extemporaneously."

? what does that word mean

Concise - Perfect and to the Point

"It's a conscious decision on my part. We are trying to be clear and trying to be concise," he added. He said he and his wife had been known to diagram sentences at the dinner table, a byproduct of having schoolteacher parents.

This makes sense, but I think 8th grade level is a little bit too low.

"I can explain the difference between 'fewer' and 'less,'" Mulvaney said, but he acknowledged that he still stumbled over the difference between "farther" and "further."

what does it mean to diagram sentances

I dont blame him. I probably wont know the difference for the rest of my life

That is a very good point. I have no idea if there even is a difference between farther & further, but I know fewer means deducted by small amount

and less means deducted by any amount.

finding I practiced finding the [illegible] words to find out the definition

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Word cells I disapprove that when ever I hear speeches w/ powerful words I think they are powerful smart people

It pdy means many and syl means together It must mean lots of things put together

explains definition

Thats still not as high as it gets

If you speak at college grade level only the seniors will understand. If it's at 8th grade then everyone will understand

She used words only a advanced Senior would understand

figures...

Senior in college

What does VAWA stand for... nevermind...

I figured.

It would be good for congress to use those words so when high-schoolers watch it helps them remember what they mean & they do better on tests

Why is he aiming towards 8th graders? I think he's stupid. He'll only get votes from 18 and older he can speak at least 10th grade or even up to senior of high-school.

don't know what any of these words mean

compromise is to bind by an agreement

She must be addicted to that word.

Partisian? dont know what is means

Nice, funny ending

This was a good essay about the lawmakers and how they have changed their speeches down to a lower grade level

I think lawmakers are using simpler language because they are confusing People with harder language So they have to use simpler words so EVERYONE understands it.

Lisa Mascaro, Who wrote this is a good writer uses perfect words and grammar.

Rep. Dan Lungren speaks at highest grade level

Rep Lucille Roybal Allard speaks at No. 2 highest grade level.

I didnt enjoy reading this because it doesnt affect me. I did find it interesting though.

Lawmakers need to keep doing what they're doing

I'm guessing this article was written at a 10th or 11th grade level.

Jaime Valeikas
P: 1st

AoW 37

It is, and when you get your chance you should give your all, because that's all you might get.

What's oratory?

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What does soaring oratory mean?

Source: Lisa Mascaro, Los Angeles Times/ May 27, 2012

The ones who dumped the Tea "Into the Sea!"

If it sounds like the debates in Congress have devolved into those of teenagers, it's because they have.

Why? What do teenagers have to do with it?

*Again WHY!

*Are you serious, do they think Sophmores are stupid? School is so much harder than it was back then!

Especially with core classes. one time I asked help with math and my mom didn't know

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I find that an understated opinion!

But what has become clear in the new research is that the soaring oratory that once filled the floors of the House and Senate with million-dollar diction and sophisticated syntax is making way for a more modest approach.

More modest Approach?!

"Congress is changing as an institution, and what you see is more and more members gearing their speeches as sound bites or YouTube clips," said Lee Drutman, a senior fellow at the nonpartisan Sunlight Foundation, which compiled the study released Monday.

"You can [hark] back to a golden age of Congress when members quoted Shakespeare on the floor and really engaged in debate and talked to each other and tried to reason back and forth," he said.

That's what you would think is supposed to happen.

Consider Everett M. Dirksen, the legendary Republican senator from Illinois, who defended a civil rights bill in 1964 by paraphrasing 19th century French writer Victor Hugo: "Stronger than all the armies is an idea whose time has come."

Kind of like, "You can do anything if you put your mind to it!"

But that was then.

In an analysis of floor debates over the last several years, the study found that newer lawmakers tended to speak at a lower grade level than the veterans of congressional speechifying.

Yes it's true we want to understand what they're saying and what they mean, but it's not about the speech! They're trying to persuade us to pick a side, what we should really be focusing on is not what they say they're going to do, but what they've done

And political moderates among both Republicans and Democrats tended to carry on at a higher grade level than those more partisan liberals or conservatives.

With that framework in mind, it should come as no surprise that the lawmakers at the bottom of the list, speaking at the lowest grade level, are among the most ardent tea party Republicans in the freshman class. Rep. Mick Mulvaney of South Carolina, Rep. Robert Woodall of Georgia and Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky were the bottom three — speaking at about an eighth-grade level, the study found.

They're so concerned then why did they elect them?

"We look at it as a badge of honor," said Mulvaney, a graduate of Georgetown University and the University of North Carolina Law School, who notes that he often speaks on the floor "extemporaneously."

What does Extemporaneously mean?

"It's a conscious decision on my part. We are trying to be clear and trying to be concise," he added. He said he and his wife had been known to diagram sentences at the dinner table, a byproduct of having schoolteacher parents.

That's ridiculous! That's Funny!

"I can explain the difference between 'fewer' and 'less,'" Mulvaney said, but he acknowledged that he still stumbled over the difference between "farther" and "further."

Who cares?!

That's exactly right, be in, be brief, be out". Don't say something that doesn't need to be stated or is part of the topic, but don't use these ginormous words that no one understands!

what does polysyllabic mean?

Absolutely Not.

"I don't think people see the polysyllabic words — or the number of words — in a sentence as a sign of your intelligence," he said.

As a case in point, he cites fellow Republican Rep. Dan Lungren of Gold River, a seasoned politician who topped the list as the lawmaker with the highest level of speech — that of a college senior.

That makes Lungren almost a throwback — on par with the Federalist Papers (a 17.1 grade level) or the U.S. Constitution (17.8 grade level) — though it is not clear his speeches are easier to understand. Exactly, we want someone educated, but dont make it so big the no one even understands you!

"The canard that somehow we are tearing the Constitution up just does not stand any kind of inquiry whatsoever," Lungren said during a debate over the Patriot Act. "The suggestion that somehow we are invading the civil liberties of citizens is negated by the language in the three sections of the bill that we have before us."

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you should stand up for what you believe in.

A 16th grade level is better than nothing

"I cannot in good conscience vote to pass this version of VAWA, as it erases 18 years of bipartisan efforts to respond to the needs of victims of domestic violence," she said. "I am also disappointed that, yet again, provisions to alleviate the economic factors that keep victims in abusive relationships have not been included."

That's so messed up.

The best and worst speeches may be in the ear of the listener, and the study noted that President Obama's 2012 State of the Union address was judged by other researchers to rank at the eighth-grade level for the third year in a row.

It doesn't always matter if it's at a low level, it's how the present themself and persuade us.

As for those high-powered words from the Scholastic Assessment Test, memorized and recited by legions of high schoolers, they go virtually unspoken in Congress. How do you even know the high schoolers know?

Yes, it really doesn't matter what all these scholars think and say because, the voters are the ones that listen.

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The most-used SAT word — "compromise" — was said the most by Sen. Harry Reid (D-Nev.), the majority leader, who is fond of declaring, "Legislation is the art of compromise." No, I don't think so.

Because that's what they're always trying to do, bargain in a sense. "I give this for that".

But in this partisan environment, as the study noted, even saying the word 142 times "does not make it so." That's Correct!!!!

Possible WN topics

- Why do you think lawmakers are using simpler language? Explain
- Choose a "hot spot" from the article and write a reflection.
- Research SAT scores over the past 50 years. What trend do you find? Thoughts?

* Memorized and recited, well now you know why they go unspoken.

"It's not memorize to learn, it's learn to memorize".

Caitlyn Larsen
Period 1

AoW 37

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No, I really don't

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a thorough examination

- I noticed a lot of stuff in here is about California and Los Angeles.

Source: Lisa Mascaro, Los Angeles Times/ May 27, 2012

That's a good month

If it sounds like the debates in Congress have devolved into those of teenagers, it's because they have.

- I haven't noticed

Discourse in the House and Senate has dropped a full grade level — to the equivalent of high school sophomore, according to a new study.

an adherant to a party or faction

Call this the dumbing down of Congress in a partisan age. Or a shift to plain-spoken populism ignited by the new class of tea party Republicans.

a moving or powerful speach

But what has become clear in the new research is that the soaring oratory that once filled the floors of the House and Senate with million-dollar diction and sophisticated syntax is making way for a more modest approach.

- Why is that bad?

- I think that could be good or bad.

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what does that mean?

Like "Hark the Herald Angels Sing"?

Compile: to gather information

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I haven't heard of him....

Consider Everett M. Dirksen, the legendary Republican senator from Illinois, who defended a civil rights bill in 1964 by paraphrasing 19th century French writer Victor Hugo: "Stronger than all the armies is an idea whose time has come."

what time frame would that be?

- that can be powerful.

But that was then.

- Why should that matter?

a thorough examination

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discuss a topic in which opposing points of view are presented by panel members

- Sounds kind of like they didn't get good education

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- Why would that be?

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Passionate, Zealous

- that would be sad

- why would you?

"We look at it as a badge of honor," said Mulvaney, a graduate of Georgetown University and the University of North Carolina Law School, who notes that he often speaks on the floor "extemporaneously."

- What???

- That's good in a way

"It's a conscious decision on my part. We are trying to be clear and trying to be concise," he added. He said he and his wife had been known to diagram sentences at the dinner table, a byproduct of having schoolteacher parents.

- kind of sounds like a boring dinner topic

"I can explain the difference between 'fewer' and 'less,'" Mulvaney said, but he acknowledged that he still stumbled over the difference between "farther" and "further."

I would too

To be far away

There's a difference?!

at a greater distance, beyond

really? It should?

So there's more immature now?

I'm guessing it has to do with "popular"

Why?

What's wrong with tradition

Sounds like a good way to do it

interesting use of words

who are they?

that sounds like they are inexperienced

Short, to the point, brief, succinct

I think a lot of people can...

a moving or powerful speach

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Paige C. Peterson p.3

Directions:
1. Mark your confusion.
2. Show evidence of a close reading. Mark up the text with questions and/or comments.
3. Write a one-page reflection on your own sheet of paper.

Think Congress is Sophomoric? A Study Says You're Right

Oratory in the House and Senate has dropped a full grade, to the high school sophomore level, an analysis finds.

Source: Lisa Mascaro, Los Angeles Times/ May 27, 2012

If it sounds like the debates in Congress have devolved into those of teenagers, it's because they have.

Discourse in the House and Senate has dropped a full grade level — to the equivalent of high school sophomore, according to a new study.

Call this the dumbing down of Congress in a partisan age. Or a shift to plain-spoken populism ignited by the new class of tea party Republicans.

But what has become clear in the new research is that the soaring oratory that once filled the floors of the House and Senate with million-dollar diction and sophisticated syntax is making way for a more modest approach.

"Congress is changing as an institution, and what you see is more and more members gearing their speeches as sound bites or YouTube clips," said Lee Drutman, a senior fellow at the nonpartisan Sunlight Foundation, which compiled the study released Monday.

"You can [hark] back to a golden age of Congress when members quoted Shakespeare on the floor and really engaged in debate and talked to each other and tried to reason back and forth," he said.

Consider Everett M. Dirksen, the legendary Republican senator from Illinois, who defended a civil rights bill in 1964 by paraphrasing 19th century French writer Victor Hugo: "Stronger than all the armies is an idea whose time has come."

But that was then.

In an analysis of floor debates over the last several years, the study found that newer lawmakers tended to speak at a lower grade level than the veterans of congressional speechifying. And political moderates among both Republicans and Democrats tended to carry on at a higher grade level than those more partisan liberals or conservatives.

With that framework in mind, it should come as no surprise that the lawmakers at the bottom of the list, speaking at the lowest grade level, are among the most ardent tea party Republicans in the freshman class. Rep. Mick Mulvaney of South Carolina, Rep. Robert Woodall of Georgia and Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky were the bottom three — speaking at about an eighth-grade level, the study found.

"We look at it as a badge of honor," said Mulvaney, a graduate of Georgetown University and the University of North Carolina Law School, who notes that he often speaks on the floor "extemporaneously."

"It's a conscious decision on my part. We are trying to be clear and trying to be concise," he added. He said he and his wife had been known to diagram sentences at the dinner table, a byproduct of having schoolteacher parents.

"I can explain the difference between 'fewer' and 'less,'" Mulvaney said, but he acknowledged that he still stumbled over the difference between "farther" and "further."

what is the new research or study? shouldn't they explain more what they're doing? figure this out at the beginning of the article?

what does that word mean?

I think that they have in some ways, yes

does that mean that they were only at a junior level then?

what does that mean?

why would you really want to do that?

what are floor debates?

so by what they're saying, it says that this guy, Lee Drutman, is at a higher level than the congress

is that just saying from memory or not

is it so that everyone will understand

yeah, so now they need to say what's now

here it is, again, the study?

why are they supposed to peak at a grade level, higher that doesn't make sense

well if they're the veterans that's

well they must not be now

so most often, or just when they felt like it?

then shouldn't they be super smart

it needs to say what the study is, still

that's a big word, they should have said the definition of it

then why aren't they smarter than everyone else?

those are confusing to almost anyone, so I don't blame him for that

"I don't think people see the polysyllabic words — or the number of words — in a sentence as a sign of your intelligence," he said.

As a case in point, he cites fellow Republican Rep. Dan Lungren of Gold River, a seasoned politician who topped the list as the lawmaker with the highest level of speech — that of a college senior.

That makes Lungren almost a throwback — on par with the Federalist Papers (a 17.1 grade level) or the U.S. Constitution (17.8 grade level) — though it is not clear his speeches are easier to understand.

"The canard that somehow we are tearing the Constitution up just does not stand any kind of inquiry whatsoever," Lungren said during a debate over the Patriot Act. "The suggestion that somehow we are invading the civil liberties of citizens is negated by the language in the three sections of the bill that we have before us."

Californians ranked among the better spoken overall, and the No. 2 slot went to Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-East Los Angeles), at almost a 16th-grade level. Her skills were on display during last week's debate on a GOP version of the Violence Against Women Act that Democrats largely opposed.

"I cannot in good conscience vote to pass this version of VAWA, as it erases 18 years of bipartisan efforts to respond to the needs of victims of domestic violence," she said. "I am also disappointed that, yet again, provisions to alleviate the economic factors that keep victims in abusive relationships have not been included."

The best and worst speeches may be in the ear of the listener, and the study noted that President Obama's 2012 State of the Union address was judged by other researchers to rank at the eighth-grade level for the third year in a row.

As for those high-powered words from the Scholastic Assessment Test, memorized and recited by legions of high schoolers, they go virtually unspoken in Congress.

Of the 100 words on SAT preparation study lists, 14 are missing entirely from the Congressional Record for this Congress — notably "florid," "hackneyed," "ostentatious" and "querulous."

The most-used SAT word — "compromise" — was said the most by Sen. Harry Reid (D-Nev.), the majority leader, who is fond of declaring, "Legislation is the art of compromise."

But in this partisan environment, as the study noted, even saying the word 142 times "does not make it so."

Possible WN topics

- Why do you think lawmakers are using simpler language? Explain.
- Choose a "hot spot" from the article and write a reflection.
- Research SAT scores over the past 50 years. What trend do you find? Thoughts?