**9th Form National Poetry Recitation Contest**

**Title of speech**: US First lady Michelle Obama addresses the Democratic National Convention, July 2016

**Speaker**: First Lady of the United States, Michelle Obama

**Watch the speech:** [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mu\_hCThhzWU**](%20https%3A/www.youtube.com/watch?v=mu_hCThhzWU)

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**About the Speaker**

**Michelle Obama** (born January 17, 1964) is an American lawyer, university administrator, and writer who served as the [First Lady of the United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Lady_of_the_United_States) from 2009 to 2017. She is married to the [44th](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Presidents_of_the_United_States) [U.S. President](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_the_United_States), [Barack Obama](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack_Obama), and was the [first African-American](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_African-American_firsts) First Lady. Raised on the [South Side](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Side%2C_Chicago) of Chicago, Illinois, Michelle Obama is a graduate of [Princeton University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Princeton_University) and [Harvard Law School](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harvard_Law_School). Michelle married Barack in 1992 and they have two daughters.

**Excerpt from speech**: (you only need to recite the words below—a small part of a much longer speech)

I also told you about our daughters, how they are the heart of our hearts, the center of our world. And during our time in the White House, we've had the joy of watching them grow from bubbly little girls into poised young women, a journey that started soon after we arrived in Washington…

I realized that our time in the White House would form the foundation for who they would become and how well we managed this experience could truly make or break them…

How we explain that when someone is cruel or acts like a bully, you don't stoop to their level. No, our motto is, when they go low, we go high.

**About the speech:**

Like Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Anna Hakobyan, Barack Obama and Michelle Obama had school-age children when they moved into the White House in Washington DC—the home of every US President. Then, Malia and Sasha were 10 and 7. Here Michelle Obama, at the end of 8 years living in the White House, talks about what they taught their daughters. She was about to move out of the White House. The people who now live there are President Trump and his wife Melania. The phrase “when they go low, we go high” means that when people talk badly about you, you should keep your dignity and pride and refuse to talk about them in nasty or crude language. As you may know, US President Trump often says or posts nasty things about his enemies. Michelle Obama’s speech was really a polite and dignified criticism of him.

**Vocabulary:**

“bubbly” in this context fun, or light-hearted, full of life

“poised” confident, assured, well-equipped for life, able to cope

“Make or break” used when a situation could go one of two ways—either good or bad.

“stoop” bend over, or crouch. In this context she means to lower yourself morally and personally, rather than physically—to behave in a way that is not as good and noble as you truly are.

**Discussion Guide:**

Would you like to be the daughter or son of a famous politician? Why or why not?

Why does Michelle Obama think it is better to be dignified than to respond to bullying by shouting or using bad or unkind language? Do you think she is right? Why or why not?

What values and good behavior have you learned from your parents?