

Read the text below and follow the instructions:

The New York Times

Our Democracy Is at Stake. Stop Waiting for a Savior.

Aug. 31, 2026

By Skye Perryman

American democracy has been deteriorating with alarming velocity since President Trump's return to the White House. Every day, it seems, there's a new Watergate-level outrage. Nearly seven in 10 Americans are dissatisfied with how our democracy is working. [...]

5 Many of the excesses of the Trump administration have been successfully challenged through our judicial system. [...] Our legal system has at times buckled, but it hasn't broken, so it can be tempting to think that the long list of judicial rulings secured against the administration, combined with a midterm election wave, will get us past the crisis. It's understandable to anticipate — to hope — that as we come out of the midterms and head into the next presidential election cycle, a savior, something or someone, will emerge to usher in a return to democratic
10 norms and show would-be autocrats the door.

Here's the problem: Waiting for a savior has led many of us not to exercise the greatest power we have — our own.

Using the courts to rein in Mr. Trump's authoritarian leanings remains essential, but it isn't sufficient. If the midterms result in the shift of power many expect, it won't be as easy for the
15 president to trample the Constitution or run roughshod over Congress. But Americans should be clear that there is no cavalry coming. We don't have the luxury of fantasizing that we are just one legal victory or perfectly poll-tested message away from turning the nation around. [...]

Many of us confuse consuming political news, engaging on social media and participating in group chats with doing the things that we, as individuals, can do to help change our country's
20 trajectory. Instead of doomscrolling, we can organize our neighbors, work at local polling places or join community groups. We must not be satisfied with watching the decline of American democracy from our phones.

Nothing is handed down by political leaders without the people demanding it. We must do so again.

25 In Minnesota, earlier this year, it was ordinary people who took to the streets in freezing weather to try to protect their neighbors by resisting the violent overreach of immigration enforcement agents. Beginning last year, we saw No Kings protests that were among the largest peaceful mass mobilizations in our history.

We can learn from our fellow Americans who are meeting the moment. Instead of waiting for a
30 knight-in-shining-armor political candidate, hoping he or she will do the hard work for us — or, worse, disengaging when a candidate or political movement disappoints us — we must continue

to look to ourselves. Our democracy is in danger, but we can save it. We are the only ones who ever have

1. Understand the text / improve your vocabulary

a. In the text, find the **synonyms** of the following words / expressions:

- Declining :
- Speed :
- Anger :
- Unhappy :
- Weakened :
- Hero :
- Introduce :
- Tendencies :
- Hurt, violate :
- Dreaming :
- Demonstrated :

b. Give a **definition** of the following words and expressions that can be found in the text:

- “Roughsod” (l.15):
- Doomscrolling (l.20):
- Overreach (l.26):

2. Work on the method: structure your summary

At the oral exam, the summary of the text **MUST NOT BE LINEAR** (= follow the chronology of the text).

It means:

- Your summary must be **introduced by a key question** (= the question that the text answers).
- You must **pick out the important elements** of the text, **reformulate** them if possible, and **CLASSIFY** them under the two or three different main ideas that **STRUCTURE** the point of the text.

LET'S PRACTICE

1. Find the **key question / main issue of the text** and write it down below.

2. Here is a possible **outline** for a summary of the text: pick out the important elements in the text, reformulate them and **classify** them appropriately

[Reminder for the oral exam: you must ANNOUNCE the outline before starting your summary: here is what that can sound like: As the American democracy seems threatened with impending collapse, a providential character should not be expected to deal with the threat. Therefore, Americans must be more proactive and do concrete work to preserve their democracy].

OUTLINE

1. **The American democracy seems threatened with impending collapse**

2. **A providential character should not be expected to deal with the threat**

3. **Americans must be more proactive and do concrete work to preserve their democracy.**