

THE LOCKE SOCIETY

LIFE, LIBERTY & EDUCATION



Unit

Topic

World War II

Winston Churchill (Speeches)
Fall of France and Battle of Britain

Lesson Plan

Aim

To identify the need for United States involvement in World War II by analyzing Winston Churchill's speeches.

Rationale

Often overlooked in World War II is the struggle to fight Germany prior to U.S. entry and the perseverance of Winston Churchill to keep fighting in the face of near defeat. Churchill is an important person for students to know because of his ability to lead with strength, to speak with valor, and to give hope to his people when doubt was consuming them. Before evaluating whether or not the United States should have joined World War II, the time they joined, and the way they provided aid prior to official entry, it is crucial to know what the circumstances were in the fight against the Axis Powers from the beginning of the war. Students will read Churchill's speeches to learn about his incredible leadership and to make an emotional connection to the time. Learning in a personal way will help students have empathy for the leaders and their people during this devastating period in history.

Student Learning Objectives

Students will be able assess the need for United States involvement in World War II by analyzing Winston Churchill's speeches.

Civics Connection

- How have people in power affected political, social, and economic developments regarding the freedom and protection of their people?
 - How can one change, strengthen, or improve upon a social, political, or economic standing?
- *See the *Civics Connection Through Questioning* guide in *Civics* for more ideas.

Vocabulary

Winston Churchill
Blitzkrieg



Materials and Resources

1. Text: Winston Churchill's speeches [selected excerpts]
Source: <https://winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/>
2. Text: Notes
Source: <http://winstonchurchill.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/06/milligan-churchills%20wartime%20speeches.pdf>
3. Handout: Churchill's Speeches Organizer

Procedure

Do Now:

What does the following quote mean to you?

"You have enemies? Good. That means you've stood up for something sometime in your life." – Winston Churchill

Lesson:

The teacher should provide context on the progression of the war regarding France and Britain. (See notes handout.)

Collaborative/Independent Work:

After the teacher reviews the directions of the organizer, students will be given copies of each of Winston Churchill's selected speeches. Students will read the speech assigned to their group and complete the organizer. The organizer requires them to identify the main idea and purpose of the speech, and determine if it was effective in meeting its goal (purpose) as a group. Then, students will independently select the quote they find most compelling and share it with their group. The group should agree to a consensus on the overall best quote, which will be shared with the rest of the class.

(Suggested structure: There should be two groups with the same speech in order to corroborate meanings and interpretations. There are 4 speeches, so there will be 8 groups in which 2 will have the same speech.)

Share:

Groups will share the notes from their organizer by discussing their conclusions drawn and choice of best quote.

Close:

After listening to Winston Churchill's speeches, do you think the U.S. should have officially joined WWII (armed forces) at this point? Why or why not?

Modifications

- The teacher may modify any speeches as needed and/or include defined vocabulary words.
- The teacher may play audio of the speeches to include a tone/mood lesson.



Extension

Students should research the life of Winston Churchill including his impact as a leader during World War II and his life after. Students should research the Churchill War Rooms, where this history unfolded. Suggested website to use at the teacher's discretion:
<https://www.iwm.org.uk/visits/churchill-war-rooms>

Notes

**Use discretion for activities according to what is appropriate for your class.*



Notes on World War II: Britain and France Face Germany

(Prior to U.S. Entry)

Germany's Aggression:

- ▶ By early May 1940, Germany had conquered or absorbed Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Denmark, and Norway.
- ▶ Tremendous resources and entire populations had fallen under Hitler's control.
- ▶ The *blitzkrieg* "lightning war" -concentrated fire power- was both successful and intimidating, and it was apparent that the Germans had the advantage in preparation, armor, and will to fight.

The Fall of France:

- ▶ In June, stunned by the speed of the German advance, the French government agreed to an armistice with the Germans, opening the northern part of France to German occupation.
- ▶ The fall of France was a terrible blow to the British, because it meant that there were no other countries fighting Germany in Europe, and most French supplies, ships, and resources became German assets (to prevent this, the British actually attacked and sank several French naval vessels in the Mediterranean).
- ▶ The Germans then turned toward Britain.

Battle of Britain and the "Blitz":

- ▶ In August, the Germans began massive bombing raids on Britain which attempted to destroy the Royal Air Force (RAF).
- ▶ Although they suffered losses, the British were able to make adjustments to protect their aircraft, pilots, and industry; and the RAF continued to meet German bombing raids.
- ▶ This led the Germans to change tactics. They began randomly bombing Britain in an attempt to destroy the British people's will to resist.
- ▶ This culminated in the Blitz – a series of bombing raids on London in late 1940 – which resulted in significant loss of life and property.

Hope:

Knowing that they could not turn back the tide of Nazi aggression alone, the British nevertheless refused to surrender. They did what they could, held on, and hoped that one day soon the Americans would enter the war and help them to win it.



Winston Churchill's Speeches

- ▶ It is argued that the leadership of Winston Churchill was essential in bringing out this British spirit. Not only did he direct the government's war effort, but he also made a series of speeches to the British people throughout the war.
- ▶ His primary communication with them was through direct broadcasts over the radio, although he also gave speeches in the House of Commons and other locations. He used his broadcasts to inform them of current events, to frame these events in a larger context, to appeal to their pride as Britons by explaining to the people what it meant to be British, and to encourage them to live up to the higher ideals that would make victory possible.
- ▶ In essence, he emboldened the British to stand firm in face of the fact that their nation stood alone against Hitler.



Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

Winston Churchill's Speeches

Speech Title:

Speech Date:

Main Idea:

Purpose:

Is it effective? Explain.

Most inspirational
quote:

What makes this quote inspirational?



I. Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat

May 13, 1940

First Speech as Prime Minister

“We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many long months of struggle and of suffering. You ask, what is our policy? I can say: It is to wage war, by sea, land and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us; to wage war against a monstrous tyranny, never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime. That is our policy. You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word: It is victory, victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory, there is no survival. Let that be realised; no survival for the British Empire, no survival for all that the British Empire has stood for, no survival for the urge and impulse of the ages, that mankind will move forward towards its goal. But I take up my task with buoyancy and hope. I feel sure that our cause will not be suffered to fail among men. At this time I feel entitled to claim the aid of all, and I say, “come then, let us go forward together with our united strength.”

Source: <https://winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/>



II. Be Ye Men of Valour

May 19, 1940

BBC, His First Broadcast as Prime Minister to the British People

“I speak to you for the first time as Prime Minister³ in a solemn hour for the life of our country, of our empire, of our allies, and, above all, of the cause of Freedom. A tremendous battle is raging in France and Flanders.⁴ The Germans, by a remarkable combination of air bombing and heavily armored tanks, have broken through the French defenses north of the Maginot Line⁵, and strong columns of their armored vehicles are ravaging the open country, which for the first day or two was without defenders. They have penetrated deeply and spread alarm and confusion in their track. Behind them there are now appearing infantry in lorries⁶, and behind them, again, the large masses are moving forward. The re-groupment of the French armies to make head against, and also to strike at, this intruding wedge has been proceeding for several days, largely assisted by the magnificent efforts of the Royal Air Force.”

...

“Our task is not only to win the battle - but to win the war. After this battle in France abates its force, there will come the battle for our Island -- for all that Britain is, and all the Britain means. That will be the struggle. In that supreme emergency we shall not hesitate to take every step, even the most drastic, to call forth from our people the last ounce and the last inch of effort of which they are capable. The interests of property, the hours of labor, are nothing compared with the struggle of life and honor, for right and freedom, to which we have vowed ourselves.”

Source: <https://winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/>



III. We Shall Fight on the Beaches

June 4, 1940

House of Commons

I have, myself, full confidence that if all do their duty, if nothing is neglected, and if the best arrangements are made, as they are being made, we shall prove ourselves once again able to defend our Island home, to ride out the storm of war, and to outlive the menace of tyranny, if necessary for years, if necessary alone. At any rate, that is what we are going to try to do. That is the resolve of His Majesty's Government—every man of them. That is the will of Parliament and the nation. The British Empire and the French Republic, linked together in their cause and in their need, will defend to the death their native soil, aiding each other like good comrades to the utmost of their strength. Even though large tracts of Europe and many old and famous States have fallen or may fall into the grip of the Gestapo and all the odious apparatus of Nazi rule, we shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end, we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender, and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this Island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle, until, in God's good time, the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old.

Source: <https://winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/>



IV. This Was Their Finest Hour

June 18, 1940

House of Commons

Indeed, I indicated a fortnight ago as clearly as I could to the House that the worst possibilities were open; and I made it perfectly clear then that whatever happened in France would make no difference to the resolve of Britain and the British Empire to fight on, 'if necessary for years, if necessary alone.'

Here remains, of course, the danger of bombing attacks, which will certainly be made very soon upon us by the bomber forces of the enemy. It is true that the German bomber force is superior in numbers to ours; but we have a very large bomber force also, which we shall use to strike at military targets in Germany without intermission. I do not at all underrate the severity of the ordeal which lies before us; but I believe our countrymen will show themselves capable of standing up to it, like the brave men of Barcelona, and will be able to stand up to it, and carry on in spite of it, at least as well as any other people in the world. Much will depend upon this; every man and every woman will have the chance to show the finest qualities of their race, and render the highest service to their cause. For all of us, at this time, whatever our sphere, our station, our occupation or our duties, it will be a help to remember the famous lines: He nothing common did or mean, Upon that memorable scene.

The whole fury and might of the enemy must very soon be turned on us. Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this Island or lose the war. If we can stand up to him, all Europe may be free and the life of the world may move forward into broad, sunlit uplands. But if we fail, then the whole world, including the United States, including all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of perverted science. Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that, if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, "This was their finest hour."

Source: <https://winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/>

