

Using speech to convince

Here are some parts of famous speeches by Winston Churchill.

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 conquered 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.

4 June 1940, House of Commons

this Island=Britain; New World=the US; the old=Europe; in God's good time=by the will of God

...the Battle of France is over... the Battle of Britain is about to begin. Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilization. Upon it depends our own British life, and our institutions and our Empire. 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, 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.'

18 June 1940, House of Commons

broad, sunlit uplands=a happy future; new Dark Age=a world ruled by evil people; lights of perverted science=bombs, poison gas and other modern weapons; Christian civilization=the British way of life

The gratitude of every home... goes out to the British airmen who, undaunted by odds, unwearied in their constant challenge and mortal danger, are turning the tide of the World War by their prowess and by their devotion. Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.

20 August 1940, House of Commons

You do your worst, and we will do our best.

I must, however, admit that when the storm broke I was for several weeks very anxious about the result. There were grievous complaints about the shelters and about conditions in them. Water was cut off, railways were cut or broken, large districts were destroyed, thousands were killed, and many more thousands were wounded. But there was one thing about which there was never any doubt. The courage, the unconquerable grit and stamina of our people, showed itself from the very outset. Without that all would have failed. Upon that rock, all stood unshakable. All the public services were carried on, and all the arrangements, far-reaching details, involving the daily lives of so many millions, were carried out in the very teeth of the cruel and devastating storm.

Winston Churchill July 14, 1941

storm=beginning of the bombing; that rock=the courage of the British people; grit=bravery

Teacher's sheet

See pages 12 and 13 of *Children in the Second World War*

Using speech to convince

Age range

- Years 3/4 (SP4/5).
- Years 5/6 (SP6/7).

Resources

Copies of the worksheets.

Using the worksheet

Churchill was famous for his rousing and well written speeches. This worksheet contains extracts from some of his most famous speeches, made during the Battle of Britain.

You may want to begin by discussing ways in which people can be convinced of things. You may also want to ask students what types of words they might use to convince people of something and how they speak when they are trying to convince. You might also want to introduce the idea of metaphor.

Churchill made these speeches in order to convince people that Britain could win the fight and the war, and to convince them not to give up hope and to keep fighting. Each speech is named after its most famous phrase.

The first two speeches were made at the outbreak of war, just as British troops had been pushed out of France and Britain was bracing for possible invasion. The third speech was made just after the Battle of Britain had begun. The fourth speech was made at the end of the Battle of Britain. Each speech is trying to make listeners feel a certain way.

You might want to ask the students what they think Churchill's purpose was in making these speeches, which tell about how brave Britain is; Britain's duty to fight evil; and how well prepared and brave the British armed forces and people are. Churchill wanted to keep people's spirits up and convince them that Britain was not losing the war and was not alone. But he also wanted to convince them that the war was a just cause. These speeches can each be seen as a type of propaganda, an attempt to convince people not to give up hope.

The extracts of the speeches have been cut and edited slightly to make them easier to understand. A few metaphors are explained on the worksheet.

Younger students

The students could answer the questions on page 48 to test their comprehension of the text. You may wish to write out the meaning of some of the more difficult words on the board for the younger students.

Answers

1. Go on to the end; fight on the beaches; fight in France; fight on the seas and oceans; fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air; defend our island; fight on the landing grounds; fight in the fields and streets; fight in the hills; never surrender.
2. The whole world will be conquered by evil.
3. The airmen, or the 'so few'.
4. The courage, grit and stamina of the British people.

Outcomes

The students can:

- Understand some ways in which Churchill used speech to give people courage.
- Extract information from a text.

Older students

Students could look up the meanings of any words they do not know as they answer the questions on page 49. Students may wish to discuss how the speeches might have made people feel.

Answers

1. The British Empire and the British fleet.
2. (i) All Europe may be free. (ii) The whole world will be conquered by evil.
3. The British airmen.
4. The courage, grit and stamina of the British people.
5. Words might include grit, stamina, we shall, prowess, devotion, unshakeable, brace ourselves, bear ourselves, this was their finest hour, never surrender.


Outcomes


The students can:


- Understand some ways in which Churchill used speech to give people courage.
- Extract information from a text.


Questions (i): Using speech to convince

1. In the first speech, Churchill uses the phrase ‘We shall...’ to give people confidence. What are four of the things that Churchill says ‘We shall’ do?










2. In the second speech, what may happen if Britain fails to win the Battle for Britain?



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3. In the third speech, who does the gratitude of every home go out to?



4. In the fourth speech, what was never in doubt?



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Questions (ii): Using speech to convince

1. In the first speech, who would carry on the struggle if “this Island” were conquered?



2. (i) In the second speech, what may happen if Britain can stand up to Hitler?



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(ii) What will happen if Britain fails?



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3. In the third speech, who are the ‘so few’?



4. In the fourth speech, what showed itself from the outset of the Battle of Britain?



5. List some of the words or phrases that you think Churchill uses to give people hope.



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