

Winston S. Churchill's "Defence of Freedom and Peace" Speech

16 October 1938

Broadcast to America

OBJECTIVES:

To enable students to understand the gathering storm in Europe with the rise of Hitler and the Munich Pact in 1938.

To enable students to understand Churchill's warning to the U.S. as revealed in his radio address to the U.S. on Oct. 16, 1938, the [Defence of Freedom and Peace Speech](#)

To enable students to understand the diversity of opinions in the U.S. about the rise of Hitler by examining letters written to Churchill that reflect public opinion on his speech.

Note: "Defence" is the British spelling of the American "Defense."

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE:

Students will have previously studied the events of the 1930's in Europe, the rise of Hitler, and the Munich Pact of September, 1938. Churchill's [Munich speech](#) and many of his other speeches may be found on the website of The Churchill Centre at www.winstonchurchill.org

Those with access to The New York Times archives may find useful two articles that explain the views of the electorates and illustrate the political climate in both America and England in the days surrounding Churchill's speech. Dr. George Gallup was an American pioneer of survey sampling techniques and inventor of the Gallup poll, a successful statistical method of survey sampling for measuring public opinion. He founded the American Institute of Public Opinion -- which evolved into The Gallup Organization -- in 1935. In 1936, his new organization achieved national recognition by correctly predicting, from the replies of only 5,000 respondents, the result of that year's presidential election NYT Archives can be searched by headline.

Headline: ***WAR FEAR INCREASING, SURVEY IN U.S. SHOWS***
60% Say Surrender to Hitler Was Preferable to Fight
October 12, 1938

"Incomplete returns from the first comprehensive survey of American opinion on the Czech crisis showed that a majority of American voters believe that Chancellor Adolf Hitler's demands for annexation of Sudetenland were not justified but that Great Britain and France did the best thing in giving in to Germany rather than going to war over that particular issue..."

Headline: ***SURVEY FINDS BRITISH BEHIND CHAMBERLAIN***
57 Per Cent in Cross-Section of Voters Back Foreign Policy
October 19, 1938

"A survey of the British electorate shows that 57 per cent of all voters approve of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and his foreign policy in the past few weeks, while 43 per cent are opposed."

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES:

Students will read Churchill's broadcast of his [Defence of Freedom and Peace speech](#) and will analyze it by answering guided questions, followed by class discussion as to content, style, and delivery.

For an audio clip, select 1938 Oct 16 – “We Must Arm,” [here](#).
For a sample of Churchill’s psalm-style format, see [here](#).

Students will be given selected letters from Americans in response to his address, which they will share orally with the class and analyze. Class discussion will be incorporated in relation to the various letters and opinions of the writers. See [American Citizens’ Letters to Churchill](#).

Students may complete a [Sound Recording Analysis Worksheet](#) from The National Archives.

EVALUATION:

As a means of evaluation, students will choose one of the following scenarios:

- **You are a reporter for the local newspaper, and it is your job to write an account of Churchill’s speech, summarizing the main points and including several direct quotations.**
- **You are the editor of the local newspaper, and you are writing an editorial that states the position of the paper on Churchill’s speech. Give your reading public your editorial staff’s opinion on the speech.**
- **You are an American citizen who listened to Churchill’s speech on the radio. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper in which you voice your opinion on his speech.**

Overarching Inquiry: Debate the effectiveness of writing letters to leaders of government to voice your personal opinions on political questions.

Resources

Churchill, Winston. [“Munich Speech.”](#) October 5, 1938, House of Commons
[“Defence of Freedom and Peace Speech](#) October 16, 1938,
Broadcast to the United States

This text of this radio address was transcribed in New York by the National Broadcasting Company and printed in full in The New York Times on Monday, October 17, 1938

American Citizens’ Letters to Churchill after his October 16th broadcast from the Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge [here](#).

www.wordle.net (transforming text into a visual)

Wordle is an online toy for generating “word clouds” from text that you provide. A word cloud shows the most commonly used words in a selected passage, giving greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the source text. The size of a word in the visualization is proportional to the number of times the word appears in the input text.

Various iterations of words are grouped together under the most common variation (e.g., “elect,” “electing,” “elected,” and “elects” might be included under “election.”) The

maximum number of words in the cloud is adjustable, and layout, font and color offer hundreds of variations.

Ilene R. Berson and Michael J. Berson, "Making Sense of Social Studies with Visualization Tools," *Social Education*, Vol. 73, Number 3, April 2009, 124-126

Other similar sites:

www.wordsift.com (created as a text assessment too for teachers)

Grade Level:	9-12
Subject Area:	U.S. History
Time Require:	One or two classroom periods
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