Liberty Under Pressure

Analyze central ideas in a historical-style American address.

ELA.10.R.2.2 "Analyze the central idea(s) of historical American speeches and essays."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two sentences that express a major message, then circle details that explain or support each message. Use your marks to track how the speaker builds central ideas.

A 1943 Civic Address

1. Neighbors, our nation asks young people to defend freedom overseas, yet here at home it has removed thousands of Japanese Americans from their homes and placed families in camps. Some officials call this action a military necessity. Fear after Pearl Harbor is real, and every community wants safety. But fear is a poor judge of a neighbor's character. Many people taken away were citizens, students, farmers, and shopkeepers who had broken no law. If citizenship means anything, it must protect people when public opinion is most frightened.

2. I do not ask you to ignore danger or deny the government's duty to protect the country. I ask you to remember that rights are not rewards for people who are popular or familiar. A democracy becomes weaker when it punishes a whole group for the acts of a few. Courts, evidence, and fair hearings exist because officials can make mistakes, especially in a crisis. When we accept punishment without proof for others, we also weaken the protections that may someday be needed by our own families.

3. Therefore, our response must be more than private sympathy. We should question rumors, write to elected officials, and insist that each accusation be examined fairly. We can support national defense without treating an entire community as an enemy. The strength of the United States is not shown by how loudly it speaks of liberty during calm years. Its strength is shown when citizens demand liberty's protection during fearful years, even for people whose language, ancestry, or religion is different from their own neighbors and friends.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What central idea does the speaker develop about fear and citizenship?

2. What central idea about democracy does paragraph 2 develop?

3. Name two actions the speaker asks listeners to take in paragraph 3. How do these actions support a central idea?

4. How does the speaker's contrast between national defense and liberty help develop the address's central ideas?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a historical American speech or essay you have read. In exactly four sentences, state its central idea, give two specific supporting details, and explain how one detail develops that idea.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two sentences that express a major message, then circle details that explain or support each message. Use your marks to track how the speaker builds central ideas. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What central idea does the speaker develop about fear and citizenship?	**Fear should not cause the nation to deny citizens their rights, especially when public opinion is frightened.**
2	What central idea about democracy does paragraph 2 develop?	**Democracy depends on fair procedures, evidence, and hearings instead of punishing an entire group without proof.**
3	Name two actions the speaker asks listeners to take in paragraph 3. How do these actions support a central idea?	**Listeners should question rumors and write to elected officials, or insist on fair examinations of accusations. These actions support the idea that citizens must actively defend liberty.**
4	How does the speaker's contrast between national defense and liberty help develop the address's central ideas?	**The contrast acknowledges the need for safety but argues that defending the nation does not require treating a whole community as an enemy or abandoning liberty.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In the Gettysburg Address, Abraham Lincoln argues that the Civil War tests whether a nation founded on equality can endure. He recalls that the nation was "conceived in Liberty" and "dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." He also asks listeners to ensure that "government of the people, by the people, for the people" does not perish. This detail develops his central idea by connecting the soldiers' sacrifice to the survival of democratic self-government.

Accept equivalent statements of the central ideas when students connect them to accurate passage details. For the open task, accept a defensible central idea and two relevant details from the chosen historical American speech or essay.