Factories and Freedoms

Read Roosevelt's case for preparing a nation for war.

USH.C.5.1.C "Evaluate the industrial mobilization and psychological preparation for war as reflected in President Franklin Roosevelt's Four Freedoms speech."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details about shifting industry toward defense, and circle two references to freedoms. Write 1 beside a reason to support preparation and 2 beside a limit of that preparation.

Preparing for a War Not Yet Joined

1. On January 6, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt addressed Congress while World War II raged overseas. The United States had not entered the fighting. Britain faced German attacks, and Roosevelt argued that its survival mattered to American safety. He asked Congress to support sending weapons and supplies to nations resisting aggression. To make that possible, he called for faster production of planes, ships, guns, and other equipment. American factories could become a source of strength before American soldiers entered the war. Meeting this goal would mean shifting workers, materials, and factories toward defense on a national scale.

2. Roosevelt did more than request machinery. He described a world built on four freedoms: freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. The last two meant economic security and a reduction of weapons so nations could not threaten their neighbors. He said these freedoms should exist "everywhere in the world," not just in the United States. By linking defense production to freedoms, he offered people a reason to accept costs and uncertainty. A factory's output could now seem connected to protecting ordinary lives, rather than merely increasing the nation's stock of arms.

3. That connection had limits. Weapons sent abroad could help nations under attack, but weapons alone could not guarantee jobs, food, or free expression after the fighting. Nor did all Americans agree that aiding Britain was worth the risk of being drawn into war. Roosevelt's speech did not announce that the United States was entering combat. Instead, it pressed Congress and the public to prepare for a dangerous future while imagining a safer one. His vision made factory work and public support part of the same effort, even though building arms and securing lasting freedom were different tasks.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did Roosevelt call for increased weapons production before U.S. troops entered the fighting? Use two details from the passage.

2. How might the four freedoms help persuade Americans to support the factory changes Roosevelt wanted?

3. Why could building more weapons not, by itself, achieve Roosevelt's vision? Refer to two freedoms.

4. What worry might an American have had about aiding Britain, and how did Roosevelt's larger goal make a case for accepting that risk?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are writing a four-sentence note to a neighbor in January 1941 who fears that supplying Britain will pull the United States into war. Make a case for or against Roosevelt's plan using one specific factory change and one freedom from the passage, and acknowledge a limitation or risk of your position.

ANSWER KEY

Factories and Freedoms

HIGH SCHOOL · USH.C.5.1.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details about shifting industry toward defense, and circle two references to freedoms. Write 1 beside a reason to support preparation and 2 beside a limit of that preparation. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did Roosevelt call for increased weapons production before U.S. troops entered the fighting? Use two details from the passage.	**Britain faced German attacks, and Roosevelt argued that Britain's survival mattered to U.S. safety. Faster production would let the United States supply nations resisting aggression.**
2	How might the four freedoms help persuade Americans to support the factory changes Roosevelt wanted?	**The freedoms connected factory work to protecting people's lives and rights around the world, rather than simply making more weapons.**
3	Why could building more weapons not, by itself, achieve Roosevelt's vision? Refer to two freedoms.	**Weapons alone could not guarantee the jobs and food associated with freedom from want or the free expression associated with freedom of speech.**
4	What worry might an American have had about aiding Britain, and how did Roosevelt's larger goal make a case for accepting that risk?	**An American might worry that aid would draw the United States into war. Roosevelt presented aid as a way to defend U.S. safety and help protect freedoms beyond its borders.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would support Roosevelt's plan to send supplies to Britain, though I understand your fear that aid could draw us into war. Speeding production of planes would give a nation under attack a better chance to resist without sending American soldiers into combat now. Protecting freedom of worship gives that factory work a purpose beyond filling warehouses. Still, making planes cannot guarantee that people will be safe, and our country could face a harder choice later.

Accept either a case for or against the plan if the four-sentence note uses a factory change and a named freedom from the passage, then acknowledges a plausible risk or limitation. Do not require students to claim that aid would keep the United States out of war.