Service and Strength

Kennedy's inaugural ideas in action

USH.C.6.3.D "Explain President Kennedy's foreign policy as expressed in his inaugural address, including the establishment of the Peace Corps and reaction to the completion of the Berlin Wall."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two ideas about foreign policy in Kennedy's inaugural address. Number the later actions that put each idea into practice, using the same number for an idea and its matching action.

From Words to Decisions

1. On January 20, 1961, John F. Kennedy spoke from the Capitol steps as the Cold War divided the United States and the Soviet Union. In his inaugural address, he promised to defend freedom, even at great cost. Yet he also called for both sides to negotiate instead of letting fear lead them toward war. He urged Americans to ask what they could do for their country and invited people around the world to join a struggle against poverty and other common dangers. His foreign policy joined firm support for allies with cooperation across borders.

2. Kennedy soon put that promise of cooperation to work. In March 1961, he established the Peace Corps by executive order. American volunteers traveled abroad at the invitation of host countries to work on projects such as teaching and public health. Instead of treating every Cold War challenge as a military problem, this program offered practical help and built relationships. The Peace Corps echoed Kennedy's call for Americans to serve and his pledge to help people struggling with poverty help themselves. It was also a way to show that the United States could be a partner, not just a military power.

3. That same year, East German authorities began building the Berlin Wall to stop people from fleeing East Berlin for West Berlin. As the barrier was completed and strengthened, it cut through streets and separated families. Kennedy protested the wall but did not order U.S. forces to tear it down, which could have sparked a war with the Soviet Union. He reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to defend West Berlin and visited the city in 1963, declaring, "Ich bin ein Berliner." His response showed the two sides of his inaugural message: stand by allies and protect freedom, while avoiding a direct superpower war.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Kennedy's inaugural address pair strength with restraint toward the Soviet Union?

2. Explain how the Peace Corps put two ideas from Kennedy's inaugural address into practice.

3. How did Kennedy's response to the completed Berlin Wall show both firm commitment and restraint?

4. Why did Kennedy use volunteers abroad but a defense pledge in Berlin to pursue his foreign policy?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a newly independent country asks for help training nurses while a U.S. ally fears a Soviet blockade of its main port. Write a four-sentence advice note to Kennedy that proposes one cooperative action and one firm but peaceful response, and connect each action to an idea in his inaugural address.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · USH.C.6.3.D

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two ideas about foreign policy in Kennedy's inaugural address. Number the later actions that put each idea into practice, using the same number for an idea and its matching action. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Kennedy's inaugural address pair strength with restraint toward the Soviet Union?	**He promised to defend freedom while calling for negotiation instead of letting fear lead to war.**
2	Explain how the Peace Corps put two ideas from Kennedy's inaugural address into practice.	**Volunteers answered his call for Americans to serve. Their work also supported his pledge to help people struggling with poverty help themselves.**
3	How did Kennedy's response to the completed Berlin Wall show both firm commitment and restraint?	**He protested the wall and reaffirmed the commitment to defend West Berlin, but he did not order U.S. forces to tear down the wall and risk war.**
4	Why did Kennedy use volunteers abroad but a defense pledge in Berlin to pursue his foreign policy?	**The Peace Corps offered practical help where people faced poverty, while the defense pledge supported an ally threatened by the wall. Both approaches aimed to protect freedom without starting a war.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would send trained volunteer nurses if the new country invites them. This would answer Kennedy's call for Americans to serve and help others improve their own lives. I would publicly promise to defend our ally's port and seek talks to prevent a blockade, rather than attack Soviet forces first. This would honor Kennedy's pledge to stand by allies and his call to negotiate instead of letting fear lead to war.

Accept other specific actions if students accurately connect cooperation and firm but restrained defense to the inaugural address. Responses should distinguish the Peace Corps from a military response to the Berlin Wall.