

Text-Based Answers

From “Winston Churchill Braces Britons to Their Task”

I say to the House as I said to ministers who have joined this government, I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat. We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many months of struggle and suffering.

You ask, what is our policy? I say it is to wage war by land, sea, and air. War with all our might and with all the strength God has given us, and to wage war against a monstrous tyranny never surpassed in the dark and lamentable catalogue of human crime. That is our policy.

You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word. It is victory. Victory at all costs - Victory in spite of all terrors. Victory, however long and hard the road may be, for without victory there is no survival.

I take up my task in buoyancy and hope. I feel sure that our cause will not be suffered to fail among men. I feel entitled at this juncture, at this time, to claim the aid of all and to say, “Come then, let us go forward together with our united strength.”

Main idea of paragraph 1	
Details that support or develop and main idea	
Words that stand out	More common words for the same idea

Main idea of paragraph 2	
Details that support or develop and main idea	
Words that stand out	More common words for the same idea

Main idea of paragraph 3	
Details that support or develop and main idea	
Words that stand out	More common words for the same idea

Main idea of paragraph 4	
Details that support or develop and main idea	
Words that stand out	More common words for the same idea

Main idea of the piece as a whole?

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Informational Text – 6-12 History/Social Studies

Grades 6 – 8

**Murphy, Jim. *The Great Fire*. New York: Scholastic, 1995. (1995)
From Chapter 1: “A City Ready to Burn”**

Chicago in 1871 was a city ready to burn. The city boasted having 59,500 buildings, many of them—such as the Courthouse and the Tribune Building—large and ornately decorated. The trouble was that about two-thirds of all these structures were made entirely of wood. Many of the remaining buildings (even the ones proclaimed to be “fireproof”) looked solid, but were actually jerrybuilt affairs; the stone or brick exteriors hid wooden frames and floors, all topped with highly flammable tar or shingle roofs. It was also a common practice to disguise wood as another kind of building material. The fancy exterior decorations on just about every building were carved from wood, then painted to look like stone or marble. Most churches had steeples that appeared to be solid from the street, but a closer inspection would reveal a wooden framework covered with cleverly painted copper or tin.

The situation was worst in the middle-class and poorer districts. Lot sizes were small, and owners usually filled them up with cottages, barns, sheds, and outhouses—all made of fast-burning wood, naturally. Because both Patrick and Catherine O’Leary worked, they were able to put a large addition on their cottage despite a lot size of just 25 by 100 feet. Interspersed in these residential areas were a variety of businesses—paint factories, lumberyards, distilleries, gasworks, mills, furniture manufacturers, warehouses, and coal distributors.

Wealthier districts were by no means free of fire hazards. Stately stone and brick homes had wood interiors, and stood side by side with smaller wood-frame houses. Wooden stables and other storage buildings were common, and trees lined the streets and filled the yards.

Grades 9 – 10

**From Brown, Dee. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West*. New York: Holt Rinehart Winston, 1970. (1970)
From Chapter 1: “Their Manners Are Decorous and Praiseworthy”**

The decade following establishment of the “permanent Indian frontier” was a bad time for the eastern tribes. The great Cherokee nation had survived more than a hundred years of the white man’s wars, diseases, and whiskey, but now it was to be blotted out. Because the Cherokees numbered several thousands, their removal to the West was planned to be in gradual stages, but the discovery of Appalachian gold within their territory brought on a clamor for their immediate wholesale exodus. During the autumn of 1838, General Winfield Scott’s soldiers rounded them up and concentrated them into camps. (A few hundred escaped to the Smoky Mountains and many years later were given a small reservation in North Carolina.) From the prison camps they were started westward to Indian Territory. On the long winter trek, one of every four Cherokees died from the cold, hunger, or disease. They called the march their “trail of tears.” The Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks, and Seminoles also gave up their homelands in the South. In the North, surviving remnants of the Shawnees, Miamis, Ottawas, Hurons, Delawares, and many other once mighty tribes walked or traveled by horseback and wagon beyond the Mississippi, carrying their shabby goods, their rusty farming tools, and bags of seed corn. All of them arrived as refugees, poor relations, in the country of the proud and free Plains Indians.

Scarcely were the refugees settled behind the security of the “permanent Indian frontier” when soldiers began marching westward through Indian country. The white men of the United States—who talked so much of peace but rarely seemed to practice it—were marching to war with the white men who had conquered the Indians of Mexico. When the war with Mexico ended in 1847, the United States took possession of a vast expanse of territory reaching from Texas to California. All of it was west of the “permanent Indian frontier.”

Grades 11 – 12 (CCR)

**Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*. Translated by Henry Reeve. (1835)
From Chapter 2: “The Origins of the Anglo-Americans”**

The remarks I have made will suffice to display the character of Anglo-American civilization in its true light. It is the result (and this should be constantly present to the mind of two distinct elements), which in other places have been in frequent hostility, but which in America have been admirably incorporated and combined with one another. I allude to the spirit of Religion and the spirit of Liberty.

The settlers of New England were at the same time ardent sectarians and daring innovators. Narrow as the limits of some of their religious opinions were, they were entirely free from political prejudices. Hence arose two tendencies, distinct but not opposite, which are constantly discernible in the manners as well as in the laws of the country.

It might be imagined that men who sacrificed their friends, their family, and their native land to a religious conviction were absorbed in the pursuit of the intellectual advantages which they purchased at so dear a rate. The energy, however, with which they strove for the acquirement of wealth, moral enjoyment, and the comforts as well as liberties of the world, is scarcely inferior to that with which they devoted themselves to Heaven.

Political principles and all human laws and institutions were moulded and altered at their pleasure; the barriers of the society in which they were born were broken down before them; the old principles which had governed the world for ages were no more; a path without a turn and a field without an horizon were opened to the exploring and ardent curiosity of man: but at the limits of the political world he checks his researches, he discreetly lays aside the use of his most formidable faculties, he no longer consents to doubt or to innovate, but carefully abstaining from raising the curtain of the sanctuary, he yields with submissive respect to truths which he will not discuss. Thus, in the moral world everything is classed, adapted, decided, and foreseen; in the political world everything is agitated, uncertain, and disputed: in the one is a passive, though a voluntary, obedience; in the other an independence scornful of experience and jealous of authority.

These two tendencies, apparently so discrepant, are far from conflicting; they advance together, and mutually support each other. Religion perceives that civil liberty affords a noble exercise to the faculties of man, and that the political world is a field prepared by the Creator for the efforts of the intelligence. Contented with the freedom and the power which it enjoys in its own sphere, and with the place which it occupies, the empire of religion is never more surely established than when it reigns in the hearts of men unsupported by aught beside its native strength. Religion is no less the companion of liberty in all its battles and its triumphs; the cradle of its infancy, and the divine source of its claims. The safeguard of morality is religion, and morality is the best security of law and the surest pledge of freedom.