Hello my friends!

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Please offer me feedback on this item. Specifically: Do you think it is something you can use? Do you think it is an appropriate representation of a Common Core close read? If not, why not?

Feel free to email lengthy commentary to [theladylion7@aol.com](mailto:theladylion7@aol.com) , or simply drop a comment on this product at TpT!

Anything constructive you can offer I appreciate!! I want to craft materials that will be useful in the history classroom!

I will be releasing some “close reads” of primary sources over the next several months, and I will offer them *free* for a short period of time. As such, I will notify my followers first.

Thank you so much for your purchases, and for following my work!

Lady Lion

(Lauri Secker)

Global History Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Reading: Iron Curtain Speech

*Nine months after Sir Winston Churchill failed to be reelected as Britain's Prime Minister, Churchill traveled by train with President Harry Truman to make a speech. On March 5, 1946, at the request of Westminster College in the small Missouri town of Fulton (population of 7,000), Churchill gave his now famous "Iron Curtain" speech to a crowd of 40,000.*

From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia, all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and, in many cases, increasing measure of control from Moscow. Athens alone - Greece with its immortal glories - is free to decide its future at an election under British, American and French observation. The Russian-dominated Polish Government has been encouraged to make enormous and wrongful inroads upon Germany, and mass expulsions of millions of Germans on a scale grievous and undreamed-of are now taking place. The Communist parties, which were very small in all these Eastern States of Europe, have been raised to *pre-eminence* and power far beyond their numbers and are seeking everywhere to obtain totalitarian control. Police governments are *prevailing* in nearly every case, and so far, except in Czechoslovakia, there is no true democracy…

If now the Soviet Government tries, by separate action, to build up a pro-Communist Germany in their areas, this will cause new serious difficulties in the British and American zones, and will give the defeated Germans the power of putting themselves up to auction between the Soviets and the Western Democracies. Whatever conclusions may be drawn from these facts - and facts they are - this is certainly not the Liberated Europe we fought to build up. Nor is it one which contains the essentials of permanent peace…

From what I have seen of our Russian friends and Allies during the war, I am convinced that there is nothing they admire so much as strength, and there is nothing for which they have less respect than for weakness, especially military weakness. For that reason the old doctrine of a balance of power is unsound. We cannot afford, if we can help it, to work on narrow *margins*, offering temptations to a trial of strength. If the Western Democracies stand together in strict adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter, their influence for furthering those principles will be immense and no one is likely to *molest* them. If however they become divided or falter in their duty and if these all-important years are allowed to slip away then indeed catastrophe may overwhelm us all…

**1**

*molest = bother*

*margins = limits*

*prevailing = dominating*

*pre-eminence = heights, superiority*

**2**

**3**

Global History Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Reading: Iron Curtain Speech

**Symbols used in Reading to Understand:**

**✓** = I knew that. **?** = I have a question.

**X** = I didn’t expect that! **??** = I am confused or puzzled.

🟊 = This is important. **!** = This reminds me of something!

Please quietly read the Iron Curtain Speech in an attempt to get the “gist” of it. Then re-read it, and apply the above symbols in the left margin of the reading where you find them to be appropriate. ***Note that if any symbols are used (ie. X, ?, ?? or !), they should be followed by an annotated explanation in the right margin of the reading.***

**Questions:** Please answer the following questions ***using specific evidence from the text***.

1. What is the ***Main Idea*** of the speech?

2. How does Churchill characterize the Russians?

3. How does he characterize Soviet led or Soviet *sphere* governments in Eastern Europe?

4. What does Churchill mean when he says, it “will give the defeated Germans the power of putting themselves up to auction between the Soviets and the Western Democracies”?

5. What does Churchill suggest that our policy needs to be? WHY does he suggest this should be our policy?

6. Aside from Churchill’s argument IN the speech, why else might he believe this to be a necessary course of action? (Hint: What do you know about Churchill? Who is he? What has he experienced that has led him to this point of view?)

7. In the first line, Churchill mentions an “iron curtain”. Think about the words “iron” and “curtain”. What does this combination of words suggest?

8. What does Churchill suggest the “iron curtain” divides?

9. Given what you know about the USSR under Stalin, do you agree with Churchill’s assessment and his recommended plan of action? Why or why not? (Please justify your answer with specific evidence… )

Global History Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Reading: Iron Curtain Speech Key

1. What is the ***Main Idea*** of the speech?

Clearly, this speech is issuing something of a warning… a warning of Soviet aggression, and a warning of what Churchill sees as the only recourse left to the West (ie. to hang TOGETHER, and to be strong)!

2. How does Churchill characterize the Russians?

As bullies! He speaks specifically about how they have taken over “the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia”. He also speaks about how “the Communist parties, which were very small in all these Eastern States of Europe, have been raised to *pre-eminence* and power far beyond their numbers and are seeking everywhere to obtain totalitarian control”, suggesting Russian support. Also, Churchill suggests “there is nothing they (the Soviets) admire so much as strength, and there is nothing for which they have less respect than for weakness, especially military weakness.” That is practically the definition of a Bully.

3. How does he characterize Soviet led or Soviet *sphere* governments in Eastern Europe?

He characterizes them as governments looking “to obtain totalitarian control… Police governments are *prevailing* in nearly every case”.

4. What does Churchill mean when he says, it “will give the defeated Germans the power of putting themselves up to auction between the Soviets and the Western Democracies”?

He suggests that the Germans can auction themselves off to the highest bidder. Germany needed money to re-build… Churchill suggests that the Germans would literally “sell” themselves to whichever side would give them more aid.

5. What does Churchill suggest that our policy needs to be? WHY does he suggest this should be our policy?

He suggests we need to depart from previous models of “Balance of Power”… we can’t think that a few alliances will dissuade the Russians… moreover, he alludes to the fact that the Russians won’t play by the conventional rules. The only thing the Russians understand is “strength, and there is nothing for which they have less respect than for weakness, especially military weakness”. THUS, “We cannot afford, if we can help it, to offer temptations to a trial of strength…” “If (we) the Western Democracies stand together in strict adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter, their (our) influence for furthering those principles will be immense and no one is likely to *molest* them (us).”

BUT, “If however they (we) become divided or falter in their duty and if these all-important years are allowed to slip away then indeed catastrophe may overwhelm us all…”

In other words, if we don’t hang together, we shall surely hang separately! And the Soviets will use their unity to take over more and more areas.

6. Aside from Churchill’s argument IN the speech, why else might he believe this to be a necessary course of action? (Hint: What do you know about Churchill? Who is he? What has he experienced that has led him to this point of view?)

Churchill was Prime Minister of Britain during World War II, and at the forefront of British politics prior to that. He was aware of the failures of the “appeasement” policy with Hitler, and he sees the Soviets as the new aggressive threat to European freedom and independence. Thus, he might suggest a policy opposite of appeasement.

7. In the first line, Churchill mentions an “iron curtain”. Think about the words “iron” and “curtain”. What does this combination of words suggest?

“Curtain” suggests a divide (my shower curtain separates my shower from the rest of my bathroom), and “Iron” suggests something hard and permanent and impenetrable. Thus an IRON CURTAIN suggests a permanent divide between eastern and western Europe.

8. What does Churchill suggest the “iron curtain” divides?

Eastern and Western Europe. (Churchill specifically references all the capitals of EASTERN Europe… “Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia” and then suggests a divide between “Western Democracies”.)

9. Given what you know about the USSR under Stalin, do you agree with Churchill’s assessment and his recommended plan of action? Why or why not? (Please justify your answer with specific evidence… )

Answers *may* vary, but should give a resounding “HELL YES!” I’m as objective as the next person, but Stalin established a Totalitarian State in the USSR with a brutal secret police. He demanded complete obedience and allowed NO individual freedoms (aside from those which coincided with his objectives). He (knowingly) allowed millions of Ukrainian peasants to starve to death… (and I feel I am being generous by using the word “allowed”!!!) I think Churchill’s alarm had some merit. Hopefully students will be able to provide historical evidence for Churchill’s concern!