

Winston Churchill

MEMORIAL AND LIBRARY

**Exploring the Foundations of
Churchill's Leadership
through his Wit and Wisdom**

TEACHER GUIDE

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Exploring the Foundations of Churchill's Leadership through Wit and Wisdom



Imagine that in 1931, when Churchill looked the wrong way crossing a New York City street and was struck by a taxi driver, he died instead of sustaining severe injuries. The obituary in the paper the next day might have talked about his contributions to the Great War (World War I), listed a dozen or so books he authored, and described his election to Parliament and his military failure at Dardanelles in 1915. Fast forward to 1940 – without Churchill would Lord Halifax have surrendered to Hitler when the United Kingdom's position seemed hopeless or turned over the Royal Navy to Germany resulting in the defeat of Russia? What else would now be under Hitler's control?

For students today, such scenarios certainly seem like history, but Churchill's legacy lives today in the freedoms we enjoy. There is much to understand about his legacy to make it relevant and meaningful for the students of the 21st century. These lessons, presented by Westminster College's Winston Churchill Memorial, help inspire and educate students about Winston Churchill's life and leadership. Students will experience three themes that represent Churchill: his life and times, his wit and wisdom, and his leadership.

Lesson II asks middle school students to follow the power of Churchill's word as they make sense of history through his writings and speeches. Using the Churchill Memorial's rich resources, personal stories, and objects, students will understand how Churchill and his story still affect their lives today.

The Churchill Memorial curriculum supports these overarching goals. After completion, students should:

1. have a grasp and an appreciation of history and the price of democracy;

2. have an understanding and awareness of the importance of involved leadership with public and community issues;
3. have the ability to use primary sources to think critically and enter into dialogue with others of different perspectives;
4. understand the power of political action and leadership by having the skills, knowledge, and commitment needed to accomplish public purposes;
5. understand the power of language to inspire others;
6. have moral and civic virtues such as concern for the rights and welfare of others, social responsibility, tolerance and respect, and belief in the capacity to make a difference.

The lessons will focus on these Communication Grade Level Expectations (From the Missouri Department of Education):

Grade 7	Grade 8
<p>Write about personal experiences and revise by adding details and literary devices such as metaphors, analogies, and symbols</p> <p>Listen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for enjoyment • for information • for directions • critically to recognize and interpret propaganda techniques <p>Identify and explain figurative language in poetry, prose, and nonfiction (emphasize hyperbole, imagery, and symbolism)</p> <p>Compare, contrast, analyze, and evaluate connections between</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information and relationships in various fiction and non-fiction works • text ideas and own experiences • text ideas and the world by identifying and explaining how literature reflects a culture and historic time frame 	<p>Write about personal experiences and revise by adding details and literary devices such as metaphors, analogies, and symbols</p> <p>Listen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for enjoyment • for information • for directions • and use clarifying strategies for understanding (e.g., questioning, summarizing, and paraphrasing) <p>Identify and explain figurative language in poetry, prose, and nonfiction (emphasize jargon, dialect, and slang)</p> <p>Compare, contrast, analyze, and evaluate connections between</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information and relationships in various fiction and non-fiction works • text ideas and own experiences • text ideas and the world by analyzing the relationship between literature and its historical period and culture

Background of the Iron Curtain Speech

(from *Winston Churchill and His Legend Since 1945* by John Ramsden)

“How wrong the British historian Arthur Bryant was, even in his highly sympathetic expectation of Churchill's future after election defeat, in a letter of August 1945.

‘Yes, it's sad about Winston – it seems ungrateful and ungracious. Yet from his own point of view, how that defeat secures his place in history! It is as though he'd been assassinated like Lincoln in the hour of victory: 'Now he belongs to the ages'. Yet he still remains above the earth he loves so well to enjoy good brandy, good company . . . and a few years of his own immortality.’

“These and many similar judgments were wrong, because all such assessments grievously mistook their man in assigning to him so passive a future. Churchill was not ready to retire in a blaze of honours; not indeed ready to retire at all, for as he later remarked, ‘I always believed in staying in the pub until closing time.’ Moreover, while he remained active, he was also a man whose actions would continue to shape the public's perceptions of himself, his personality -- and his past. The previous chapter [of the book by Ramsden] described the relatively passive part of Churchill's rise to a unique status, while this one looks at the other side of the coin, the way in which his post-war role as an international statesman and writer shaped these same processes.

“Churchill's journey to the campus of a small college in a remote town in the heart of the United States, Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, in March 1946, to deliver what has been variously known as the ‘iron curtain’ speech, or the ‘sinews of peace’ speech, or just the ‘Fulton speech,’ has acquired a mythic significance both in evaluations of the great man's post-war career and in investigations of the point at which the Cold War went into superfreeze . . . These successes [of other speeches], beginning with the extraordinary attention paid by the international community to the purely personal opinions he expressed at Fulton, helped both to persuade Churchill against retirement and to provide the platform on which his comeback could be staged.

“The speech has a quite different significance in the historiography of international relations, where it tends to be interpreted as a milestone along the way to growing antagonism between the Soviet Union and the West. Whereas it was once typically argued that Churchill alone saw the need for a

strong Western response to Russian expansionism, and that his courageous call for such measures at Fulton had itself awakened the sleeping giant of American arms in defense of freedom, more recent historians have rightly pointed to the extent to which American elite opinion was already tending in that direction before Churchill went to Fulton.

“. . . It is quite clear that Churchill saw from the start that the invitation to go to Fulton had given him a wonderful opportunity to bring something big. He told Truman in January 1946, 'I have a message to deliver to your country and the world,' and Truman's reply picked up and repeated the phrase: 'I know you have a real message to deliver at Fulton.' The speech eventually given was longer than any that Churchill produced during the two years after the war, except for the party conference oration which in October 1946 was needed to re-establish his party leadership, and the preparations for Fulton were on a suitably elaborate scale. ... In advance of the speech, Churchill told the President of Westminster College that 'in the circumstances, it will be a political pronouncement of considerable importance,' and, as they left the College gymnasium in which the speech was delivered, he told President McCluer that he hoped he had 'started some thinking that will make history.'

“On the train back to Washington, Churchill proclaimed that it had been 'the most important speech of my career'. What were the special circumstances which enabled history to be made? In accepting Truman's fairly casual invitation, he committed to more than had probably been intended: ...'if you . . . would like me to visit you in your home State and would introduce me, I should feel it my duty --and it would also be a great pleasure – to deliver an address...on the world situation under your aegis'. . . This proved to be important when as usual the final version of the speech was produced only at the last moment, for [as Churchill's personal secretary explained) 'on such occasions Mr. Churchill makes alterations and additions on the spur of the moment.' . . . Churchill refused all prior interviews so as not to give away in advance what he intended to say in Fulton.

[Later he would say:]

'In these last years of my life there is a message of which I conceive myself to be a bearer. It is a very simple message which can be well understood by the people of both countries [Britain and United States]. It is that we should stand together . . . among the English-speaking peoples of the world there must be the union of hearts based on conviction and common ideals.”

The speech, with a wav file of Churchill's oration, is at www.hpol.org/churchill.

Curriculum Overview

Students must start with an adequate knowledge that the first half of the 20th century was a time of war and should be able to list major nations and alliances. An option is to ask students to do an internet search on World War I and II as homework prior to starting the curriculum. You can modify the curriculum to fit the needs of individual classes and students. Presented here is the minimum presentation, divided into two class periods (assuming a "normal" 50 minute period).

Day One:

Students are introduced to Churchill and his "wit and wisdom" – from his speeches and his written word. They will identify the literary term used and place it on a timeline based on Churchill's life.

Day Two:

Students use newspapers, magazines, books, and the Internet to look for similar writing styles today. Students will also try their hand at writing and/or speaking like Churchill on a current topic.

This curriculum is appropriate for middle to high school students and may be used for either regular or advanced placement classes. It can be used most effectively with students working in groups of two. For your use, the terms are defined below with most examples from Churchill. (It is easy to tell which are not his.)

- **Alliteration** is the repetition of the same sound, often the initial consonant sounds in neighboring words.
Sporadically, snakes slithered smoothly past my shoes.
- An **aphorism** is a brief statement that expresses an observation on life, usually intended as a wise observation.
"What we need now is cool heads without cold hearts or cold feet."
- **Chiasmus** is a type of rhetoric in which the second part is syntactically balanced against the first. The order of words is reversed in parallel expressions.
"And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." Or, "Quitters never win and winners never quit."
- **Hyperbole** is exaggeration or overstatement.
"Human beings may be divided into three classes: those who are toiled to death, those who are worried to death, and those who are bored to death."

- **Imagery** refers to word pictures or visual details involving the senses (sight, touch, sound, taste, smell).
"In war, the clouds never blow over; they gather unceasingly and fall in thunderbolts".
- **Irony** is an implied discrepancy between what is said and what is meant. It also can mean an incongruity between what might be expected and what occurs.
Upon arriving at Normandy shortly after the D-Day invasion Churchill sent President Roosevelt a postcard, "Wish you were here."
- A **metaphor** is a comparison of two unlike things, often using the verb "to be" and not using like or as, as in a [simile](#).
Churchill described Bolshevism as "A ghoul descending from a pile of skulls."
- A **motif** is a repeated image or words used to add impact to an idea.
"Let there be sunshine on both sides of the Iron Curtain; and if ever the sunshine should be equal on both sides, the Curtain will be no more."
- **Personification** is giving human qualities to things or ideas.
"Odd things animals. All dogs look up to you. All cats look down on you. Only a pig looks at you as an equal."
- A **pun** is a figure of speech, which consists of a deliberate confusion of similar words or phrases for rhetorical effect, whether humorous or serious.
On U.S. Diplomat John Foster Dulles, "Dull, Duller, Dulles."
- A **simile** is the comparison of two unlike things using *like* or *as*.
"The United States is like a gigantic boiler. Once the fire is lit under it, there is no limit to the power it can generate."
- A **symbol** is an object or action that means something more than its literal meaning.
"The British lion, so fierce and valiant in bygone days, so dauntless and unconquerable through all the agony of Armageddon, can now be chased by rabbits from the fields and forests of his former glory." (Liverpool, 1931)

Communicating like Churchill

In James Humes' book, *The Wit and Wisdom of Churchill*, he states that next to the Bible and Shakespeare, Churchill is the most frequent source of quotations. Richard Mahoney, in the *Quotable Winston Churchill*, notes Churchill published 37,000 pages.

Winston Churchill possessed such impressive oratorical skills that many believe his wartime speeches were extremely important to the Allied victory in WWII. Churchill's words lifted the spirits and restored the hope of the war-torn English people. When the U. S. Congress voted to confer honorary American citizenship on Churchill in 1963, President Kennedy said, "He mobilized the English language and sent it into battle."

These quotes were selected from his speeches, writings, parliamentary debates, and everyday conversation.

**"All babies look like me.
But then, I look like all babies."**

**"All for Al,
and Al for All."**

1928 election for Al Smith

**"All I can say is that I have taken more out of alcohol
than alcohol has taken out of me."**

At a reception in Washington D.C., World War II

**"An optimist sees an opportunity in every calamity;
a pessimist sees a calamity in every opportunity."**

**"Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so
bear ourselves that, if the British Empire and its
Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still
say:
'This was their finest hour.'"**

House of Commons, 1940

"Elections exist for the sake of the House of Commons and not the House of Commons for the sake of elections."

1953, during a debate to change the elections

**"He has to conceal what he would most wish to make public,
and make public what he would most wish to conceal."**

1962, Churchill is talking about the duties of a Foreign Secretary

**"I am ready to meet my Maker.
Whether my Maker is prepared
for the ordeal of meeting me is another matter."**

November 30, 1950, in response to a reporter who asked if he had any fear of death

**"I cannot help reflecting that if
my father had been an American
and my mother British,
instead of the other way around,
I might have gotten here on my own."**

Dec. 1941 in a speech to Congress

**"I hope I shall never see the day
when the Force of Right
is deprived of the Right of Force."**

**"In both our lands, it is the
people who control the Government,
not the Government the people."**

1948

**"In finance, everything that is agreeable is unsound
and everything that is sound is disagreeable."**

**"In Great Britain,
governments often change their policies
without changing their men.
In France, they usually change their men
without changing their policy."**

1939, from Churchill's book Step by Step

**"Instead of making his violent speech
without moving his moderate amendment,
he had better have moved his moderate amendment
without making his violent speech."**

1930, talking about the Prime Minister David Lloyd George

**"It is very much better . . .
to have a panic feeling beforehand,
and then be quite calm when things happen,
than to be extremely calm beforehand
and go into panic when things happen."**

1935 debate in the House of Commons

**"No more let us alter or falter or palter
From Malta to Yalta, and Yalta to Malta."**

January, 1945 when the Big Three were meeting in Yalta

**"I have never promised anything but blood, tears, toil and
sweat. Now, however we have a new experience. We
have a victory – a remarkable and definite victory. Now
this is not the end.**

**It is not even the beginning of the end.
But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning."**

1942, after Britain drove German troops out of Egypt

**"Our defeats are but stepping-stones to victory,
and his victories are but stepping-stones to ruin."**

World War II, referring to Hitler

**"Socialism would gather all power to
the supreme party and party leaders,
rising like stately pinnacles
above their vast bureaucracies of
civil servants no longer servants, no longer civil."**

1946 to the House of Commons

**"Some men change their party
for the sake of their principles;
others their principles
for the sake of their party."**

**"The first duty of a university
is to teach wisdom, not a trade;
character, not technicalities.
We want a lot of engineers in the modern world,
but we do not want a world of engineers."**

1950

**"The old wars were decided by their episodes
rather than by their tendencies.
In this war, the tendencies are
far more important than the episodes."**

1915 House of Commons speech referring to World War I

"The tank was originally invented to clear a way for the infantry in the teeth of machine-gun fire. Now it is the infantry who will have to clear a way for the tanks."

1938, after the development of anti tank weaponry

"The whole history of the world is summed up in the fact that, when nations are strong, they are not always just, and when they wish to be just, they are no longer strong."

"They have done what they like. Their difficulty is to like what they have done."

1936 letter on policies adopted by the French

"Those who can win a war well can rarely make a good peace, and those who could make a good peace would never have won the war."

1930, from his book My Early Life

"We shape our dwellings, and afterwards our dwellings shape us."

October 28, 1944 during the rebuilding of the House of Commons, which had been bombed

"You were given the choice between war and dishonor. You chose dishonor and you will have war."

1938, after Prime Minister Chamberlain signed an agreement with Hitler

"...the high roads of the future will be clear, not only for us but for all, not only for our time but for a century to come."

March 5, 1946, speech at Westminster College, Fulton Missouri

"A fanatic is one who cannot change his mind and won't change the subject."

1947

"A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on."

Nov. 11, 1942 - from a speech in the British House of Commons

"All the great things are simple, and many can be expressed in a single word: freedom; justice; honor; duty; mercy; hope."

"Dictators ride to and fro upon tigers which they dare not dismount. And the tigers are getting hungry."

"From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent."

March 5, 1946, speech at Westminster College, Fulton Missouri

"If you're going through hell, keep going."

"It was said that this was a time when leaders should keep their ears to the ground. All I can say is that the British nation will find it very hard to look up to leaders who are detected in that somewhat ungainly posture."

1954

"Success is the ability to go from failure to failure with no loss of enthusiasm."

"The farther backward you can look, the farther forward you are likely to see."

"The greatest lesson in life is to know that even fools are right sometimes."

1941

"The price of greatness is responsibility."

1941

"There is the solution which I respectfully offer to you in this Address to which I have given the title "The Sinews of Peace."

March 5, 1946, speech at Westminster College, Fulton Missouri

"You don't make the poor richer by making the rich poorer."

**We shall fight on the beaches.
We shall fight on the landing grounds.
We shall fight in the fields and in the streets.
We shall fight in the hills;
we shall never surrender. And (as an aside to a colleague as the House rallied with cheers)... we will fight them with the butt end of broken bottles because that's . . . all we've got."**

House of Commons, 1941

A woman approached a tipsy Sir Winston at a party and announced indignantly, "Mr. Churchill, you are drunk." "Yes I am," replied Churchill, "And you, madam are ugly. But I shall be sober tomorrow."

Teaching Activities: Day One

Preparation Needed:

- Be prepared to introduce and briefly
 1. discuss the times of Churchill
 2. the literary terms (see page 7-8)
- Place the following headings in a line across the front of your room:
 1. Early Political Years and World War I (1900- 1920)
 2. Gathering Storm (1921 – 1939)
 3. World War II (1939 – 1945)
 4. Cold War (1946 – 1991)
- Bring in weekly news magazines such as Newsweek, Time, the Nation, etc. and several newspapers (the pages will also be used on Day 2).
- Have the cards with the Churchill quotes ready to pass out.
- Quote Analysis Sheets (front) with Literary Terms (back)

Implementation:

1. Introduce a brief history of the early 20th century or assign it as homework prior to starting the curriculum. You might begin by asking students if they know the names of Hitler, Stalin, Roosevelt, Tito, and Churchill and what role they played in the 20th century.
2. Provide students the sheet listed *Literary Terms* or make an overhead. Go through the "Quote Analysis Sheet" using several examples from the magazines or newspaper.
3. Divide the students into teams of two and provide two Churchill quotes to each.
4. Ask them to fill out the Quote Analysis Sheet.
5. Select a student to serve as group leader. Call on the group leaders to tell the rest of the class about one of their quotes and the information they discovered.

Quote Analysis Sheet

1. Who is the speaker? _____
2. What is the speaker's position or job?

3. Which political party or interest group does the speaker seem to represent?

4. Does the speaker make a convincing argument with the quote? Why or why not?

5. Examine the use of a literary term. Which term was used?

6. How does the literary term affect the impact of the message?

7. How would you restate this quote without a literary term?

8. What questions are left unanswered by this quote?

9. Select a theme, event, or issue mentioned or alluded to in the quote that you wish to investigate further. What is it?

If you can tell the proper time, place the quote on the board in that period.

Literary Terms

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ask what you can do for your country." Or, "Quitters never win
and winners never quit."*

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toiled to death, those who are worried to death, and those who are
bored to death."*

- **Imagery** refers to word pictures or visual details involving the senses (sight, touch, sound, taste, smell).

*"In war, the clouds never blow over; they gather unceasingly and
fall in thunderbolts".*

- **Irony** is an implied discrepancy between what is said and what is meant. It also can mean an incongruity between what might be expected and what occurs.

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Churchill sent President Roosevelt a postcard, "Wish you were
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"The British lion, so fierce and valiant in bygone days, so dauntless and unconquerable through all the agony of Armageddon, can now be chased by rabbits from the fields and forests of his former glory."
 (Liverpool, 1931)

Day Two:

Preparation Needed:

- Pages from weekly news magazines and current newspapers, particularly national and local news and non fiction books
- Blank quote cards
- New copies of the Quote Analysis Sheet with Literary Terms

Implementation:

1. This can be done in teams of two or as individuals. Pass out pages from the magazines or newspaper.
2. Tell the students to look at the real news (not the advertisements). They are to select one story, select the issue, and determine the best technique to a deliver a Churchill type quote.
3. Students should exchange their quotes and perform the Quote Analysis on a classmate's quote.

Guided Classroom Discussion

1. Discuss the idea of the power of powerful speaking or writing in guiding the speaker's desired outcomes.
2. Is there a common topic or theme created by student quotes? If so, what is it?
3. What words would the class use if they were going to start a "get out and vote" campaign?
4. What other current topics could be effectively conveyed through wit?
5. Whom do the students look to today for "Churchill" type language? Is it effective?