

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts: K-12 Close Reading Task

| Text grade band placement: | |
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| 11-12 | |
| Text | Text Complexity Analysis |
| <p>Title: “John F. Kennedy: Inaugural Address, 1961”</p> <p>Author: John F. Kennedy</p> <p>Citation/Publication info: Eldenmuller, Michael E. "John F. Kennedy: Inaugural Address." <i>American Rhetoric: Top 100 Speeches</i>. American Rhetoric, 2001. Web. 22 July 2013.</p> <p>Link: http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/jfkinaugural.htm</p> | <p>Quantitative: Lexile: 1380L Flesch-Kincaid: 10.9</p> |
| | <p>Qualitative: This text is appropriate because it is both challenging and thought-provoking. The text includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thematic text structure - Abstract ideas - Use of figurative language - Requires multiple inferences |
| | <p>Reader and Task: Potential challenges for students include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complex text structure - Use of dated slang, idioms - Background knowledge demands - Bias - Ambiguous language, imagery |
| ELA/Literacy Common Core Standards addressed by task | |
| <p><u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.1</u> Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.</p> | |
| <p><u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.3</u> Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.</p> | |
| <p><u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.4</u> Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines <i>faction</i> in <i>Federalist</i> No. 10).</p> | |
| <p><u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.8</u> Evaluate an author’s premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.</p> | |
| <p><u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.2</u> Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.</p> | |

What key insights should students take from this text?

- Students will comprehend John F. Kennedy’s commitment to protecting democracy, the United States, and our allies during the Cold War.
- Students will understand who Kennedy’s audience is, who he considers our foes to be (beyond a single country or political/economic system), the President’s proposal for future action, and how to prevent nuclear annihilation.
- Students will be expected to understand the timeline of the president’s plan and who is charged with the task at hand.

Text-Dependent Questions

1. According to the introductory statement in JFK’s 1961 Inaugural Address, who is specifically in the audience?
2. The President states, “the world is very different now.” What evidence is there within the text to prove how the world has changed in his lifetime? What evidence is found in the speech to show the world has not changed in his lifetime?
3. Cite one example of JFK’s use of ambiguity and explain why he chose to do so.
4. What meaning can you infer from the use of the words “iron tyranny”?
5. What purpose does the imagery of the tiger serve?
6. How does President Kennedy justify that he believes the United Nations is “...our last best hope”?
7. Provide specific examples of what President Kennedy believes we as a nation should do to respond to the statement, “[now] a trumpet summons us again”.
8. What is the author’s tone toward democracy? Why? Cite specific examples from the text to support your conclusions.
9. After reading the entire speech: what inference can be made as to who the intended audience is in President Kennedy’s Inaugural Address? Provide justification from the text to support your response.

Writing Mode

Informative/explanatory

Writing Prompt

Using the text from John F. Kennedy’s Inaugural Address, cite specific examples from the speech outlining the President’s proposals for action. Analyze how this plan supports Kennedy’s commitment to protecting democracy and the free world.

Scaffolding and support for special education students, English language learners, and struggling readers:

- Students supported with Tier 2 vocabulary
- Students may:
 - Read individually and notate as they read
 - Read aloud (popcorn read)
 - Break sections down during small group work (ex. pair-share)
 - Follow up with whole class work

How this task supports the content standards for relevant subject area courses in this grade band

This task is most appropriately used in a high school US History course. Text exemplifies the challenges faced by the United States during the Cold War era.