Unit 9

Title:Address to Congress November 27, 1963

Suggested Time: 4 days (45 minutes per day)

Common Core ELA Standards: RI.9-10.1, RI.9-10.4, RI.9-10.5, RI.9-10.6, RI.9-10.10; W.9-10.2, W.9-10.4, W.9-10.9; SL.9-10.1; L.9-10.1, L.9-10.2, L.9-10.4

Teacher Instructions

**Preparing for Teaching**

1. Read the Big Ideas and Key Understandings and the Synopsis. Please do **not** read this to the students. This is a description for teachers about the big ideas and key understanding that students should take away **after** completing this task.

Big Ideas and Key Understandings:

Great leaders can turn big losses into big gains.

Synopsis

Two days after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, Vice President Lyndon Johnson was sworn in as president. On November 27, 1963, just 5 days after being sworn in, he addressed a joint session of the legislature. In this speech he acknowledged the loss of John F. Kennedy and the sadness that it brought to many people. Johnson’s speech commanded Congress to find the resolve in the midst of the sorrow to translate Kennedy’s ideas into action so that he, JFK, would not have died in vain.

1. Read the entire selection, keeping in mind the Big Ideas and Key Understandings.
2. Re-read the text while noting the stopping points for the Text Dependent Questions and teaching Tier II/academic vocabulary.

**During Teaching**

1. Students read the entire selection independently.
2. Teacher reads the text aloud while students follow along or students take turns reading aloud to each other. Depending on the text length and student need, the teacher may choose to read the full text or a passage aloud. For a particularly complex text, the teacher may choose to reverse the order of steps 1 and 2.
3. Students and teacher re-read the text while stopping to respond to and discuss the questions, continually returning to the text. A variety of methods can be used to structure the reading and discussion (i.e., whole class discussion, think-pair-share, independent written response, group work, etc.)

Text Dependent Questions

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Text-dependent Questions** | **Evidence-based Answers** |
| To whom was President Johnson speaking in this address? | President Johnson was addressing a joint session of the House of Representatives and the Senate, so he was speaking to the members of both groups. |
| What does President Johnson mean when he says, “All I have I would have given gladly to not be standing here today.” | He means that he did not want to become president through the death of John F. Kennedy. |
| What impact does this paragraph have on the tone of the text? Which specific words contribute to that tone? | The word within this paragraph makes the tone of the text hopeful. President Johnson repeats the words “lives on” to contribute to this tone. |
| “The dream of conquering...” List the American dreams in this paragraph. | The American dreams included building partnerships with other countries, exploring space, building the Peace Corps, providing education and jobs for all, providing care for the elderly, attacking mental illness, and establishing equal rights for all Americans. |
| Whose drive and dedication vitalized these dreams? How did you know? Additionally, which dream was the most important to President Kennedy? Find evidence in the text to support your answer. | John F. Kennedy’s drive and dedication vitalized those dreams. I know because the speech is about John F. Kennedy. The pronoun “his” refers him.  The most important dream was of equal rights for all Americans. In listing equal rights President Johnson says, “and above all” meaning that it was more important than the others. |
| Use the definition of eulogy to respond to this question: What does President Johnson suggest would be the most fitting eulogy for President Kennedy? | A eulogy is a speech praising someone who has died. President Johnson suggests that passing the Civil Rights Act as quickly as possible would be the most fitting eulogy for President Kennedy. He also said that they have fought long enough, over one hundred years, so now is the time to act. |
| What is Johnson asking his audience to do? What impact do his words and phrases have on the tone of the text? | In this speech, Johnson is asking congress to move forward on President Kennedy’s request for civil rights legislation. The tone is one of urgency. He uses the phrase “fanatics of the far right and fanatics of the far left,’ “Apostles of bitterness and bigotry” and “those who pour venom into our nation’s blood stream” to emphasize the need to act quickly. These words and phrases have the impact of creating a sense of urgency. |
| Reread the last paragraph. What is President Johnson’s purpose behind his speech? Provide evidence from the text to support your response. | President Johnson’s purpose is to use the death of President Kennedy to bring the members of Congress together. He says that “I profoundly hope that the tragedy and torment of these terrible days will bind us together in new fellowship.” By coming together, President Johnson hopes to turn a tragic event into one of action and moving forward with the initiatives of the late JFK. |
| Perhaps the most memorable part of this speech is the last sentence: “So let us here highly resolve that John Fitzgerald Kennedy did not live – or die – in vain.” “Vain” has several meanings. Here it means “Without positive results.” According to the speech, how could the congressmen make sure that President Kennedy did not die in vain?  Reread the last line of the speech: “So let us here highly resolve that John Fitzgerald Kennedy did not live –or die– in vain.” The meaning of ‘vain’ here is without positive results. What was President Johnson’s intent of this last sentence? | According to the speech, the congressmen could make sure that John F. Kennedy did not die in vain by passing the civil rights law and acting to create other legislation to support the programs proposed by President Kennedy. |

Tier II/Academic Vocabulary

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **These words require less time to learn**  (They are concrete or describe an object/event/  process/characteristic that is familiar to students) | **These words require more time to learn**  (They are abstract, have multiple meanings, are a part  of a word family, or are likely to appear again in future texts) |
| **Meaning can be learned from context** | forward thrust, equal rights, conquering the vastness of space,  profoundly, fellowship | vitalized, drive, translated into effective action, nobly  tolerance, conveyed, torment, memorial, bind |
| **Meaning needs to be provided** | foulest, deed, immortal, elderly, mental illness  creeds, fanatics, apostles, bitterness, bigotry, defiant | dedication, resolve  destiny, venom, nation’s bloodstream, vain |

Culminating Writing Task

* Prompt
* *The speech ends with the sentence, “So let us here highly resolve that John Fitzgerald Kennedy did not live – or die– in vain.” In this speech, President Johnson refers to President Kennedy as “the greatest leader of our time” and calls his assassination the “foulest deed of our time” (Page 680). How does President Johnson use this great loss to achieve great gains? Use evidence from the text, including direct quotes, to write a brief (one page) informative/explanatory essay answering this question.*
* Teacher Instructions

1. Students identify their writing task from the prompt provided.
2. Students complete an evidence chart as a pre-writing activity. Teachers should guide students in gathering and using any relevant notes they compiled while reading and answering the text-dependent questions earlier. Some students will need a good deal of help gathering this evidence, especially when this process is new and/or the text is challenging!

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Evidence***  ***Quote or paraphrase*** | ***Elaboration / explanation of how this evidence supports ideas or argument*** |
| “Today, John Fitzgerald Kennedy lives on in the immortal words and works that he left behind.” | Johnson is reminding Congress that JFK had an important agenda that needed to be continued. |
| “No words are strong enough to express our determination to continue the forward thrust of America that he began…” | Again, Johnson is reminding Congress that the work JFK began must be continued and not put on hold due to his sudden death. Johnson lists several agenda items, including civil rights. |
| “Now the ideas and the ideals which he so nobly represented must and will be translated into action.” | Johnson is urging Congress to promptly act on these agenda items. |
| “Today, in this moment of new resolve, I would say to all my fellow Americans, let us continue.” | It’s not just about Congress, but about all Americans. |
| “Nothing could honor JFK more than the earliest possible passage of the civil rights bill for which he fought so long.” | Johnson is directly itemizing the civil rights bill and saying that to support JFK’s work would be to honor him in death. |
| “Let us turn away from the fanatics on the far left and the far right, from the apostles of bitterness and bigotry…” | Johnson basically challenges every Congressman to consider his stand on civil rights and to put aside political leanings to the left or right. |
| “I profoundly hope that the tragedy and the torment of these terrible days will bind us together in new fellowship, making us one people in our hour of sorrow.” | We are mourning together and should use this to be productive for the better of the people and in honor of JFK. |

1. Once students have completed the evidence chart, they should look back at the writing prompt in order to remind themselves what kind of response they are writing (i.e. expository, analytical, argumentative) and think about the evidence they found. (Depending on the grade level, teachers may want to review students’ evidence charts in some way to ensure accuracy.) From here, students should develop a specific thesis statement. This could be done independently, with a partner, small group, or the entire class. Consider directing students to the following sites to learn more about thesis statements: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/545/01/ OR http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/ thesis\_statement.shtml.
2. Students compose a rough draft. With regard to grade level and student ability, teachers should decide how much scaffolding they will provide during this process (i.e. modeling, showing example pieces, sharing work as students go).
3. Students complete final draft.

* Sample Answer

Five days after being sworn in as the President of the United States, Lyndon B. Johnson gave a speech to a joint session of the House of Representatives and the Senate. He was sworn in president after President Kennedy’s (JFK) death and is addressing the legislators to remind them of their duties that Johnson sees as even more important at this sorrowful time. Johnson stated, “Today, John Fitzgerald Kennedy lives on in the immortal words and works that he left behind” to communicate that now is not the time to take a break and mourn, but rather to continue leading by JFK’s example and see the work done. He lists in his speech JFK’s agenda items that must be continued, including civil rights for all Americans and compels lawmakers to translate JFK’s ideas into action. Furthermore, Johnson specifically focuses on civil rights and rallies Congress to honor JFK by passing a civil rights bill. Johnson challenges every Congressman to consider his stand on civil rights by advising, “Let us turn away from the fanatics on the far left and the far right, from the apostles of bitterness and bigotry…”. President Johnson is compelling at the end of his speech by discussing “binding us together” and referring to “one people” and finally stating “So let us here highly resolve that John Fitzgerald Kennedy did not live – or die— -- in vain“ to gather momentum for the civil rights movement and see legislation immediately that would ensure equal rights for all Americans. By doing so, he was able to make great gains from a time of great loss.

Additional Tasks

* In your small groups, practice reading Johnson’s address to Congress aloud. Use the provided copy of the speech to prepare for your speech by marking the pronunciations of difficult words, pauses in the speech, and other cues to enhance the meaning of the speech. As a group, prepare one final copy of the manuscript to submit for reading to the class.

Answer: Sample Paragraph:

Mrs. Speaker, Mr. President, Members of the House, Members of the Senate, my fellow Americans: (Pause)

(speak slowly and with constraint) All I have I would have given gladly **not** to be standing here today.

The greatest leader of our time has been struck down by the foulest deed of our time. Today John Fitzgerald Kennedy lives on (speak with clear enunciation) in the immortal words and works that he left behind. He lives on (more emphasis) in the mind and memories of mankind. He lives on (pause and emphasize) in the hearts of his countrymen.

Note to Teacher

* Students may need information about terms specific to government in the United States and the operation of Congress. Providing definitions of the following terms may be helpful:
  + House of Representatives
  + Senate
  + Congress
  + Speaker of the House
* For the Additional Task, model one or two paragraphs, but do not provide a complete model. Allow the students to work through the speech and determine which changes in intonation and emphasis would make it a more effective speech.

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Address to Congress November 27, 1963**

1. To whom was President Johnson speaking in this address?
2. What does President Johnson mean when he says, “All I have I would have given gladly to not be standing here today.”
3. What impact does this paragraph have on the tone of the text? Which specific words contribute to that tone?
4. “The dream of conquering...” List the American dreams in this paragraph.
5. Whose drive and dedication vitalized these dreams? How did you know? Additionally, which dream was the most important to President Kennedy? Find evidence in the text to support your answer.
6. Use the definition of eulogy to respond to this question: What does President Johnson suggest would be the most fitting eulogy for President Kennedy?
7. What is Johnson asking his audience to do? What impact do his words and phrases have on the tone of the text?
8. Reread the last paragraph. What is President Johnson’s purpose behind his speech? Provide evidence from the text to support your response.
9. Perhaps the most memorable part of this speech is the last sentence: “So let us here highly resolve that John Fitzgerald Kennedy did not live – or die – in vain.” “Vain” has several meanings. Here it means “Without positive results.” According to the speech, how could the congressmen make sure that President Kennedy did not die in vain? Reread the last line of the speech: “So let us here highly resolve that John Fitzgerald Kennedy did not live –or die– in vain.” The meaning of ‘vain’ here is without positive results. What was President Johnson’s intent of this last sentence?