Title: The New Frontier

Suggested Time: 5 days (45 minutes per day)

Common Core ELA Standards: RI.9-10.1, RI.9-10.2, RI.9-10.3, RI.9-10.4, RI.9-10.5, RI.9-10.6; W.9-10.1, W.9-10.4, W.9-10.9; SL.9-10.1; SL.9-10.4; L.9-10.1, L.9-10.2, L.9-10.4, L.9-10.6

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:

The progress of mankind is dependent on courageous people daring to do what has never been done before. In the 1960’s, space exploration presented an opportunity for Americans to take this risk and lead the way in innovation and discovery.

Synopsis:

In this 1962 speech, Kennedy attempts to persuade the public that America should invest in space exploration in the name of progress and national pride. He argues that America has a responsibility to be the world’s leader in space exploration, so that the mysteries of space will be solved for the good of all.

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** |
| Reread the first two paragraphs and underline each milestone of human achievement. How does Kennedy present this timeline to the audience? What point is he trying to make? | More important gains have been made in the last few years than in the rest of history and we need to continue in that vein. |
| What was President Kennedy’s purpose in using this historical anthology to begin his speech? | Kennedy draws a parallel between great achievements of the past and great achievements of the future. Kennedy is telling the crowd that space exploration is the natural next step for mankind. He is listing the accomplishments we have made and encouraging us to explore space. He is attempting to generate a sense of urgency among the American population to avoid falling behind the Soviet Union in the space race. |
| Kennedy uses the word vista. What does “vista” mean and what does he want us to see? | The word “vista” is something like a view or expanse. Kennedy used this word because he wanted us to see that space exploration is expansive and poses dangers, but will have many rewards. |
| Kennedy quotes William Bradford. Quoting someone helps support your idea. What is the quote, what does it mean, and which idea did Kennedy want this quote to support? | “… all great and honorable actions are accompanied with great difficulties, and both must be enterprised and overcome with answerable courage.” He is trying to communicate that for centuries individuals have been working hard to accomplish great and important tasks and these tasks have never been easy. He gave us the examples, of Newton who brought us the idea of gravity and the fact that penicillin had recently been developed. His point is that breaking new ground is full of challenges, but the results are always worth it. |
| Throughout the speech Kennedy refers to “US” and “WE.” Why does Kennedy choose to use these pronouns in his speech? | President Kennedy is purposeful in using these words to create a feeling of pride in our nation. In order for us to succeed we must be united in the endeavor of space exploration. |
| Kennedy states, “… and this generation does not intend to founder in the backwash of the coming age of space.” Kennedy uses the two words “founder” and “backwash” together. Why does he use these two words together and what do they mean in this paragraph? | Kennedy is appealing to our nationalism and/or competitiveness. We cannot be left behind. He uses these two words as a metaphor for a ship sinking below the surface of water and not being able to carry on. |
| What supporting details does Kennedy use to justify the argument that the United States should become “the world leading space-faring nation.” | The United States will become a world leading space faring nation by: (possible choices) 1) leadership in science and industry 2) national peace and security 3) obligation to us and others 4) solve mysteries for the good of humanity |
| Personification is when a writer gives human features to an inanimate object. Why did he choose to use this technique to further his argument? | Kennedy uses the analogy of setting sail when he personifies space as a new ocean and asks if it will be a sea of peace. Kennedy used personification to emphasize that humanity decides how information will be used. |
| Kennedy states three reasons to pursue space exploration. How do these reasons support his argument? | Kennedy gave these three reasons/rationales for space exploration. 1. New knowledge to be gained 2. New rights to be won 3. They must be won for the progress for all people.  This is how society moves forward and progresses as suggested in the time continuum in which he began his speech. |
| Kennedy uses the phrase “peaceful cooperation.” Why does he feel that nations need to cooperate peacefully? What words and phrases does he use when discussing this point? | President Kennedy feels that nations need to cooperate peacefully in order to coexist without strife, prejudice, and national conflict in outer space. |
| What words or phrases does Kennedy use to argue for space exploration? | “Going to the moon is a choice. It will not be easy, but we choose it because it is hard.” “It represents the best of our energies and skills.” “It is a challenge we are ready to accept, not postpone, and one we intend to win. “ |

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** | obligation, condense, half century, timespan, hazards, space-faring  capsule, | dispel,  conquest, vowed, prejudice |
| **Meaning needs to be provided** | vista,  pre-eminence, backwash, strife, condense, enterprised, founder | conquered, humanity,  enterprise, deterred, theatre |

Culminating Writing Task

* Prompt
  + *The New Frontier is a speech in which Kennedy argues that America needs to take a leadership role in space exploration. Does Kennedy effectively argue his point? Use evidence from the text to support your claim.*
* 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 remind students to use any relevant notes they compiled while reading and answering the text-dependent questions.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Evidence***  ***Quote or paraphrase*** | ***Elaboration / explanation of how this evidence supports ideas or argument*** |
| No man can fully grasp how far and how fast humanity has come, but condense, if you will, the 50,000 years of man’s recorded history in a time span of but a half-century. | At the beginning of the essay, Kennedy uses historical anthology to begin his speech. Kennedy draws a parallel between great achievements of the past and great achievements of the future if America chooses to continue down the path of space exploration. |
| William Bradford, speaking in 1630 of the founding of the Plymouth Bay Colony, said that all great and honorable actions are accompanied with great difficulties, and both must be enterprised and overcome with answerable courage. | Kennedy wants to remind us that for centuries people have been working hard to accomplish great and important tasks and to express the notion that all things worth doing are difficult to do. |
| Kennedy refers to our predecessors as the forerunners of invention and industry, “and this generation does not intend to founder in the backwash of the coming age of space.” | Kennedy uses this argument to support his idea that just as our forefathers took the lead in invention and industry we must continue the tradition of innovation in the area of space exploration. |
| “We set sail on this new sea because there is new knowledge to be gained, and new rights to be won, and they must be won and used for the progress of all people.” | The metaphor of the sailing ship furthers the argument that space exploration is a natural step towards the progress of mankind. |

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:

Kennedy makes a persuasive argument that the United States should be a leader in space exploration. Initially, he uses a quote from William Bradford stating, “That all great and honorable actions are accompanied with great difficulties, and both must be enterprised and overcome with answerable courage.” Here Kennedy wants to remind us that for centuries people have been working hard to accomplish great and important tasks and expresses the notion that all things worth doing are difficult to do. Space exploration may be a difficult and expensive task, but one worth our undertaking.

He also uses the argument that the pace of innovation has been rapid in recent history. He uses the example of Newton’s discovery of gravity, the invention of the telephone, and the automobile which came in recent history. He states that if we are to keep pace with these innovations we cannot wait. The United States needs to be on the forefront of space exploration if it wants to remain one of the leading nations. “The exploration of space will go ahead, whether we join it or not and no nation which expects to be a leader of other nations can expect to stay behind in the race for space.”

Kennedy’s final point is that that space (i.e. landing on the moon) shall not be “governed by a hostile flag of conquest” (i.e. Russia), but by “a banner of freedom and peace.” Kennedy also makes the point that space exploration should be for the good of all men and there is “new knowledge to be gained and new rights to be won, and they must be won and used for the progress of all people.” He warns that in the wrong hands, space science can be used as a force for “ill” and that the United States is in a position to make sure we use our knowledge for the “good of all men.” He is making the point that the United States is the nation that will use the knowledge for good. Kennedy uses the good versus evil argument to finalize his point that the United States needs to be the country that leads in space exploration. He appeals to the nations distrust toward Russia and its national pride as a final way to convince the people to support this plan.

Additional Tasks

* How would President Kennedy’s speech on space exploration be received today with the state of the present day economy in mind?

Answer: In responding to this prompt, students need to provide statistical evidence, expert opinion, and/or case studies to support their argument. They also need to use evidence from the text in their response. Answers will vary.

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

**“The New Frontier”**

1. Reread the first two paragraphs and underline each milestone of human achievement. How does Kennedy present this timeline to the audience? What point is he trying to make?
2. What was President Kennedy’s purpose in using this historical anthology to begin his speech?
3. Kennedy uses the word vista. What does “vista” mean and what does he want us to see?
4. Kennedy quotes William Bradford. Quoting someone helps support your idea. What is the quote, what does it mean, and which idea did Kennedy want this quote to support?
5. Throughout the speech Kennedy refers to “US” and “WE.” Why does Kennedy choose to use these pronouns in his speech?
6. Kennedy states, “… and this generation does not intend to founder in the backwash of the coming age of space.” Kennedy uses the two words “founder” and “backwash” together. Why does he use these two words together and what do they mean in this paragraph?
7. What supporting details does Kennedy use to justify the argument that the United States should become “the world leading space-faring nation”?
8. Personification is when a writer gives human features to an inanimate object. Why did he choose to use this technique to further his argument?
9. Kennedy states three reasons to pursue space exploration. How do these reasons support his argument?
10. Kennedy uses the phrase “peaceful cooperation.” Why does he feel that nations need to cooperate peacefully? What words and phrases does he use when discussing this point?
11. What words or phrases does Kennedy use to argue for space exploration?