

Churchill's Speech: We Shall Fight on the Beaches

Great Britain's Prime Minister Winston Churchill delivered a speech to the House of Commons on June 4, 1940. Churchill explained that the British effort in World War II was not going well and that a German invasion of Britain was possible. A gifted orator, Churchill knew he must convince the British people that victory would come someday. When Churchill gave his speech, the U.S. had not yet entered World War II. He references his hope that "the New World," meaning the U.S., would join the war. Below is the end of his speech.

I have, myself, full confidence that if all do their duty, if nothing is neglected, and if the best arrangements are made, as they are being made, we shall prove ourselves once again able to defend our Island home, to ride out the storm of war, and to outlive the menace of tyranny, if necessary for years, if necessary alone.

At any rate, that is what we are going to try to do. That is the resolve of His Majesty's Government - every man of them. That is the will of Parliament and the nation.

The British Empire and the French Republic, linked together in their cause and in their need, will defend to the death their native soil, aiding each other like good comrades to the utmost of their strength.

Even though large tracts of Europe and many old and famous States have fallen or may fall into the grip of the Gestapo and all the odious apparatus of Nazi rule, we shall not flag or fail.

We shall go on to the end, we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be, 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 even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this Island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle, until, in God's good time, the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old.

Why does Churchill repeat the phrase "we shall fight" over and over? How does it support the main purpose of this speech?

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Actual answers will vary. Example of correct answer:

Churchill uses the repetition of the phrase "we shall fight" to add emphasis and to show conviction. At a dark time of World War II, Churchill must state clearly that the British government is determined to win the war, no matter the cost. By making the commitment to fight in every possible place, he is making it clear that Britain will never surrender.