

Document A: Neville Chamberlain (Modified)

Neville Chamberlain met with Adolf Hitler twice in 1938 to discuss Germany's aggressive foreign policy. On September 30, 1938, they signed the Munich Pact, which gave the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia to Germany. In exchange, Hitler agreed that Germany would not seek to acquire additional territory. In this excerpt, Chamberlain defends the agreement in front of the United Kingdom's House of Commons.

What is the alternative to this bleak and barren policy of the inevitability of war? In my view it is that we should seek by all means in our power to avoid war, by analyzing possible causes, by trying to remove them, by discussion in a spirit of collaboration and good will. I cannot believe that such a program would be rejected by the people of this country, even if it does mean the establishment of personal contact with dictators. . . .

I do indeed believe that we may yet secure peace for our time, but I never meant to suggest that we should do that by disarmament, until we can **induce** others to disarm too. Our past experience has shown us only too clearly that weakness in armed strength means weakness in diplomacy, and if we want to secure a lasting peace, I realize that diplomacy cannot be effective unless . . . behind the diplomacy is the strength to give effect. . . .

I cannot help feeling that if, after all, war had come upon us, the people of this Country would have lost their spiritual faith altogether. As it turned out the other way, I think we have all seen something like a new spiritual revival, and I know that everywhere there is a strong desire among the people to record their readiness to serve their Country, where-ever or however their services could be most useful.

Source: *Neville Chamberlain to the House of Commons, October 5, 1938.*

Vocabulary

induce: convince

Document B: Winston Churchill (Modified)

Winston Churchill was the loudest and most important critic of Chamberlain's policy of appeasement. He believed that Hitler and Germany needed to be dealt with more firmly. The following excerpt is from part of a speech Churchill made to the House of Commons as they debated the Munich Agreement.

I will begin by saying what everybody would like to ignore or forget but which must nevertheless be stated, namely, that we have sustained a total . . . defeat. . . . The utmost he [Chamberlain] has been able to gain for Czechoslovakia and in the matters which were in dispute has been that the German dictator, instead of snatching his **victuals** from the table, has been content to have them served to him course by course. . . .

I have always held the view that the maintenance of peace depends upon the accumulation of **deterrents** against the aggressor, coupled with a sincere effort to **redress** grievances. . . . After the [German] seizure of Austria in March . . . I ventured to . . . pledge that in conjunction with France and other powers they would guarantee the security of Czechoslovakia while the Sudeten-Deutsch question was being examined either by a League of Nations Commission or some other **impartial** body, and I still believe that if that course had been followed events would not have fallen into this disastrous state. . . .

I venture to think that in the future the Czechoslovak State cannot be maintained as an independent entity. You will find that in a period of time, which may not be measured by years, but may be measured only by months, Czechoslovakia will be **engulfed** in the Nazi regime. . . . We are in the presence of a disaster of the first magnitude which has befallen Great Britain and France. . . . This is only the beginning of the reckoning.

Source: *Winston Churchill to the House of Commons, October 5, 1938.*

Vocabulary

victuals: food

deterrents: prevention strategies

redress: to make right

impartial: fair and just

engulfed: consumed

Appeasement: Guiding Questions

Document A: Chamberlain

- 1) (Sourcing) When and where did this speech take place? What was Chamberlain's goal for the Munich Agreement?
- 2) (Context) Why might people in England in 1938 have supported appeasement?
- 3) (Close reading) What did Chamberlain claim England should do while pursuing the policy of appeasement?

Document B: Churchill

- 1) (Sourcing) When and where did this speech take place? What was Churchill's purpose?
- 2) (Close reading) What did Churchill mean when he said that instead of being forced to "snatch" his "victuals from the table," Hitler had "them served to him course by course"?
- 3) (Context) In the second paragraph, what did Churchill claim could have prevented Germany from taking the Sudetenland? Did he offer any evidence for this claim?
- 4) (Context) What did Churchill predict will happen in Czechoslovakia?