

LESSON 20

From **The Inaugural Address (1961)** (speech)

by John F. Kennedy

In your hands, my fellow citizens, more than mine, will rest the final success or failure of our course. Since this country was founded, each generation of Americans has been **summoned** to give **testimony** to its national loyalty. The graves of young Americans who answered the call to service surround the globe.

Now the trumpet summons us again—not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need—not as a call to battle, though embattled we are—but a call to bear the burden of a long **twilight** struggle, year in and year out “rejoicing in hope, patient in **tribulation**”—a struggle against the common enemies of man: **tyranny**, poverty, disease, and war itself.

Can we **forge** against these enemies a grand and global **alliance**, North and South, East and West, that can assure a more fruitful life for all mankind? Will you join in that historic effort?

In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of **maximum**

danger. I do not **shrink** from this responsibility—I welcome it. I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. The energy, the faith, and the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it—and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.

And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.

My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.

Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us here the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good **conscience** our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God’s work must truly be our own.

• Exercise I: Context Clues

Read the passage above, paying special attention to the words in dark type. These are the Master Words you will study in this lesson. As you read, look for context clues in the sentences and paragraphs around each master word. Circle any words and phrases that give clues to the meaning of the master words.

Master Words

Place a check by words you feel you know; underline words you don’t know.

alliance

forge

shrink

testimony

twilight

conscience

maximum

summon

tribulation

tyranny

Exercise 2: Using Context Clues

Fill in the form for each of the Master Words listed below with context clues (if any), your definition, and the dictionary definition. If you have difficulty writing a definition, try using the word in a sentence instead.

1. **alliance** Part of Speech: *n.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

2. **conscience** Part of Speech: *n.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

3. **forge** Part of Speech: *v.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

4. **maximum** Part of Speech: *adj.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

5. **shrink** Part of Speech: *v.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

6. **summon** Part of Speech: *v.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

7. **testimony** Part of Speech: *n.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

8. **tribulation** Part of Speech: *n.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

9. **twilight** Part of Speech: *adj.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

10. **tyranny** Part of Speech: *n.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

Exercise 3: Synonyms and Antonyms

Use the synonyms and antonyms in the word list to fill in the blanks except where you see an X.

	Synonyms	Antonyms	Word List	
1. summon	_____	_____	advance	freedom
2. testimony	_____	X	blessing	greatest
3. tribulation	_____	_____	bright	immorality
4. tyranny	_____	_____	call	minimum
5. forge	_____	_____	dictatorship	morals
6. alliance	_____	_____	dismiss	obscure
7. twilight	_____	_____	dissolve	separation
8. maximum	_____	_____	evidence	trouble
9. shrink	_____	_____	flinch	union
10. conscience	_____	_____	form	

Exercise 4: Sentence Completion

From the Master Words, choose the appropriate word for the blank in each of the following sentences. Write the word in the space provided at the right.

- I would like to ...?... a new relationship based on trust and friendship.
- Often ...?... results when too much power is put in the hands of too few.
- Coach had to ...?... Shawn to the sideline for a quick word of advice.
- The great ...?... that man has suffered shows in his haggard face.
- Each speaker gave ...?... to the achievements of the guest of honor.
- I will never be a doctor. I ...?... from the smallest drop of blood.
- I knew you had (a, an) ...?... and would do the right thing in the end.
- During World War II, the United States and Britain formed (a, an) ...?... to defeat Nazi Germany.
- The ...?... number of people allowed into the hall is 5,000; more would be unsafe.
- They made one final ...?... effort with only a dim hope of success.

Exercise 5: Using Words with Multiple Meanings

Each of the Master Words in bold type in these sentences has a different meaning from the same word in the passage. For each word, note the part of speech and write your definition of the word as it is used in the sentence. Then write the dictionary definition.

1. Unfortunately, deer often feed at **twilight**, and it is hard for drivers to see them in the dwindling light.

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

2. The blacksmith worked at his **forge**, heating the metal and hammering it into horseshoes.

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

3. After the number of occupants reached the legal **maximum**, no one else was allowed into the hall.

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

4. Washing clothing made from knitted fabric in hot water will often **shrink** it.

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

5. The eyewitness gave her **testimony** in court, telling what she had seen of the crime.

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

Exercise 6: Analogies

Determine the relationship between the first pair of words in each item. Then write the Master Word on the blank that would create a similar relationship with the second pair of words. The types of relationships used are cause/effect, degree, producer/product, synonyms, and whole/parts. (See page 158 for a guide to analogy types.)

1. few : least :: many : _____
2. farmer : harvest :: dictator : _____
3. smash : broken :: _____ : smaller
4. shining : bright :: _____ : dim
5. chain : links :: _____ : nations

Write About It: Speech

Write a short speech that you might give at a ceremony honoring an important event in American history. The speech might honor heroes who fell in a famous Civil War battle or a major achievement in America's space program. Use formal English that would be appropriate for such an occasion. Include at least four of the Master Words in your speech.