

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## The President's Speech

Have you ever seen the President give a speech on television? Believe it or not, presidents usually do not write their own speeches. The ideas in the speech belong to the President, but the exact words are composed by a different person. This person is known as a speech writer.

Nearly all recent presidents have hired speech writers. Most presidents are very good speakers. But they may not be good writers. They also do not have much free time. So they hire people who are very good writers to write their speeches for them. The President and his or her advisors sit down with the speech writer before the speech. They discuss the important topics and plan the tone, or feeling, of the speech.



Being a speech writer can be difficult. Sometimes speech writers are called to write a very important speech in a short amount of time. If there is a national threat or the country is going to war, presidential speech writers have to be extremely careful about what they write and how they write it. They have to make sure they write exactly what the President means to say. There is no room for mistakes.

- 1) In paragraph 1, the author writes, “The ideas in the speech belong to the President.” Which of the following details from the passage best supports this statement?
- A. “But the exact words are composed by a different person.”
  - B. “Nearly all recent presidents have hired speech writers.”
  - C. “They discuss the important topics and plan the tone, or feeling, of the speech.”
  - D. “There is no room for mistakes.”
- 2) According to the author, presidents hire speech writers because presidents
- I. may not be good speakers
  - II. may not be good writers
  - III. do not have much free time
- A. I only
  - B. I and II only
  - C. II and III only
  - D. I, II, and III

- 3)** Based on the information in the passage, it can be understood that being a speech writer is a difficult job because speech writers
- A. do not get paid very well
  - B. have to work under pressure
  - C. have to work long hours
  - D. are not recognized for their work
- 4)** Based on the information in the passage, it can be understood that which of the following events would require a speech writer to be the most careful?
- A. an election
  - B. a report of an enemy attack
  - C. a natural disaster
  - D. a memorial for past victims
- 5)** In paragraph 3, the author writes, “They have to make sure they write exactly what the President means to say.” This statement is intended to
- A. provide an example
  - B. introduce a new idea
  - C. summarize the passage
  - D. support an earlier statement
- 6)** Do you think presidents should use speech writers, or should they return to writing their own speeches? Explain.

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## Answers and Explanations

1) C

Core Standard: **Integration of Knowledge**

In paragraph 1, the author writes, “The ideas in the speech belong to the President.” This tells us that even though the President does not write the words, he or she is the one who comes up with the ideas for the speech, not the speech writer. In paragraph 2, we learn that “the President and his or her advisors sit down with the speech writer before the speech. They discuss the important topics and plan the tone, or feeling, of the speech.” This explains how the President communicates his or her ideas for the speech to the speech writer: by sitting down and discussing “the important topics” and “the tone, or feeling, of the speech.” Since it provides information about how the President communicates his or her ideas for the speech, the detail “They discuss the important topics and plan the tone, or feeling, of the speech” best supports the statement that “The ideas in the speech belong to the President.” Therefore **(C)** is correct.

The detail “But the exact words are composed by a different person” supports the fact that the words in the speech belong to the speech writer, not that the ideas in the speech belong to the President. This means **(A)** is incorrect.

The detail “Nearly all recent presidents have hired speech writers” supports the fact that it is common for presidents to have a speech writer, not that the ideas in the speech belong to the President. This makes **(B)** incorrect.

The detail “There is no room for mistakes” supports the fact that speech writers must work very carefully to represent exactly what the President means to say, but it does not directly support the fact that the ideas in the speech belong to the President. This means it is not the best choice. This eliminates **(D)**.

2) C

Core Standard: **Key Ideas and Details**

To answer this detail question correctly, we need to find where the author discusses why presidents hire speech writers in the passage. A good way to do this is to scan the topic sentence of each paragraph, since this sentence will likely tell us what information can be found in the rest of that paragraph. The topic sentence of paragraph 2 reads: “Nearly all recent presidents have hired speech writers.” This lets us know that the details we are looking for can likely be found in paragraph 2.

In paragraph 2, the author writes, “Most presidents are very good speakers.” This means that the reason why presidents hire speech writers is not because presidents may not be good speakers. According to the author, most of them are very good speakers. This eliminates **option (I)**.

In paragraph 2, the author writes of presidents: “But they may not be good writers. They also do not have much free time. So they hire people who are very good writers to write their speeches for them.” This tells us that there are two main reasons why presidents hire speech writers: because they may not be good writers and they do not have much free time. This supports **option (II)** and **option (III)**.

Therefore **(C)** is correct.

**3) B**

Core Standard: **Integration of Knowledge**

In paragraph 3, the author explains, “Being a speech writer can be difficult. Sometimes speech writers are called to write a very important speech in a short amount of time. If there is a national threat or the country is going to war, presidential speech writers have to be extremely careful about what they write and how they write it.” Since a speech writer may have to write very carefully about a very important subject in a short amount of time, we can infer that there is a lot of pressure on speech writers to produce quality work under a deadline. This means that being a speech writer is a difficult job because speech writers have to work under pressure. Therefore **(B)** is correct.

The passage does not provide information to support choices **(A)**, **(C)**, and **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

**4) B**

Core Standard: **Integration of Knowledge**

In paragraph 3, the author writes, “If there is a national threat or the country is going to war, presidential speech writers have to be extremely careful about what they write and how they write it. They have to make sure they write exactly what the President means to say. There is no room for mistakes.” This tells us that presidential speech writers have to be “extremely careful” in situations such as a national threat or the country going to war. Since a report of an enemy attack is a national threat, we can understand that this is a situation where the speech writer must be extremely careful. Because this is the only choice given that is an example of a national threat, we can understand that a report of an enemy attack would require a speech writer to be the most careful. Therefore **(B)** is correct.

Although presidents likely would have to give speeches in the event of an election, a natural disaster, or a memorial for past victims, none of these events qualify as an example of a “national threat or the country...going to war.” This means that none of these events would require a speech writer to be as careful as a report of an enemy attack would. This eliminates choices **(A)**, **(C)**, and **(D)**.

**5) D**

Core Standard: **Integration of Knowledge**

In paragraph 3, the author writes, “They have to make sure they write exactly what the President means to say.” To understand the intent of this statement, it is necessary to look at the context surrounding it. The author writes, “If there is a national threat or the country is going to war, presidential speech writers have to be extremely careful about what they write and how they write it. They have to make sure they write exactly what the President means to say. There is no room for mistakes.” The statement “They have to make sure they write exactly what the President means to say” develops the earlier idea that “presidential speech writers have to be extremely careful about what they write and how they write it.” This means that this statement is intended to support an earlier statement. Therefore **(D)** is correct.

This statement does not contain an example. This means **(A)** is incorrect.

This statement develops the idea of the previous sentence, so it does not introduce a new idea. This eliminates **(B)**.

The passage contains other major ideas, such as why presidents hire speech writers and how speech writers work, so this statement only explains one point in the passage. This means it does not summarize the passage. This makes **(C)** incorrect.