“Speech to the Virginia Convention”
by Patrick Henry

**Prereading**

**Vocabulary Practice**

**Teach Unfamiliar Vocabulary** Teach the following words prior to reading. Depending on the language level of your students, you may elect to teach only a portion of the suggested words.

- *disrespectful* (p. 83): rude
- *disloyalty* (p. 83): a lack of trustworthiness or devotion
- *disregarded* (p. 84): paid no attention to; ignored
- *disarmed* (p. 84): had weapons taken away
- *accumulation* (p. 83): collection or mass amount
- *reconciliation* (p. 83): the act of reuniting through agreement
- *debate* (p. 83): discussion or argument
- *(giving) offense* (p. 83): causing hurt feelings
- *treason* (p. 83): the crime of betraying your country
- *deceive* (p. 84): to trick or cheat

**Alternative Activities**

### Read the Adaptation
Distribute copies of the adapted reading of “Speech to the Virginia Convention” (available in this book and, with marginal questions, in *Holt Adapted Reader*). Have all students read the selection silently.

### Use The Holt Reader
Instruct students to use the Before You Read page in *The Holt Reader*, either instead of or in addition to the Before You Read page found in the student book.

**Background**

**Activate Prior Knowledge** Prepare students to analyze and critique Patrick Henry’s speech by activating prior knowledge about persuasion, logic, and emotion. Begin by defining these terms through examples and pantomime. For example: a television commercial for a brand of dog food is *persuasive* because it tries to influence viewer opinions. The commercial appeals to *logic* by stating that veterinarians recommend this brand; it is logical to respect an expert’s opinion. The commercial appeals to the *emotions* of dog owners by showing the happy interaction between a healthy dog and its owner.
Reading

Alternative Teaching Strategy

Paraphrase for Comprehension  Instruct students to read the selection in *The Holt Reader* so that they can take notes and respond to the instruction in the margins as they read. Have students paraphrase specific sections of the selection to demonstrate comprehension and vocabulary retention. As students read Patrick Henry’s speech, ask them to note each time a targeted vocabulary word appears in the text. Help them use their knowledge of the vocabulary to restate in their own words the phrase in which the word appears.

Depending on students’ levels of English proficiency, you might ask them to simply paraphrase the immediate context of the target vocabulary, or you might challenge them to paraphrase an entire sentence. For example, as students read pages 82–83:

- a less-advanced student might restate “. . . I hope it will not be thought disrespectful to those gentlemen . . .” as *I hope it will not be thought rude to those gentlemen.*
- a more advanced student might paraphrase the entire sentence as *I hope no one thinks I’m being rude to those men if I openly say my ideas are opposite to theirs.*

Listening and Speaking Opportunities

Listen to the Audio Recording  Remind students that this selection is a speech, which means that it was meant to be read aloud. Play the audio recording one time through as students track the print. Tell them to listen to the powerful delivery of the speech. Explain that later they will have the opportunity to read aloud parts of the speech themselves.

Speak Persuasively  In Henry’s biography on student book page 80, he is noted for being an exceptional orator. Explain that a powerful delivery makes persuasive discourse more effective. Play the recording a second time and stop periodically to invite students to read aloud short sections of the speech using the audio recording as a model for delivery.

Postreading

Alternative Assessment

Check Comprehension  Students may feel overwhelmed if they try to analyze the entire speech. Help them succeed by asking them to examine smaller chunks of the text. On separate index cards, summarize each paragraph of Patrick Henry’s speech, as follows. Divide the class into six groups and distribute one card to each. Have students locate the paragraph in the speech that their card summarizes. Reconvene to check students’ work.
Paragraph 1: Patrick Henry makes a respectful appeal to his audience and describes the question that is before the convention.

Paragraph 2: Henry urges the convention to be realistic, accept the truth, and face the problem.

Paragraph 3: Henry recalls past experiences with Great Britain as proof that the British are unwilling to compromise.

Paragraph 4: Henry asks why Great Britain has accumulated such a large military presence in the American Colonies. He then points out that the colonists have made repeated attempts to avoid war. The British have refused to compromise, and now there is nothing left to do but fight.

Paragraph 5: Henry refutes the argument that the colonies are too weak to fight against the British. He focuses on the strength of bravery, vigilance, and the cause of freedom.

Paragraph 6: Henry states that he would rather die free than live as a slave. He says that it is too late to talk about peace because the war has already started.

Vocabulary Development

Additional Practice

Create Original Sentences  Provide students with additional practice using the new vocabulary words. Because the Vocabulary Development activity on student book page 86 focuses on using these words in the context of the reading, students may have difficulty transferring their knowledge to different contexts. Repeat the activity described in the student text, but replace the sentences with ones that do not concern Patrick Henry’s speech. Simplify the exercise by asking students to choose between only three words to complete a sentence. For example:

After Sal broke his leg, a trip to the doctor was ___________________.

(inevitable, avert, martial)  (inevitable)

Reading Skills Development

Recognize Modes of Persuasion  First, have students complete the postreading activities in The Holt Reader so that they have a clear idea of the differences between emotional and logical modes of persuasion. Then, divide students into small groups and give each group a popular magazine. Have the students pick several advertisements from the magazine and identify them as either appeals to logic or appeals to emotion. Groups should share their advertisements with the class and explain how they determined the type of appeal used by each one. Discuss which advertisements are most effective and why.
**Targeted Strategies for Special Education Students**

**Prereading**

**Background**

**Focus on the Context** Review the historical context of Henry’s speech (see the biography on student book page 80). Remind students that this speech was intended to persuade colonists who were loyal to England to go to war. Help students identify possible reasons why these colonists favored compromise with England over war. Record ideas like the following on the board:

- patriotism toward England
- fear of committing and being punished for treason
- desire for peace
- comfort in the safety of England’s protection
- the weakness of the American military compared with the might of the British
- financial security

As students read, they will note if and how Henry addresses these concerns.

**Reading**

**Alternative Activity**

**Focus on the Key Skill** Help student analyze and critique Henry’s modes of persuasion as they read his speech. Review the anti-war viewpoint of the period: Some people felt the American Colonies should remain conciliatory and cooperative with the British. As students read, have them consider the concerns they listed in Prereading. Help students consider how each point Henry makes addresses these concerns. For example, in the first paragraph of the speech, Henry makes an emotional appeal to the patriotism of his listeners. On the Prereading list of concerns, place a check mark next to patriotism toward England and write emotional. He then addresses their fear of committing treason with an argument that is both logical and emotional. Place a check mark next to fear of . . . treason and write emotional and logical.

**Postreading**

**Alternative Activity**

**Work as a Class** Help students work together to answer the Thinking Critically questions on student book page 85. Read aloud each question and give students a few minutes to think about an answer. Then invite the class to share their ideas. Finally, ask students to each write an answer using all the information they absorbed from the class discussion.
“Speech to the Virginia Convention”

A. Complete the sentences with the words from the Word Bank.

1. Patrick Henry did not want to make a ____________, or plea, to the British.
2. The colonists were afraid that the British were a strong enemy, or ____________.
3. Some people thought the war with Britain was ____________, but others thought it could be avoided.
4. Patrick Henry did not trust the British ministry. He considered them to be ____________.
5. The American petitions were disregarded and ____________ by the British.

B. Write T or F next to each statement to tell if it is true or false.

1. Patrick Henry was an American patriot from Virginia. ____
2. Patrick Henry wanted to cooperate with the British government. ____
3. In 1775, British soldiers left the colonies and returned to England. ____
4. Patrick Henry thought the Americans could win a war against the British. ____

C. Patrick Henry makes logical and emotional appeals for wanting war. Which appeal did you find most persuasive? Why? Write your answer on the lines below.

_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
"Speech to the Virginia Convention"

A. Write the letter of the correct definition next to each word.

1. solace
   a. uncorrupted
2. martial
   b. warlike
3. avert
   c. comfort
4. inviolate
   d. watchful
5. vigilant
   e. prevent, turn away

B. Complete each blank to spell a vocabulary word. Use the definition to help you.

Example: disarmed: had weapons taken away

1. __________tion: the act of reuniting through agreement and understanding
2. dis________: a lack of trustworthiness or devotion
3. dis________: rude
4. __________tion: collection or mass amount
5. dis________: ignored

C. Complete each sentence with a word from the Word Bank.

1. There was an ___________ of ten inches of snow after the blizzard.
2. When the American colonists spoke out against the British, they committed ___________ against Great Britain.
3. Even though Candice argued and argued, she did not win the ___________.
4. It is wrong to ___________ your friends. You should always be honest and truthful.
5. The police ___________ the criminal when they took away his gun.
6. It is ___________ to talk during a live performance.