**11th Form National Poetry Recitation Contest**

**Title of Speech**: We Shall Fight on the Beaches  
**Speaker:** Winston Churchill  
**Link**: https://winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1940-the-finest-hour/we-shall-fight-on-the-beaches/



**About the Speaker:**  
Winston Churchill, 1874-1965 (adapted from: wikipedia.org)  
Sir Winston Churchill was a British politician, army officer, and writer, who was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1940 to 1945 and again from 1951 to 1955. As Prime Minister, Churchill led Britain to victory in the Second World War.

**Excerpt:**

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.

**Pre-Reading:**Churchill gave this speech, known as “We Shall Fight on the Beaches,” to Parliament on June 4, 1940. When this speech was given, there was a lot of fear in Britain that they would not be able to win the war against Nazi Germany. At this point, Germany was winning many battles and taking control of many countries in Europe. Churchill was also afraid that France would leave the war and that Britain would be fighting Germany alone, as the United States had not yet joined the war. This speech was meant to inspire the British people to continue fighting. This speech was also intended to inspire other nations to fight against Germany and to encourage the USA to join the war against Germany. Shortly before this speech, many British troops narrowly avoided defeat on the beaches of Dunkirk, which is a reason Churchill references “beaches.” He is saying that next time, they will not run away, they will stay and fight, no matter what the conditions.  
  
**Vocabulary:**  
neglected – forgotten, not cared for  
arrangements – plans  
menace – threat, fear  
tyranny – unfair rule or leadership of a country  
His Majesty – the King of England, then Henry ??  
surrender – to give up or quit something, to stop fighting a war  
  
**Post-Reading Questions:**  
What else do you know about the history of World War II?  
What kind of leader do you think Churchill was?  
Why do you think this speech had such an inspiring effect on the British people?