

Eisenhower Speaks

Answering Questions about Primary Documents

Directions: After reading the two D-Day documents from General Dwight Eisenhower, along with their descriptions, answer the questions below on a separate sheet of paper. Indicate where you find your answers. If you use quotes, be sure to put quotation marks around them.

1. Who is Eisenhower addressing in his Order of the Day?
2. What words and phrases does Eisenhower use to convey the idea of teamwork?
3. If he is trying to motivate the troops, why does he say, “Your task will not be an easy one”?
4. What is the importance of honesty in communication?
5. What historical information about WWII can you learn from studying this document?
6. After reading Eisenhower’s D-Day failure message, describe his concept of taking responsibility.
7. Why do you think Eisenhower gives so little information about the attempted invasion?
8. What historical information about D-Day can you learn from studying this document?
9. Describe Eisenhower’s personality based solely on these two documents.
10. What other primary sources of information would you want to have to create a fuller description of Eisenhower?

Eisenhower's Order of the Day

Every American soldier, sailor, and airman participating in the D-Day invasion of Normandy received this message of inspiration from Supreme Commander, General Dwight Eisenhower, just before D-Day.

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE



Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force!

You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other Fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.

Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely.

But this is the year 1944! Much has happened since the Nazi triumphs of 1940-41. The United Nations have inflicted upon the Germans great defeats, in open battle, man-to-man. Our air offensive has seriously reduced their strength in the air and their capacity to wage war on the ground. Our Home Fronts have given us an overwhelming superiority in weapons and munitions of war, and placed at our disposal great reserves of trained fighting men. The tide has turned! The free men of the world are marching together to Victory!

I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full Victory!

Good Luck! And let us all beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

Eisenhower's D-Day Failure Message

General Eisenhower wrote this message just prior to the invasion, to be read in case Operation Overlord failed. Either through stress or fatigue he misdated it July 5, instead of June 5.

'Our landings in the Cherbourg-Harve area have failed to gain a satisfactory foothold and I have withdrawn the troops. My decision to attack at this time and place was based upon the best information available. The troops, the air and the Navy did all that bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt it is mine alone.'

Eisenhower Library and Museum

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July 5