Introduction:

By the summer of 1940, things looked bleak for Great Britain. Forced to flee the European mainland after the fall of France and barely able to evacuate its army from Dunkirk, the British Isles braced for a German invasion.

The Germans' strategy for conquering Britain was to first win air supremacy, then follow with a land-based invasion. However, one thing the German commanders did not count on was a new technological advance the British had—radar. Radar allowed the British to plot flight paths of German planes, even in darkness. With this information, the outnumbered RAF could unleash deadly strikes on the *Lufwaffe*. The use of radar won the Battle of Britain for England and forced Hitler to postpone his invasion of England indefinitely. This was of monumental importance, because the British Isles later became a strategic base for Allied bombing missions in Europe as well as a launching point for the D-Day invasion in June, 1944.

Another factor the Germans didn’t count on was the ability of the British citizenry to rally around their Prime Minister, Winston Churchill. Churchill used his speaking ability to rally both the British Parliament as well as the people of the nation to aid the war effort against the German threat.

Directions:

**Churchill's address to the House of Commons of June 18, 1940**

Go to [http://www.winstonchurchill.org/fineste.htm](http://www.winstonchurchill.org/fineste.htm). Read the speech, then answer the following questions.

1. In the first paragraph of Churchill’s speech, he refers to a “colossal military disaster.” What disaster is he referring to?

2. According to Churchill, what happened at Dunkirk?
3. How does Churchill answer those who want to find fault or blame for the disaster in France?

4. Further on in the speech, Churchill notes that the strength of the (British) “fighter air force” is “stronger than it ever has been.” What does Churchill look “confidently” toward?

5. In his speech, Churchill also mentions bomber attacks. How does he ask the people of Britain to respond to bombings?

6. How does Churchill attempt to link the United States with the upcoming Battle of Britain?

7. Churchill closes his speech by rallying the members of the House of Commons and the British nation against the Germans. How exactly does he do this? What do you think he implies in the speech’s final sentence?

8. Assume you are a newspaper reporter covering Churchill’s speech. Write a story describing the speech and its impact on the British people.