**We Shall Fight on the Beaches Context**

Winston Churchill

* Born into a high class family in Blenheim Palace. He was the son of the Duke of Marlborough.
* Churchill was unhappy as a child, and had an undistinguished school career. He went into the Royal Military Academy lacking tertiary education and public speaking skills.
* Churchill’s speaking skills were hampered by a slight lisp and stammer, which he spent much time trying to correct. It was because of this that his speeches had a unique style, with word play, alliteration, vivid imagery and metaphors.
* His speaking style was what got him elected in the lead up to WWII. He seemed to be the right person for the wartime leadership position, and he was a very inspirational speaker.
* He was given the role of an inspirational leader to rally British forces against the Nazi threat.

World War II

* By May 1940, German had conquered most of Eastern Europe.
* An enormous amount of resources and causalities had fallen under Hitler’s control.
* Blitzkrieg had been effective in intimidating the enemy and was tactically successful.
* The Germans had many advantages including will to fight.
* As the Germans invade other part of Europe, like Belgium, they struggled against hardened defence by the Belgium’s and now the British who declared war.
* The Miracle of Dunkirk is when the British Forces engaged in a full scale retreat from France, in late May.
* French government agreed to an armistice.
* This meant that the British had no other European countries fighting Germany.
* Britain needed supplies from North America but the German U-boats where determined to sink as many supply vessels as possible, this constant struggle for supply vessels to reach Britain continued throughout the War.

Significance for Britain

* The British fought Germany alone from May 1940 to June 1941. They were fighting a growing German Empire.
* The aerial bombings disrupted daily life, and the feeling of being alone was a psychological nightmare.
* Britain refused to surrender, and hoped America could join them.

Churchill’s Speeches

* Churchill was essential in bringing out British spirit in his people.
* His main communication was through broadcasts, to inform them of happenings, appeal to their pride and to give them an overall picture of the war.
* He emboldened the British to stand firm in the face of the fact that their nation stood alone against Hitler.

Importance of Britain’s Refusal to Surrender

* British were the only country fighting Germany for a period. This meant the Germans expended resources to fight them, and in turn grew less as an army.
* Britain retaining their ground also meant that they could launch future operations (like D-Day) from Britain instead of the US, which closed the distance significantly.