
John F. Kennedy – Speech in the Paulskirche, 25 June 1963

- ① Analyse the given text. (*bullet points are fine*)
- ② Explain what achievements Kennedy attributes to the Frankfurt Assembly and the historical references he makes. *Make sure to give references to the text.*
- ③ Take a critical stance on the author's thesis that the Paulskirche "was the cradle of German democracy".

I am most honoured [...] to be able to speak in this city before this audience, for in this hall I am able to address myself to those who lead and serve all segments of a democratic system ... As one who has known the satisfaction of the legislator's life, I am particularly pleased that so many members of your Bundestag
5 and Bundestrat are present today, for the vitality of your legislature has been a major factor in your demonstration of a working democracy, a democracy world-wide in its influence. In your company also are several authors of the Federal Constitution who have been able through their own political service to give a new and lasting validity to the aims of the Frankfurt Assembly.

10 One hundred and fifteen years ago a most learned Parliament was convened in this historic hall. Its goal was a united German Federation. Its members were poets and professors, lawyers and philosophers, doctors and clergymen, freely elected in all parts of the land. No nation applauded its endeavors as warmly as my own. No assembly ever strove more ardently to put perfection into practice.
15 And though in the end it failed, no other building in Germany deserves more the title of "cradle of German democracy".

But can there be such a title? In my own home city of Boston, Faneuil Hall – once the meeting-place of the authors of the American Revolution – has long been known as the "cradle of American liberty". But when, in 1852, the Hungarian patriot
20 Kossuth addressed an audience there, he criticized its name. "It is", he said, "a great name – but there is something in it which saddens my heart. You should not say 'American liberty'. You should say 'liberty in America'. Liberty should not be either American or European – it should just be 'liberty'."

Kossuth was right. For unless liberty flourishes in all lands, it cannot flourish in
25 one. Conceived in one hall, it must be carried out in many. Thus, the seeds of the American Revolution had been brought here from Europe, and they later took root around the world. And the German Revolution of 1848 transmitted ideas from idealists to America and to other lands. Today, in 1963, democracy and liberty are more international than ever before. And the spirit of the Frankfurt Assembly, like the spirit of Faneuil Hall, must live in many hearts and nations if it is
30 to live at all [...].

Taken and abbreviated: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=9303>
(16.11.2023)



Annotations

- 1 'legislator's life': Kennedy had been a member of both houses of the American Congress (i. e. the American parliaments).
- 2 'federal constitution': Kennedy means the Basic Law (Grundgesetz) which had been drawn up in 1948/49.
- 3 'Frankfurt Assembly': the parliament in the Paulskirche 1848/49
- 4 'applauded': Here Kennedy refers to the public support the Paulskirche parliament received in the US; to strive ardently: to try very enthusiastically to achieve sth.
- 5 'Faneuil Hall': (pronunciation: Fan'-yul) a hall in Boston where American revolutionaries met who fought against the British in the American War of Independence in the 18th century
- 6 'Hungarian patriot Kossuth': Kossuth was the leader of the revolutionary movement in Hungary in 1848; he demanded independence from Austria. Kossuth spoke throughout whole of Europe and his speeches were read everywhere. When the Hungarian movement was finally crushed by Austrian and Russian troops, Kossuth escaped. He toured Great Britain and the USA.
- 7 'seeds of the American revolution': Kennedy alludes to the ideas of the European Enlightenment (Aufklärung) which influenced the American freedom fighters.

①

The given source / The source at hand ...



Tip

Apart from the obvious aspects, such as what type of source, which type of text, who, when and where, also cover its addressees, theme and intention.

② Achievement	Lines	Further Explanation and historical reference

**Task 3) Sentence starters**

1. "Considering the Paulskirche as the 'cradle of German democracy,' one might question how..."
2. "To assess Kennedy's claim about the Paulskirche, we should look at..."
3. "If the Paulskirche is to be seen as the 'cradle of German democracy,' what does that imply about..."
4. "One could argue against Kennedy's view by pointing out that..."
5. "To better understand the context of Kennedy's thesis regarding the Paulskirche, it's important to consider..."

Template for the Analysis of Secondary Sources

Secondary sources are reconstructions and interpretations of the past. Secondary sources are books, essays, newspaper articles, speeches etc. about the past written today. Most of what a person knows about the past comes from reading secondary sources, because in most cases it is impossible to study primary sources concerning an event in the past which one is interested in. But because secondary sources present the past based on the author's perspective it is necessary to be critical when analysing them. The analysis of all secondary sources follows the same line and can be made in three steps:

1. Before Reading the Text: Is Any Additional Information Provided? Before starting to read a text, always be on the lookout for additional information, generally included in the annotations. If you know something about the author of a text and his/her attitude to a certain historical problem, it will be easier to understand the text.
2. Basic Identification and Inspection of the Text: The Formal Analysis
 - What kind of source is the text? The given text is a secondary source.
 - Which type of text is the text at hand? (examples: speeches about the past delivered recently, newspaper articles about the past published lately, extracts from a modern history book, extracts from modern historical essays etc.)
 - Source? The text is quoted from (author, title, place and date of publication, page). Or: The text is quoted from the internet (internet address).
 - Who wrote the text? The name of the author must always be given. A short text may be written, if the author is well-known (cf. annotations).
 - Where was the text published? Usually this place is not of much interest if you discuss secondary sources. But sometimes it can make the analysis easier, if the place of publication is known.
 - When was the text written? Secondary sources are – broadly speaking – texts which have been published recently. So the date when a text was published is usually not of much interest. But it can make a difference if a text was published before or after a certain event of the recent past.
 - Addressees? Who is addressed by the extract from a history book/the newspaper article/the speech about the past? Usually one can conclude that the audience are people who are interested in history. If the text appeared in a newspaper, then the addressees can be defined as "the general public". If a secondary source is rather complicated, the addressees are professors and/or students at university, i. e. they are experts.
 - Theme? What is the main topic which is dealt with in the text? The answer to this question can only be given after a careful study of the text itself!
 - Intention? Which interpretation of the past becomes apparent in the text at hand? What are the main points the author makes about a historical event in the past? How does he/she influence the addressees? The answer to this question can only be given after a careful study of the text itself!

3. Presentation of the Content in a Structured Analysis: The structured analysis is a continuous text in which the main ideas of the text are depicted. So the points the author of the text makes must be communicated to the reader of a structured analysis. It is not enough just to paraphrase the text. Most important: The parts where the interpretation of the past by the author becomes apparent should be given special emphasis when analysing secondary sources.

4. Transfer of Knowledge: Here the task is to prove that the historical facts which are mentioned in the secondary source are known, because it is impossible to discuss an opinion about an event if there is no knowledge of the event itself.

5. Evaluation: The opinion which has become apparent in the analysis of the text is to be evaluated here; evaluation means proving one's knowledge of the interpretation expressed in the text, one's knowledge of conflicting interpretations and their pros and cons, and trying to formulate one's own interpretation.