

# THEODORE ROOSEVELT

A P R E S I D E N T ' S V I S I O N

## PRIMARY SOURCE WORKSHEET

### EXCERPT FROM THEODORE ROOSEVELT, "THE MAN IN THE ARENA," SPEECH DELIVERED IN PARIS, FRANCE, ON APRIL 23, 1910.

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

Shame on the man of cultivated taste who permits refinement to develop into fastidiousness that unfits him for doing the rough work of a workaday world. Among the free peoples who govern themselves there is but a small field of usefulness open for the men of cloistered life who shrink from contact with their fellows. Still less room is there for those who deride of slight what is done by those who actually bear the brunt of the day; nor yet for those others who always profess that they would like to take action, if only the conditions of life were not exactly what they actually are. The man who does nothing cuts the same sordid figure in the pages of history, whether he be a cynic, or fop, or voluptuary.

There is little use for the being whose tepid soul knows nothing of great and generous emotion, of the high pride, the stern belief, the lofty enthusiasm, of the men who quell the storm and ride the thunder. Well for these men if they succeed; well also, though not so well, if they fail, given only that they have nobly ventured, and have put forth all their heart and strength. It is war-worn Hotspur, spent with hard fighting, he of the many errors and valiant end, over whose memory we love to linger, not over the memory of the young lord who "but for the vile guns would have been a valiant soldier."

### QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. According to Roosevelt, what are the differences between "the man . . . in the arena" and "the critic"?
2. Does it matter if "the man . . . in the arena" fails to accomplish his goals fully? Does it matter if he makes mistakes? Explain your answer.
3. Define the following words, using a dictionary as necessary: *cynic*, *fop*, and *voluptuary*. In Roosevelt's view, what characteristics do these three types of men share?
4. Use print or online sources to determine the identity of "war-worn Hotspur." Who was he? What characteristics of his does Roosevelt admire?
5. What value does Roosevelt place on "rough work"? What do the cynic, the fop, and the voluptuary never experience?
6. Based on his speech, identify three characteristics you think Roosevelt would encourage in "free peoples who govern themselves."
7. In two or three sentences, summarize Roosevelt's message in this speech.

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## ACTIVITIES

Use your textbook and other print and online resources to complete the following activities.

1. Look at the images of Roosevelt on the poster and in the image gallery on the *President's Vision* website. Which image best illustrates Roosevelt's message in this speech? Explain your answer.
2. Reflect on a time in your life when you have tried at something and failed. What did you learn from that experience? Write a short paragraph describing your experience and compare it Roosevelt's message in this speech.

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