Text Dependent Questions

1. Reread the first two sentences of Roosevelt’s speech. What does Roosevelt say the present situation requires him to do when speaking to the American people?
2. Roosevelt says this inaugural address is “preeminently the time” to speak the truth to the American people. Why would this instance be different than any other time?
3. In his first paragraph, Roosevelt uses both the pronouns “them” and “we” in reference to his audience. When does he use these pronouns and what is the desired effect of using different pronouns at different places in the paragraph?
4. What does Roosevelt state that Americans should fear? Why would he choose to begin his speech by addressing the citizens’ fears?
5. In his opening paragraph, Roosevelt says the American people need “to convert retreat to an advance.” What is the denotation and connotation of the word “retreat” in this sentence? A denotation is a word’s literal or defined meaning. A connotation is an understood meaning for the word that is different from its definition. What does Roosevelt mean by this statement?
6. In the second paragraph, Roosevelt identifies some of the nation’s “common difficulties.” He states that “They concern, thank God, only material things.” What does he mean by this statement?
7. When Roosevelt states, “We are stricken by no plague of locusts,” what message is he trying to instill in the minds of his audience?
8. Who or what caused the current economic situation, according to Roosevelt?
9. In this section of the speech, Roosevelt begins to outline his plans to get the country out of its economic distress. He says, “This Nation calls for action, and action now.” Why is the word “Nation” capitalized in the written version of the text? Why is it significant? From whom does the “Nation” demand action?
10. When identifying actions that he proposes to address the country’s economic problems, Roosevelt repeats the phrase “it can be helped by” six times in the same paragraph. He finishes the paragraph by stating, “but it can never be helped by merely talking about it.” What idea or belief is Roosevelt attempting to instill in the audience?
11. In his plans for the country, Roosevelt advocates for “national planning for and supervision of all forms of transportation and of communications,” and “strict supervision of all banking and credits and investments.” What does Roosevelt mean by “national planning?” Who will be supervising? Does this idea align with his other plans advocated by Roosevelt in this speech?
12. In relation to “international trade relations,” Roosevelt claims that by taking his recommended actions, “we address ourselves to putting our own national house in order.” What does he mean by this phrase? What policy is Roosevelt advocating in relation to other countries?
13. In the sentence beginning with the phrase, “In the field of foreign policy,” Roosevelt uses the word “neighbor” four times, and the word “respect” four times. Why did he repeat these words? How does Roosevelt employ the word “neighbor” in this sentence? In his overall plan for U.S. foreign policy?
14. Roosevelt calls the U.S. Constitution “the most superbly enduring political mechanism in the world.” How does Roosevelt support this assertion? How does his praise of the Constitution support his proposed plan for leading the country?
15. Throughout the speech, Roosevelt uses the word “common” multiple times. Identify places in the text where this term is used and its meaning in that specific context.
16. Roosevelt weaves multiple war-related terms and metaphors throughout this speech. What connection is Roosevelt trying to make for his audience by employing these military terms and metaphors?
17. How does Roosevelt’s use of these war metaphors provide support for his plans for the country?
18. Roosevelt concludes his speech with “In their need they have registered a mandate that they want direct, vigorous action. They have asked for discipline and direction under leadership. They have made me the present instrument of their wishes. In the spirit of the gift, I take it.” According to Roosevelt, the people have “registered a mandate.” What does this imply to Roosevelt? How does he play with the word “present” in this last sentence?