

Teacher Key 10.6A Literacy Strategy for McMahon’s Response to Husayn (Source 3)

Investigative Question: Break down the investigative question into its three parts. Write each part below.

A. What did McMahon promise?

B. What limits did he put on the promise?

C. How did this letter affect the map of the Middle East?

First Read: Vocabulary

Read the document and underline words if you are not sure of their meaning. Circle the word “interests” wherever it appears in the document. This word has a special meaning in documents about imperialism. It is a kind of code. Think about its meaning as you read through the document.

Possible challenging terms:

wherein

empowered

assurances

modifications

necessitate

administrative

aggression

interests

aspirations

expulsion

Second Read: Author’s Perspective and Purpose

Answer the following questions about the Letter from Sharif Husayn Ibn-Ali to Sir Henry McMahon (Source 2):

1. From what region in what empire does Sharif Husayn come?

Hijaz, Ottoman Empire

2. What is Husayn’s job?

He is the amir, or governor.

3. Husayn was given this job by the Ottoman Empire, but does he want to keep his region in the Ottoman Empire?

No

4. What ethnic group does Husayn say he represents?

The Arabs

With your partner, read *McMahon's Response to Husayn* (Source 3) again and find the answers to the following questions.

5. From what country does Henry McMahon come?

Great Britain

6. Whom did he inform about Husayn's letter?

The government of Great Britain

7. For whom does McMahon work?

The British government

8. What is his job?

He is the British governor of Egypt.

9. Did McMahon decide by himself what to promise Husayn?

No, his government told him what to promise.

10. Was this letter written before, during, or after World War I?

During

11. What does Great Britain want Husayn to do that relates to World War I?

Britain wants him to lead a revolt against the Ottoman Empire.

12. What other countries are named in this letter?

France (the Turks, Syria)

13. In the war, on what side were those countries?

France is on the Allied side, the Turks (the Ottomans) are in the Central Powers, and Syria is part of the Ottoman Empire.

14. What concerns would McMahon have about making promises to Husayn?

He would be concerned about promising too much and then having to break the promise if Great Britain made other deals.

Third Read: Text-Dependent Questions

Reread the document paragraph by paragraph and answer the following text-dependent questions.

Paragraphs 1 and 2:

1. Why is McMahon writing this letter?

To answer Husayn and communicate Great Britain's answer to his proposal.

2. Is the tone of these paragraphs positive or negative?

Positive

3. What specific words are evidence for your answer to question 2?

please, friendliness, sincerity, greatest satisfaction, lost no time, great pleasure, confident, satisfaction

Paragraph 3:

4. What should happen to the districts of Mersina and Alexandretta?

They should be excluded from Husayn's Arab kingdom.

5. According to McMahon, why should that happen? Cite a quotation from the text as evidence that supports your answer. Do not write entire sentences, only the phrase that provides evidence. Then put the quote into your own words to answer the question.

“ . . . cannot be said to be purely Arab . . . ”; not everyone there is Arab.

Paragraph 4:

6. What does “in the name of” mean?

McMahon is speaking for the British government.

7. Which word in this sentence means “promises”?

assurances

8. The first part of the long sentence puts a limit on the territory that Husayn was claiming. McMahon does not state exactly what territory might be excluded, but is vague instead. Read the first part carefully, and fill in the blanks. He is saying that Great Britain might not be free _____ to act if the interests of her ally, France _____, would be harmed.

9. Later, if France wants more territory, what can the British tell Husayn?

The British can point to this paragraph and say that they never promised to give Husayn territory that the French claimed.

Paragraph 5:

10. What does McMahon promise? Cite a quotation from the text as evidence that supports your answer. Then put the quote in your own words to answer the question.

“ . . . Great Britain is prepared to recognise and support the independence of the Arabs in all the regions within the limits demanded by the Sharif of Mecca.” Great Britain will publicly agree with and help out a free Arab kingdom in regions claimed by Husayn.

11. Which part of the sentence limits the promise?

“ . . . subject to the above modifications . . . ”

Paragraphs 6 and 7:

12. What is the limit that McMahon places on seeking advice from Europeans?

The Arabs can only ask Great Britain for advisers and help.

13. Which words signal that limit?

only, will be British

Paragraph 8:

14. What does Great Britain have already in the vilayets of Baghdad and Basra?

An established position and interests

15. The words “necessitate special administrative arrangements” are a euphemism, a soft or vague word or phrase substituted for a harsh or unpopular word or phrase. The harsh phrase would be “we want to control that area.” Why would McMahon use this euphemism?

Because it sounds cruel and imperialist and might offend Husayn.

16. What three reasons does McMahon give?

Protecting the area against invasion, taking care of the local people, and protecting their economic interests.

17. Which words signal that he is about to give reasons?

in order to

18. Of the three reasons, which do you think is most important to Great Britain?

Protecting their economic interests.

Paragraph 9:

19. Why would McMahon remind Husayn of the Turks (the Ottoman Empire) in this last paragraph?

To remind Husayn and the Arabs of their part of the bargain and focus Husayn against the Turks rather than on what the British and French might do after the war.

Fourth Read: Vocabulary

Return to the words you underlined in the second read. List them below. To the best of your ability, provide a definition. Should you need to, use a dictionary and select the best definition that helps you better understand the source.

wherein: in which (inside those regions)

empowered: given power to

assurances: promises

modifications: changes

necessitate: require

administrative: management of government duties

aggression: attack

aspirations: hopes

expulsion: the act of driving out

In your own words, write down what you think is the meaning of the code word “interests” in this document.

The dictionary definition of *interests* that fits best is “shares or investments in business or financial companies, property, etc.” In imperialist documents like this one it is code for all the property and investments of the imperial power (Great Britain) and all its people in a sphere of influence.

Fifth Read: Answer the Investigative Question

Read the text to determine the central ideas. Answer the three parts of the investigative question, How did McMahon’s promises and limits affect the map of the Middle East?

- A. McMahon promised to support Arab independence in some of the areas Husayn claimed.
- B. But he limited the promise by excluding parts of Syria and Mesopotamia and a possible extra area if France claimed it.
- C. His letter affected the map of the Middle East because the areas he excluded became mandates and later separate countries.

Corroboration and Inferences:

By 1920, what was the outcome of McMahon’s letter? Did the British keep McMahon’s promise? Why or why not?

After the war the British broke McMahon’s promise by giving some of the promised area to the British and French as mandates and promising Palestine to the Zionists. That angered the Arabs. British reasons for breaking their promises to Husayn are complicated. From an imperialist point of view, it was in Britain’s interest to keep control over the area because of its resources and strategic importance. Because many people were involved in making British policy, perhaps there was a difference of opinion about the promise and at the end of the war, opponents of Arab independence won out. Perhaps British leaders never intended to honor the promise after the war. The ultimate impact was that the areas McMahon reserved became separate nations.

Now consider the results for the two groups.

Arabs

a. Consider the other sources in this set. Which source might indicate how the Arabs would feel about these promises and limits?

Husayn's letter to McMahon

b. Based on this document, how might the Arabs have responded to reading this letter? Why?

They would be happy, because they wanted to be independent.

c. Cite one or more quotes from the other source to support your answer.

"The whole of the Arab nation, without any exception, have decided in these last years to accomplish their freedom."

"For these reasons the Arab nation [asks] the Government of Great Britain for the approval, through her deputy or representative, of the following fundamental propositions: Firstly — England to acknowledge the independence of the Arab countries"

Syrians

d. Consider the other sources in this set. What document might indicate how the Syrians would feel about these promises and limits?

Resolution of the General Syrian Congress, 1919

e. Based on this document, how might the Syrians have responded to reading this letter? Why?

They would be happy because they had sought freedom without colonial rulers, but they wouldn't be happy to be ruled over by Husayn, because they wanted a Syrian king.

f. Cite one or more quotes from the other source to support your answer.

"We ask absolutely complete political independence for Syria."

"We protest against Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, placing us among the nations in their middle stage of development which stand in need of a mandatory power."

"We ask that the Government of the Syrian country should be a democratic civil constitutional Monarchy . . . and that the King be the Emir Faysal. . . ."