

## ★ Enrichment Activity 7



### Addressing the Troops

By 1558 when Elizabeth Tudor ascended to the throne of England at the age of 25, she could read and write Greek, Latin, French, Italian, Spanish, German, and, of course, English. During the era that was named for her, she was celebrated in many poems and plays. Her own writing reveals

the same intelligence and learning that distinguished much of sixteenth-century writing.

Below is the speech that Elizabeth delivered to the English troops assembled at Tilbury in 1588 waiting for the landing of the Spanish Armada.

My loving people,

We have been persuaded by some that are careful of our safety, to take heed how we commit our selves to armed multitudes, for fear of treachery; but I assure you I do not desire to live to distrust my faithful and loving people. Let tyrants fear, I have always so behaved myself that, under God, I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and good-will of my subjects; and therefore I come amongst you, as you see, at this time, not for my recreation and disport, but being resolved, in the midst and heat of the battle, to live or die amongst you all; to lay down for my God, and for my kingdom, and my people, my honour and my blood, even in the dust. I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and king of England too, and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realm; to which rather than any dishonour shall grow by me, I myself will take up arms, I myself will be your general, judge, and rewarder of every one of your virtues in the field. I know already, for your forwardness you have deserved rewards and crowns; and We do assure you in the word of a prince, they shall be duly paid you. In the mean time, my lieutenant general shall be in my stead, than whom prince never commanded a more noble or worthy subject; not doubting but by your obedience to my general, by your concord in the camp, and your valour in the field, we shall shortly have a famous victory over those enemies of my God, of my kingdom, and of my people.

—From "Speech to the Troops at Tilbury" by Elizabeth I.

**DIRECTIONS:** Answer the questions below in the space provided.

1. According to Elizabeth, why is she at Tilbury with the troops? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What does Elizabeth's presence at Tilbury with the soldiers tell you about her character? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. How would you describe the tone or mood of this speech? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What effect do you think this speech had on the soldiers? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Imagine that Philip II of Spain was addressing his troops as they set off to invade England. How do you think his speech might compare with Elizabeth's? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_