

An African Heritage in Chicago

CCSSR2—clarify the main/central idea of a passage.

Fidelis Umeh was born in Nigeria and lived there through his high school years. Fidelis Umeh grew up with strong family values of the traditions of the Ibos, a culture within Nigeria. "One thing that we Nigerians, particularly the Ibos, have taught us from youth is the value of education. It is paramount. And the drive to succeed--my culture says that each person must work very hard and that is essential to success, which is very important. And we have support from family that keeps us going when things are difficult. Sometimes perseverance can make the difference between success and failure."

He moved to the United States when he went to college. After he finished college, he stayed connected to his family in Nigeria. He returned to Nigeria at least once a year. But he made his home and career in this country. He became a business leader.

Fidelis Umeh has succeeded in the business community, which some people see as a separate culture all of its own. He planned projects. He designed systems. He brought new ideas to businesses. He has been president of a company that employs hundreds of highly skilled individuals. At the same time, he kept his commitment to his original culture.

In 1991, he founded a group to support Nigerians in Chicago. "I formed a group of Nigerians to be an anchor for them that will fit into the American society but at the same time will give them something to fall back on in times of adversity. I feel it is a strength, it allows us to be individuals."

"It has one goal, which is to bridge the gap between our people and the people in America. The target is to build an anchor where the Nigerians can feel their identity and at the same time become more connected to the Chicago scene. The problem that we have with our children is that either our children don't have an understanding of the Nigerian culture or an understanding of the American culture. The focus is on children through adolescence. The adults get to benefit from the network."

"We started with story-telling. We are telling the children the stories that our families have told for generations. Each story has a moral, an idea that it teaches the children. The children learn the moral. They also learn more about their own heritage. They will appreciate their heritage. They will realize that they have to work hard, too, to achieve progress."

With more than 15,000 Nigerians in Chicago today, the potential is very great. Fidelis Umeh said that "The vision of Enumbra is that the Nigerian community will bring the traits that are valued in their heritage as they join the American society. They will in fact be able to enrich the American culture."

What do you think the main idea is of this passage?

Underline five examples or facts that support that idea.

Chicago Is a City of Possibilities

CCSSR2—analyze a passage to infer the central message and related claims; analyze the writer's choices (CCSSR5)

Deval Patrick was a child in Chicago, living in the Robert Taylor Homes, a public housing project. Mrs. Eddie Quaintance, his teacher, realized how bright he was and arranged for him to apply for a scholarship. He got that scholarship and continued to get a great education and then good jobs. Today he is governor of Massachusetts. Read his inauguration speech to learn about his ideas.

For a very long time now we have been told that government is bad, that it exists only to serve the powerful and well-connected, that its job is not important enough to be done by anyone competent, let alone committed, and that all of us are on our own. Today we join together in common cause to lay that fallacy to rest, and to extend a great movement based on shared responsibility from the corner office to the corner of your block and back again.

My journey here has been an improbable one. From a place where hope withers, through great schools and challenging opportunities, to this solemn occasion, I have been supported and loved and lifted up. And I thank the family, the mentors, the teachers - every one of whom is here today in body or in spirit - just as I thank the tens of thousands of campaign volunteers and millions of voters across the Commonwealth who shared this improbable journey with me.

America herself is an improbable journey. People have come to these shores from all over the world, in all manner of boats, and built from a wilderness one of the most remarkable societies in human history. We are most remarkable not just for our material accomplishments or military might, but because of the ideals to which we have dedicated ourselves. We have defined those ideals over time and through struggle as equality, opportunity and fair play - ideals about universal human dignity. For these, at the end of the day, we are the envy to the world. ...

I am descended from people once forbidden their most basic and fundamental freedoms, a people desperate for a reason to hope and willing to fight for it. And so are you. So are you. Because the Amistad was not just a Black man's journey; it was an American journey. This Commonwealth - and the Nation modeled on it - is at its best when we show we understand a faith in what's possible, and the willingness to work for it.

And I see above all the imagination, the compassion and the energy of our people. I see what we are capable of - not just as a matter of history, but as a matter of character. And I am asking you to touch that part of our shared legacy, and reach with me for something better.

I know that we can have more and better jobs, and a stronger economy. But we will need the best prepared workforce on the planet, simpler and faster regulatory processes, a stable and simplified corporate tax structure, and a more cooperative relationship between labor and business. Let's reach for that.

I know we can have better schools to support that emerging economy, and to prepare today's and tomorrow's citizens. But we will need high expectations for our kids at home as well as at schools, more flexibility in the classrooms and even in what we consider to be a "classroom," early education and after-school programs, and public colleges and universities every bit as well-supported and honored as their private counterparts. Let's reach for that.

I know we can have more accessible and more affordable health care for ourselves and our families. But it will take transparency among clinicians and health insurers, a system of care that makes more use of community settings, simplified administrative systems, and government stewardship for the good of the whole. Let's reach for that.

I know we can have safer neighborhoods. But it will take more community-based

patrols, after-school and enrichment programs, summer job and volunteer opportunities for young people, training and pre-release preparation for inmates, and sensible reform of both CORI and sentencing. Let's reach for that.

We know what to do. We know that our challenges were long in the making and will require long-term solutions. We know what to reach for. And we ought to know that either we invest today or we will surely pay excessively tomorrow. We know that investment in education today beats investment in prisons tomorrow.

Quick fixes, gimmicks and sound bites are not enough. That's not in the spirit of what built this country. That is not what cleared the forest and planted New England's earliest farms. It's not what inspired our great universities and museums. It's not what created the boom in textile manufacturing in its time or a flourishing biotech industry today. It's not what freed the colonies from oppression or the slaves from bondage or women from second class citizenship.

What has distinguished us at every signature moment of our history is the willingness to look a challenge right in the eye, the instinct to measure it against our ideals, and the sustained dedication to close the gap between the two. That is who we are.

Think It Through

A theme is a way of thinking about something.

What is the main theme of this speech—the ideas that Governor Deval Patrick wants you to understand? Write the theme on the line.

He uses different examples to make that idea clear. List three examples from the speech that support the theme.

THEME: _____

Example

Example

Example

Answer the following questions on another page.

Choose one claim that Governor Patrick makes in the speech.

What evidence does he use to support it?

Effective Communication

Governor Patrick has used techniques to communicate his message.

For example, he uses “we” to make it clear that this is an inclusive speech.

What techniques does he use that are especially effective?