

Name _____

The passage below is the opening of a speech delivered by Harold Ickes, President Franklin Roosevelt's Secretary of the Interior, in May of 1941, when it seemed that Adolf Hitler and the Nazis would succeed in their quest for world domination.

DIRECTIONS: Read the passage. Explain the meaning of each underlined phrase.

I want to ask a few simple questions. And then I shall answer them.

What has happened to our vaunted idealism? Why have some of us been behaving like scared chickens? Where is the (1) million-throated, democratic voice of America?

For years it has been dinned into us that we are a weak nation; that we are an inefficient people; that we are simple-minded. For years we have been told that we are beaten, decayed, and that no part of the world belongs to us any longer.

Some amongst us have fallen for this (2) carefully pickled tripe. Some amongst us have fallen for this calculated poison. Some amongst us have begun to preach that the "wave of the future" has passed over us and left us a wet, dead fish.

They shout—from public platforms in printed pages, through the microphones—that it is futile to oppose the "wave of the future." They cry that we Americans, we free Americans nourished on Magna Carta and the Declaration of Independence, (3) hold moth-eaten ideas. They exclaim that there is no room for free men in the world anymore and that only the slaves will inherit the earth. America—the America of Washington and Jefferson and Lincoln and Walt Whitman—they say, is (4) waiting for the undertaker and all the hopes and aspirations that have gone into the making of America are dead too.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

BONUS: On the back of this page, discuss why you think Ickes uses such colorful expressions, and the likely affect of them on his audience.

ANSWERS

1. America is composed of many people but it speaks with a single voice.
2. Someone has gone to great care to make something that is unpalatable seem palatable.
3. Old, outdated, having been in storage for a long time, no longer in good shape, etc.
4. Almost dead

BONUS: Answers will vary.