

Joseph McCarthy on Trial
Pat McLarty
Kathleen High School

Directions: The following question requires you to construct a coherent essay that integrates your interpretation of Documents A – H and your knowledge of the period referred to in the question. You may also assess the reliability of the documents as historical sources where relevant to your answer.

Senator Joseph McCarthy stands as a symbol of Cold War tension in the 1950s. Was Senator McCarthy a patriot or a zealot?

Document A

While the records are not available to me, I know absolutely of one group of approximately 300 certified to the Secretary for discharge because of communism. He actually only discharged approximately 80. I understand that this was done after lengthy consultation with the now-convicted traitor, Alger Hiss. I would suggest, therefore, Mr. President, that you simply pick up your phone and ask Mr. Acheson how many of those whom your board had labeled as dangerous Communists he failed to discharge...

Failure on your part will label the Democratic Party of being the bedfellow of international communism. Certainly this label is not deserved by the hundreds of thousands of loyal American Democrats throughout the Nation, and by the sizable number of able loyal Democrats in both the Senate and the House.

U.S. Senate, State Department Loyalty Investigation Committee on Foreign Relations, 81st Congress; Joseph McCarthy to President Harry Truman February 11, 1950, *Congressional Record*, 81st Congress

Document B

McCarthy saw danger to his country and clothed in the shining armor of zeal and love and holding within his hand the sword of truth marched forward into battle with the cry on his lips, "For God and for my Country."

Sermon delivered by Reverend Adam Grill, May 7, 1957
<http://www.myhistorymuseum.org/mccarthy/senator8.htm>

Document C



"I have here in my hand . . ."
Washington Post May 7, 1954
[LC-USZ62-126910](#)

Document D

The Pumpkin Papers consist of sixty-five pages of retyped secret State Department documents, four pages in Hiss's own handwriting of copied State Department cables, and five rolls of developed and undeveloped 35 mm film. The film included fifty-eight frames, mostly photos of State and Navy Department documents. The State Department documents dealt with a wide variety of subjects, including U. S. intentions with respect to the Soviet Union, the Spanish Civil War, and Germany's takeover of Austria. Other frames dealt with subjects that hardly seem the stuff of spy novels, such as diagrams of fire extinguishers and life rafts. All of the documents that bore dates came from the period from January 5 through April 1, 1938.

<http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/hiss/pumpkinp.html>

Document E

Q. Do you think that Senator McCarthy can show any disloyalty exists in the State Department?

The President. I think the greatest asset that the Kremlin has is Senator McCarthy.

Q. Would you care to elaborate on that?

The President. I don't think it needs any elaboration—I don't think it needs any elaboration.

Reaction of President Harry Truman to Loyalty Investigation, "News Conference at Key West,"

March 30, 1950

Document F

(HUAC) was created in 1938 to investigate alleged disloyalty and subversive activities on the part of private citizens, public employees, and those organizations suspected of having Communist ties...

Through its power to subpoena witness and hold people in contempt of Congress, HUAC often pressured witnesses to surrender names and other information that could lead to the apprehension of Communists and Communist sympathizers. Committee members often branded witnesses as "red" if they refused to comply or hesitated in answering committee questions. In perhaps its most famous investigation, HUAC-member Richard Nixon, after weeks of dramatic hearings, was, at the final hour, able to reveal that Alger Hiss, a former State Department official, had lied to them about having "ever been a Communist." More importantly, however, the questioning style and examination techniques employed by HUAC served as the model upon which Senator Joseph McCarthy would conduct his investigative hearings in the early 1950s.

The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers."House Un-American Activities Committee." Teaching Eleanor Roosevelt, ed. by Allida Black, June Hopkins, et. al. (Hyde Park, New York: Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, 2003). <http://www.nps.gov/archive/elro/glossary/huac.htm> [Accessed January 21, 2009].

Document G

Resolved, That the Senator from Wisconsin, Mr. McCarthy, failed to cooperate with the Subcommittee on Privileges and Elections of the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration in clearing up matters referred to that subcommittee which concerned his conduct as a Senator and affected the honor of the Senate and, instead, repeatedly abused the subcommittee and its members who were trying to carry out assigned duties, thereby obstructing the constitutional processes of the Senate, and that this conduct of the Senator from Wisconsin, Mr. McCarthy, is contrary to senatorial traditions and is hereby condemned.

Sec 2. The Senator from Wisconsin, Mr. McCarthy, in writing to the chairman of the Select Committee to Study Censure Charges (Mr. Watkins) after the Select Committee had issued its report and before the report was presented to the Senate charging three members of the Select Committee with "deliberate deception" and "fraud" for failure to disqualify themselves; in stating to the press on November 4, 1954, that the special Senate session that was to begin November 8, 1954, was a "lynch-party"; in repeatedly describing this special Senate session as a "lynch bee" in a nationwide television and radio show on November 7, 1954; in stating to the public press on November 13, 1954, that the chairman of the Select Committee (Mr. Watkins) was guilty of "the most unusual, most cowardly things I've ever heard of" and stating further: "I expected he would be afraid to answer the questions, but didn't think he'd be stupid enough to make a public statement"; and in characterizing the said committee as the "unwitting handmaiden," "involuntary agent" and "attorneys-in-fact" of the Communist Party and in charging that the said committee in writing its report "imitated Communist methods -- that it distorted, misrepresented, and omitted in its effort to manufacture a plausible rationalization" in support of its recommendations to the Senate, which characterizations and charges were contained in a statement released to the press and inserted in the Congressional Record of November 10, 1954, acted contrary to senatorial ethics and tended to bring the Senate into dishonor and disrepute, to obstruct the constitutional processes of the Senate, and to impair its dignity; and such conduct is hereby condemned.

Transcript of Senate Resolution 301: Censure of Senator Joseph McCarthy (1954)

Transcription courtesy of the U.S. Department of State's [Information USA](#) website.

Page URL: <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=86&page=transcript>

Document H



Catholic War Veterans of New York presenting McCarthy with 250,000 signatures of citizens protesting his censure, November 8, 1954
Courtesy of Marquette University Archives and Corbis

<http://www.myhistorymuseum.org/mccarthy/senator8.htm>

U.S. History Rubric Check Sheet

Scoring Rubric Prepared By Jim Tomlin

- **Thesis**
 - Well developed and clearly focused (8-9)
 - Clear and adequate (5-7)
 - Confused, limited, or missing (2-4)
 - No thesis, provides an inappropriate response (0-1)
- **Document Usage**
 - Sophisticated use of a substantial number of documents (8-9)
 - Several documents used, may be more descriptive than analytical (5-7)
 - Few documents used, significant errors in document interpretation (2-4)
 - No document used, obvious misunderstanding of documents (0-1)
- **Critical Thought**
 - Strong interpretation and analysis (8-9)
 - Limited or superficial analysis, mostly descriptive (5-7)
 - Limited or no understanding of the question (2-4)
 - Shows a complete lack of understanding (0-1)
- **Evidence**
 - Abundant, appropriate, dealing with all aspects of question (8-9)
 - Uses some factual information (5-7)
 - Superficial or missing supporting information (2-4)
 - Little or no evidence (0-1)
- **Writing Style**
 - Well organized and well written (8-9)
 - Acceptable organization and writing (5-7)
 - Weak organization and/or poorly written (2-4)
 - May be incomprehensible (0-1)
- **Error Level**
 - No errors or errors are insignificant (8-9)
 - May contain minor errors (5-7)
 - May contain major errors (2-4)
 - Has substantial factual errors (0-1)