

# Different interpretations of dunkirk essay sample



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There are different interpretations of what happened in May 1940 on the coast of Dunkirk. Was it a major disaster or a great triumph? The different interpretations are split between people from different places and from different eras.

People who were writers or reporters or any one trying to abide by the government at the time portrayed it as a triumph because that is the propaganda that the government wanted people to see and believe. Newspapers and books coming out at the time were telling people of how well we had done. The soldiers and army co-ordinaters saw it on the other hand as a defeat and disaster.

We have many sources of information on Dunkirk and the later they were written the more they make it sound like a disaster. This is because there is no longer any need to keep spirits up as we did win the war in the end. Dunkirk was a retreat as Britain lost ground to Germany. Many, many lives were lost. By any normal definition this was far from a victory.

There are many pictures painted at the time that show Dunkirk as a victory, there is one by Charles Cundell who was sent by the government to paint an official painting of the events on the shore of Dunkirk. In the Painting he shows all the big and little boats from all over Britain coming to Dunkirk taking soldiers from the dark Smokey shores into the bright horizon showing them leaving with style and dignity. All the pictures I have seen from the time show the British soldiers standing in orderly queues waiting to be taken back to England.

There were no reporters from England actually there yet All the radio stations and newspapers said how wonderful it was and how the soldiers had their heads held high and were ready to have another crack at jerry. They mention them coming back in glory and them being undefeated but all they had to rely on was what the government told them and that was the government wanted people of Britain to believe.

There are other sources saying the same sort of things that were also written at the same time by people who were not actually there so it shows that people believed the government.

We also have sources written by people who were there who describe it as a disaster and say things like “stepping over bodies we marched onto the beach the stench of blood and mutilated flesh pervaded the place” and “it was just cold blooded killing”. As sources get found from the 1960s we see that more of the soldiers views have been taken in to account and people have started to see past the government’s propaganda. The sources are either saying it was a complete disaster or seeing it from both points of view.

Many books have been published more recently that say Dunkirk was a disaster so people now are seeing it more in the way of it being a disaster but the propaganda was good because it kept the British’s hopes up and made them fight harder to win the war.