

HAM 2

Read the section below and complete a Critical Reading Analysis on each paragraph. Then answer the questions on the back.

VR

Charlemagne

CC

Charlemagne is one of the most well-known kings of Dark Ages Europe. His grandfather, nicknamed Charles the Hammer, was known as a great hero for defending Europe against invaders from the south. He reunited many of the lands that formerly made up the Roman Empire. When he died control of Europe was divided between his two sons, Charlemagne and Carloman. When Carloman died leading a battle defending the Catholic Church Charlemagne became sole ruler of the empire. Could he live up to his grandfather's legacy?

Charlemagne was a very religious man and wasn't afraid to use violence to back it up. He believed it was his duty as a Christian king to rebuild the Roman Empire. He saw only one way to make that happen – murder. He ordered the arrest of anyone who would not become a Christian (and pay tribute to the church). At one point he gathered about 4,500 barbarian leaders. He told them they would convert on the spot or die. They refused to deny their beliefs. Charlemagne had each one executed. One by one they were led to the chopping block and their heads chopped off - the bodies left to rot there in the field.

Charlemagne's villainous legacy does not stop there. Murdering thousands wasn't enough for him – he really wanted to make a point. He ordered his army to invade the barbarian lands and destroy their most holy places. For example, when he found the location of what they called "The World Tree" he viciously chopped it down. This great tree had stood for hundreds of years and was central to the barbarian faith.

The Dark Ages were an awful time. It took a very violent man to provide even the smallest chance at unity. Charlemagne was that man. He let nothing stand in his way of rebuilding the Roman Empire. He wanted power to return and he would do anything he had to for that to happen. In a way then he certainly lived up to the legacy of his grandfather.

1. List as many words as you can find that make Charlemagne look like a hero.
2. List as many words as you can find that make Charlemagne look like a villain.
3. Do you think Charlemagne was a more of a hero or a villain? Why?
4. Does this reading give you enough information to make a good decision on whether Charlemagne was a hero or not? Why?