

## Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at [www.LibraryVideo.com](http://www.LibraryVideo.com)

- [www.reaganlibrary.com/reagan/speeches/](http://www.reaganlibrary.com/reagan/speeches/)  
The Reagan Presidential Foundation and Library provides the full text of many of President Reagan's historic speeches.
- [www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/publicpapers.html](http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/publicpapers.html)  
The University of Texas has speeches, statements and papers on its "The Public Papers of President Ronald W. Reagan" site.
- [millercenter.virginia.edu/scripps/diglibrary/prezspeeches/reagan/index.html](http://millercenter.virginia.edu/scripps/diglibrary/prezspeeches/reagan/index.html)  
The Miller Center of Public Affairs at the University of Virginia has the audio and text of a number of Reagan's speeches.

## Suggested Print Resources

- Harrison, Maureen (ed.). *The Speeches of Ronald Reagan*. Excellent Books, Carlsbad, CA; 2004.
- Houck, Davis W. (ed.). *Actor, Ideologue, Politician: The Public Speeches of Ronald Reagan*. Greenwood Press, Westport, CT; 1993.
- Reagan, Ronald. *Speaking My Mind: Selected Speeches*. Simon and Schuster, New York, NY; 1989.

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### TEACHER'S GUIDE

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### TITLES

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GREATEST SPEECHES  
OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY™  
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## RONALD REAGAN

### Grades 9–12

Great political speeches are authentic and heart felt — designed to move audiences, instill trust, and clearly and effectively communicate goals and policies. *Greatest Speeches of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Voices in Time* will introduce viewers to a wide range of prominent leaders and analyze the rhetoric they used to persuade others during times of dramatic social change and intense political turmoil. Students will become more knowledgeable about the immediate impact and enduring effect of history's most remarkable speeches, and through these stirring words increase their awareness of 20<sup>th</sup> century world history.



## Historical Overview

Throughout the 1970s, Vietnam, Watergate and the Iranian Hostage Crisis had damaged America's reputation abroad and caused a sense of weakness and malaise at home. In the fall of 1980, the former actor and Governor of California, Ronald Reagan, ran for the presidency on a program of smaller government, lower taxes and the raising of American morale. With his Hollywood-honed oratorical skills, Reagan challenged the "Evil Empire" with inflammatory rhetoric and consoled a wounded nation in the aftermath of the Challenger disaster. Although supporters dubbed Reagan the "The Great Communicator," political scandals and numerous domestic challenges during his second term earned him a new nickname, "The Great Prevaricator." Throughout his eight years as president, Ronald Reagan had a great ability to marshal words and convey emotions — some say, a performance that was the greatest of his life.

## Time Line

- 1911 — Ronald Reagan is born in Tampico, Illinois.
- 1966 — Ronald Reagan is elected governor of California.
- 1979 — Iranian protestors seize the American embassy in Tehran.
- 1981 — Ronald Reagan is sworn in as president; the remaining U.S. hostages in Iran are released on the same day.
- 1981 — John Hinckley shoots Ronald Reagan in an assassination attempt.
- 1984 — President Reagan is reelected in a landslide victory over Walter Mondale.
- 1985 — The Geneva Summit yields an arms control agreement with the Soviet Union.
- 1986 — The Space Shuttle Challenger explodes shortly after takeoff.
- 1986 — The Iran-Contra investigation begins.
- 2004 — Ronald Reagan dies at age 93 at his home in California.

## Vocabulary

**Vietnam War** — A brutal Cold-War era conflict in Indochina in which the United States used a domino-theory rationale to attempt to crush a communist-led, nationalist movement in Vietnam.

**Watergate** — A scandal that involved an illegal break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters in 1972, which eventually led to President Nixon's resignation in 1974.

**Cold War** — An intense, hostile rivalry during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century between communist nations, particularly the Soviet Union, and the democratic nations of the world, led by the United States.

**The Great Communicator** — A name that President Reagan's supporters dubbed him because of his clear, plainspoken speaking style, which was comforting and understandable to Americans during national and international crises.

**House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC)** — An investigative body formed in 1937 to identify and prosecute those guilty of participating in subversive activities in the United States, especially individuals suspected of holding communist views.

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**World War II** — The second major war of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that involved the Allied Powers led by England, France, the Soviet Union and the United States and their opponents, the Axis Powers, which included Germany, Japan and Italy.

**Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI)** — A program proposed by President Reagan in 1983 that was intended to provide the United States with a space-based system to guard against possible nuclear attack.

**Red Menace** — A term used to describe the threat of communist influence in the United States in the post-World War II era.

**communist** — One who advocates an economic system in which all means of production and property are publicly owned. A communist is also referred to as a Marxist-Leninist, after Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin.

**Berlin Wall** — A barrier that surrounded West Berlin in Germany, which was constructed by the Soviet Union in 1961 to stop people from fleeing communist East Berlin.

## Discussion Questions

1. What was Ronald Reagan's role as "Agent T-10"?
2. What were the goals of the "Strategic Triad" foreign policy?
3. How was the Strategic Defense Initiative intended to protect the United States?
4. What was the result of the Geneva Summit between Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev?
5. What were the policies of the Reagan Administration towards Nelson Mandela, Saddam Hussein, Nicaragua and Osama bin Laden?

## Discussion Questions & Activities

- A major part of the "Reagan Revolution" philosophy of government was the notion that social welfare programs lessen one's personal initiative and potential for success. Ask students to research and debate points Ronald Reagan made about greater government activity in the affairs of people in his 1964 speech, "A Time for Choosing." Students may speculate about the impact this speech had on Reagan's future in the Republican Party. The complete text of Reagan's speech may be found at the following web site: [www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1964reagan1.html](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1964reagan1.html)
- In an October 28, 1980 debate with President Carter, Ronald Reagan asked the famous question, "Are you better off than you were four years ago?" Ask students to research and summarize social and economic conditions in America during the Carter years and to develop their own answers to this question. The full text of the 1980 debate may be found at the following web site: [www.debates.org/pages/trans80b.html](http://www.debates.org/pages/trans80b.html)
- In President Reagan's Farewell Address he stated that "we've made a difference." Ask students to listen to Reagan's speech and to discuss what he believed were his greatest accomplishments. His Farewell Address may be heard at the following web site: [ftp://webstorage2.mcpa.virginia.edu/library/nara/rwr/audiovisual/speeches/rwr\\_1989\\_0111.mp3](http://ftp://webstorage2.mcpa.virginia.edu/library/nara/rwr/audiovisual/speeches/rwr_1989_0111.mp3)