



## Interviewing Ronald Reagan

Lesson Plan  
Grades 6–8

### Language Arts, Social Studies Focus

Students gather background information about Ronald Reagan, then plan and conduct an imaginary interview based on their interpretation of events. Interview questions are “answered” using Adobe Premiere Elements and editable *unitedstreaming* video segments of Reagan speeches.

### ISTE NETS S Standards

- II. Social, ethical, and human issues
- III. Technology productivity tools
- V. Technology research tool

### Content Standards

- Understand the chronological organization of history and know how to organize events and people into major eras to identify and explain historical relationships.
- Find, interpret, evaluate, and organize primary and secondary sources of information including pictures, graphics, maps, atlases, artifacts, timelines, political cartoons, videotapes, journals, and government documents.

### Learning Objectives

- Complete a project, integrating writing, photography, research, and graphic design.
- Learn to conduct an interview, using appropriate techniques and available technology.
- Present the results of the project.
- Discuss the difference between primary and secondary sources of information.
- Use technology tools to construct a technology-enhanced model for learning.
- Select and evaluate new technology information resources.

### Technology Components

- Discovery Education *unitedstreaming* account
- Computer with LCD projector and Internet connection
- Adobe Premiere Elements video editing software (or similar)

### Lesson Starter

- Show the following still image of Ronald Reagan at the Berlin Wall:  
<http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/photographs/large/c41247-10.jpg>.
- Ask questions about the image: What is happening in the image? How do you know?
- Explain the difference between primary and secondary sources and the need to evaluate the validity of material posted on the Internet.
- Ask students: How can we find out the most reliable, well-established information? Discuss the research tools of a historian. Explain that interviews are one important tool. At this point, the teacher should introduce Wikipedia as a commonly used technology reference tool. This discussion will cover two topics – the technology research tool itself, and the ethical side of research and collaboration. As part of the initial discussion below, demonstrate and explain Wikipedia ([www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)), ensuring that students understand its intention (a reference site).



built by its contributors, as opposed to a traditional encyclopedia – more details are available at the Wikipedia site), and how to navigate the site. Locate the information on Reagan, demonstrate the edit/view history features of the Wikipedia entry, and discuss with students how this information came to be posted here. Students will be better able to make an informed decision using a technology tool such as this, after having a discussion about its origin, and its accuracy as compared to other reference sources.

- Introduce the concept of the Cold War and the effect of the arms race and weapons build-up on economies, world trust, and political movements in the United States and abroad.

### Prior Knowledge

- Discuss the American political system, the role of the President, and what students know about the nuclear arms race.

### Present New Content

- Use *unitedstreaming* to show video segments of Reagan speeches. Have the class discuss the content.
  - Suggested *unitedstreaming* videos:
    - *Speeches from History: Ronald Reagan, 2004*
    - *Speeches from History: Ronald Reagan and the Soviet Union, 2004*
- Explain that students will do research to prepare for an interview with Reagan.
- Using *Inspiration*, help students identify the big ideas in the video segments and group them into subtopics for small-group research.
- Remind students of the 5 W's of Web site evaluation (<http://kathyschrock.net/abceval/5ws.htm>).
- Explain that students may use *unitedstreaming* video for this project, but copyright laws must always be followed when gathering Web resources.

### Activity

- In groups, the students search the Internet to investigate the Cold War.
- Students read about interviewing techniques (<http://projects.edtech.sandi.net/staffdev/tpss99/processguides/index.htm>) and use a word processor to create a list of interview questions for Reagan. They should create a new document, name and save it appropriately, and use the bullet feature in MS Word to create a list of questions. Teacher should remind students where and how to save their files, and ensure that each student is able to create the document and use the bulleted list feature correctly.
- Using video editing software, students crop editable *unitedstreaming* clips to answer the interview questions. Film the interviewer asking the questions, integrate into the video segments. (Students may use title screens in place of filming the interviewer.)
- Teacher should clearly demonstrate and explain the video editing software if it has not been used before. Students must be reminded that their videos are to be no longer than three minutes in length (or other predetermined length).

### Feedback

- Circulate around the room, providing feedback to groups based on the content and the default rubric.



### Assessment

- Score the interview final project according to a rubric that you have created, distributed, and discussed in advance.
- Hold a general discussion to determine what students see as important traits and skills of Ronald Reagan.

### Transfer

- Discussion of how the current President would answer students' questions about the end of the Cold War. What would you have done if you were President?
- What would you do as President if you were confronted with a current issue or concern, such as rising gas prices?

### Citations

Speeches from History: Ronald Reagan. United Learning (2004), *unitedstreaming*, <http://www.unitedstreaming.com/>.

Speeches from History: Ronald Reagan and the Soviet Union. United Learning (2004), *unitedstreaming*, <http://www.unitedstreaming.com/>.