

Reagan and the Fall of Communism

The role of Ronald Reagan's presidency in the final collapse of Soviet Communism and the Soviet empire.



Debating the
DOCUMENTS

Interpreting Alternative Viewpoints
in Primary Source Documents

Reagan and the Fall of Communism

*The role of Ronald Reagan's presidency in the final collapse
of Soviet Communism and the Soviet empire.*

MindSparks®

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MindSparks
10200 Jefferson Boulevard, P.O. Box 802
Culver City, CA 90232-0802
United States of America

(310) 839-2436
(800) 421-4246

<http://mindsparks.com>
access@mindsparks.com

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Teacher Introduction

★ Using Primary Sources

Primary sources are called “primary” because they are first-hand records of a past era or historical event. They are the raw materials, or the evidence, on which historians base their “secondary” accounts of the past.

A rapidly growing number of history teachers today are using primary sources. Why? Perhaps it’s because primary sources give students a better sense of what history is and what historians do. Such sources also help students see the past from a variety of viewpoints. Moreover, primary sources make history vivid and bring it to life.

However, primary sources are not easy to use. They can be confusing. They can be biased. They rarely all agree. Primary sources must be interpreted and set in context. To do this, students need historical background knowledge. *Debating the Documents* helps students handle such challenges by giving them a useful framework for analyzing sources that conflict with one another.



*“Multiple,
conflicting
perspectives are
among the truths
of history.
No single
objective or
universal account
could ever put an
end to this endless
creative dialogue
within and
between the past
and the present.”*

From the 2011 Statement on Standards
of Professional Conduct of the Council of
the American Historical Association.

★ *The Debating the Documents Series*

Each *Debating the Documents* booklet includes the same sequence of reproducible worksheets. If students use several booklets over time, they will get regular practice at interpreting and comparing conflicting sources. In this way, they can learn the skills and habits needed to get the most out of primary sources.

Each *Debating the Documents* Booklet Includes

- **Suggestions for the Student and an Introductory Essay.** The student gets instructions and a one-page essay providing background on the booklet's topic. A time line on the topic is also included.
- **Two Groups of Contrasting Primary Source Documents.** In most of the booklets, students get one pair of visual sources and one pair of written sources. In some cases, more than two are provided for each. Background is provided on each source. *Within each group, the sources clash in a very clear way.* (The sources are not always exact opposites, but they do always differ in some obvious way.)
- **Three Worksheets for Each Document Group.** Students use the first two worksheets to take notes on the sources. The third worksheet asks which source the student thinks would be most useful to a historian.
- **One DBQ.** On page 20, a document-based question (DBQ) asks students to write an effective essay using all of the booklet's primary sources.

★ *How to Use This Booklet*

1. Have students read “Suggestions for the Student” and the Introductory Essay.

Give them copies of pages 5–7. Ask them to read the instructions and then read the introductory essay on the topic. The time line gives them additional information on that topic. This reading could be done in class or as a homework assignment.

2. Have students do the worksheets.

Make copies of the worksheets and the pages with the sources. Ask students to study the background information on each source and the source itself. Then have them take notes on the sources using the worksheets. If students have access to a computer, have them review the primary sources digitally.

3. “Debate the documents” as a class.

Have students use their worksheet notes to debate the primary source documents as a class. Urge students to follow these ground rules:

- Use your worksheets as a guide for the discussion or debate.
- Try to reach agreement about the main ideas and the significance of each primary source document.
- Look for points of agreement as well as disagreement between the primary sources.
- Listen closely to all points of view about each primary source.
- Focus on the usefulness of each source to the historian, not merely on whether you agree or disagree with that source’s point of view.

4. Have students do the final DBQ.

A DBQ is an essay question about a set of primary source documents. To answer the DBQ, students write essays using evidence from the sources and their own background knowledge of the historical era. (See the next page for a DBQ scoring guide to use in evaluating these essays.)

The DBQ assignment on page 20 includes guidelines for writing a DBQ essay. Here are some additional points to make with students about preparing to write this kind of essay.

The DBQ for this Booklet (see page 20):

Did Ronald Reagan’s leadership and his ideas play a major role—or perhaps the most important role—in the fall of Communism in the Soviet Union? Why or why not?

- Analyze the question carefully.
- Use your background knowledge to set sources in their historical context.
- Question and interpret sources actively. Do not accept them at face value.
- Use sources meaningfully to support your essay’s thesis.
- Pay attention to the overall organization of your essay.

★ *Complete DBQ Scoring Guide*

Use this guide in evaluating the DBQ for this booklet. Use this scoring guide with students who are already familiar with using primary sources and writing DBQ essays.

Excellent Essay

- Offers a clear answer or thesis explicitly addressing all aspects of the essay question.
- Does a careful job of interpreting many or most of the documents and relating them clearly to the thesis and the DBQ. Deals with conflicting documents effectively.
- Uses details and examples effectively to support the thesis and other main ideas. Explains the significance of those details and examples well.
- Uses background knowledge and the documents in a balanced way.
- Is well written; clear transitions make the essay easy to follow from point to point. Only a few minor writing errors or errors of fact.

Good Essay

- Offers a reasonable thesis addressing the essential points of the essay question.
- Adequately interprets at least some of the documents and relates them to the thesis and the DBQ.
- Usually relates details and examples meaningfully to the thesis or other main ideas.
- Includes some relevant background knowledge.
- May have some writing errors or errors of fact, as long as these do not invalidate the essay's overall argument or point of view.

Fair Essay

- Offers at least a partly developed thesis addressing the essay question.
- Adequately interprets at least a few of the documents.
- Relates only a few of the details and examples to the thesis or other main ideas.
- Includes some background knowledge.
- Has several writing errors or errors of fact that make it harder to understand the essay's overall argument or point of view.

Poor Essay

- Offers no clear thesis or answer addressing the DBQ.
- Uses few documents effectively other than referring to them in “laundry list” style, with no meaningful relationship to a thesis or any main point.
- Uses details and examples unrelated to the thesis or other main ideas. Does not explain the significance of these details and examples.
- Is not clearly written, with some major writing errors or errors of fact.

Suggestions to the Student

★ *Using Primary Sources*

A primary source is any record of evidence from the past. Many things are primary sources: letters, diary entries, official documents, photos, cartoons, wills, maps, charts, etc. They are called “primary” because they are first-hand records of a past event or time period. This *Debating the Documents* lesson is based on two groups of primary source documents. Within each group, the sources conflict with one another. That is, they express different or even opposed points of view. You need to decide which source is more reliable, more useful, or more typical of the time period. This is what historians do all the time. Usually, you will be able to learn something about the past from each source, even when the sources clash with one another in dramatic ways.

★ *How to Use This Booklet*

1. Read the one-page introductory essay.

This gives you background information that will help you analyze the primary source documents and do the exercises for this *Debating the Documents* lesson. The time line gives you additional information you will find helpful.



2. Study the primary source documents for this lesson.

For this lesson, you get two groups of sources. The sources within each group conflict with one another. Some of these sources are visuals, others are written sources. With visual sources, pay attention not only to the image’s “content” (its subject matter) but also to its artistic style, shading, composition, camera angle, symbols, and other features that add to the image’s meaning. With written sources, notice the writing style, bias, even what the source leaves out or does not talk about. Think about each source’s author, that author’s reasons for writing, and the likely audience for the source. These considerations give you clues as to the source’s historical value.

3. Use the worksheets to analyze each group of primary source documents.

For each group of sources, you get three worksheets. Use the “Study the Document” worksheets to take notes on each source. Use the “Comparing the Documents” worksheet to decide which of the sources would be most useful to a historian.

4. As a class, debate the documents.

Use your worksheet notes to help you take part in this debate.

5. Do the final DBQ.

“DBQ” means “document-based question.” A DBQ is a question along with several primary source documents. To answer the DBQ, write an essay using evidence from the documents and your own background history knowledge.

Did Ronald Reagan Bring Down the Soviet Union?

Just after World War II, the Soviet Union imposed Communist dictatorships on most of Eastern Europe. These governments allowed no real individual political freedom. Life in Eastern Europe became dull and uniform, and people were frozen in fear about speaking out or seeking reform of any sort. Yet in just a few months in 1989, these seemingly powerful dictatorships were overthrown in a huge popular upheaval that was for the most part peaceful.

It remained peaceful mainly because the Soviet Communist leaders by then had become either too weak or too unsure of themselves to use force to save their empire. And shortly after this big change in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union's Communist state itself weakened and collapsed. By 1991, the Soviet Union was no more.

Why this happened is a complex question for which there is no simple answer.

For more than forty years, the United States acted to limit Soviet power around the world. This policy is known as "containment." U.S. leaders largely agreed that the Soviet Union was an aggressive state that had to be stopped. However, the huge nuclear arsenals of both "superpowers" made direct warfare between them almost impossible to imagine. Instead, the U.S. hoped that "containment" would check the Soviets and one day force them to change. This long stalemated rivalry is known as the Cold War—though in places like Korea, Vietnam, and elsewhere it often led to actual warfare among smaller states allied with one power or the other.

In 1981, Ronald Reagan began eight years as the U.S. president. He told Americans that he hoped to go beyond containment and end the Cold War. He promised to convince the Soviets to stop building more and more nuclear weapons. He also spoke out forcefully about what he called the "evil" of the Soviet totalitarian dictatorship. More directly than any other president, he called on the Soviets to reform their system entirely.

His efforts to stop the Soviet nuclear arms buildup first took the form of a battle over the medium-range nuclear missiles the Soviets had aimed at Western Europe. Even though millions in Europe protested, Reagan carried out an earlier U.S. promise to place medium-range missiles of its own there to counter the Soviet missiles. Later he announced a very costly program known as SDI, the Strategic Defense Initiative. This was a plan to develop ways to shoot down nuclear missiles in flight.

Many in America and Europe criticized Reagan harshly for these steps. Some said he was even more dangerous and warlike than the Soviets. But Reagan said his actions would force the Soviets to see that they could not afford to keep up an endless arms race. And in 1985, top Soviet officials did choose a more peaceful Soviet leader who did begin to work more cooperatively with Ronald Reagan. In time, agreements were reached to remove all the medium-range missiles in Europe and to work to reduce other nuclear weapons programs.

Mikhail Gorbachev was that new Soviet leader. Gorbachev soon started to reform his nation and open it up to the world. His efforts led directly to the upheavals of 1989 and the end of the Soviet Communist system.

Today, big arguments about Ronald Reagan continue. They often take the form of debates about how important he was in causing the Soviet Union and its Communist system to collapse. The documents in this booklet should help you think about this debate and take part in it. They may even help you decide for yourself which view of Ronald Reagan you think is correct.

Reagan and Communism Time Line

1940s

In his 1946 “Iron Curtain” speech, British wartime leader Winston Churchill warns of Soviet-imposed dictatorships in Eastern Europe. In 1947, the Truman Doctrine pledges the U.S. to aid all those fighting Communism. In 1948, the Marshall Plan seeks to rebuild Europe to lessen the appeal of Communism. In 1949, the NATO alliance is formed to counter the Soviet threat to Western Europe. Also in 1949, the Soviets test their first atomic bomb and Communists take over China.

1950s

The Korean War takes place (1950–1953). Fears of domestic Communist spying lead to the excesses of Joe McCarthy. The CIA helps overthrow unfriendly governments in Iran and Guatemala. The Soviets form the Warsaw Pact. In 1956, they brutally put down an uprising in Hungary. *Sputnik* in 1957 begins an era of U.S.-Soviet rivalry in space exploration and missile technology. Castro takes over in Cuba.

1960s

In 1960, John F. Kennedy is elected. He warns of a Soviet build-up of nuclear-armed missiles. In 1961 a U.S. assisted effort to overthrow Castro fails (the “Bay of Pigs” invasion). The first U.S. soldiers are sent to Vietnam. The Soviets build the Berlin Wall. In 1962, the Cuban Missile Crisis nearly results in a nuclear war. In 1963, the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty is ratified. In 1968, U.S. troop escalation in Vietnam reaches its peak. That year, Soviet troops also crush a move for reform in Czechoslovakia.

1970s

President Nixon begins to turn the Vietnam war over to South Vietnamese forces. U.S. troops are out of Vietnam by 1973, and the Communists take over there in 1975. Meanwhile, Nixon visits China. His policy of *detente* seeks to ease tensions with the Soviets. In 1972, a major arms control agreement, SALT I, is signed. In 1974, President Nixon resigns due to the Watergate scandal. In 1979, another major arms limitation agreement, SALT II, is signed. In 1979, the Shah of Iran is overthrown. Americans are seized in the Iranian Hostage Crisis. The Soviets invade Afghanistan.

1980s

President Reagan takes office in 1981. He warns of the failures and dangers of Soviet Communism. Also in 1981, Poland’s Solidarity labor union challenges Soviet rule. In 1983, Reagan counters Soviet intermediate missiles aimed at Europe by placing U.S. missiles there. He proposes his Strategic Defense Initiative, known as “Star Wars.” In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev takes over in the Soviet Union. He calls for reform of the Soviet system and begins meeting with Reagan. In 1986, Reagan is hurt by the Iran-Contra affair, in which the U.S. sold arms to Iran to finance rebels fighting Nicaragua’s Communist government. In 1987, Reagan and Gorbachev agree to remove all medium- and short-range nuclear missiles. In 1989, Soviet troops withdraw from Afghanistan. Communist rule begins to be overthrown throughout Eastern Europe. In November, the Berlin Wall falls. The Soviet empire is at an end.

Visual Primary Source Document 1



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Information on Document 1

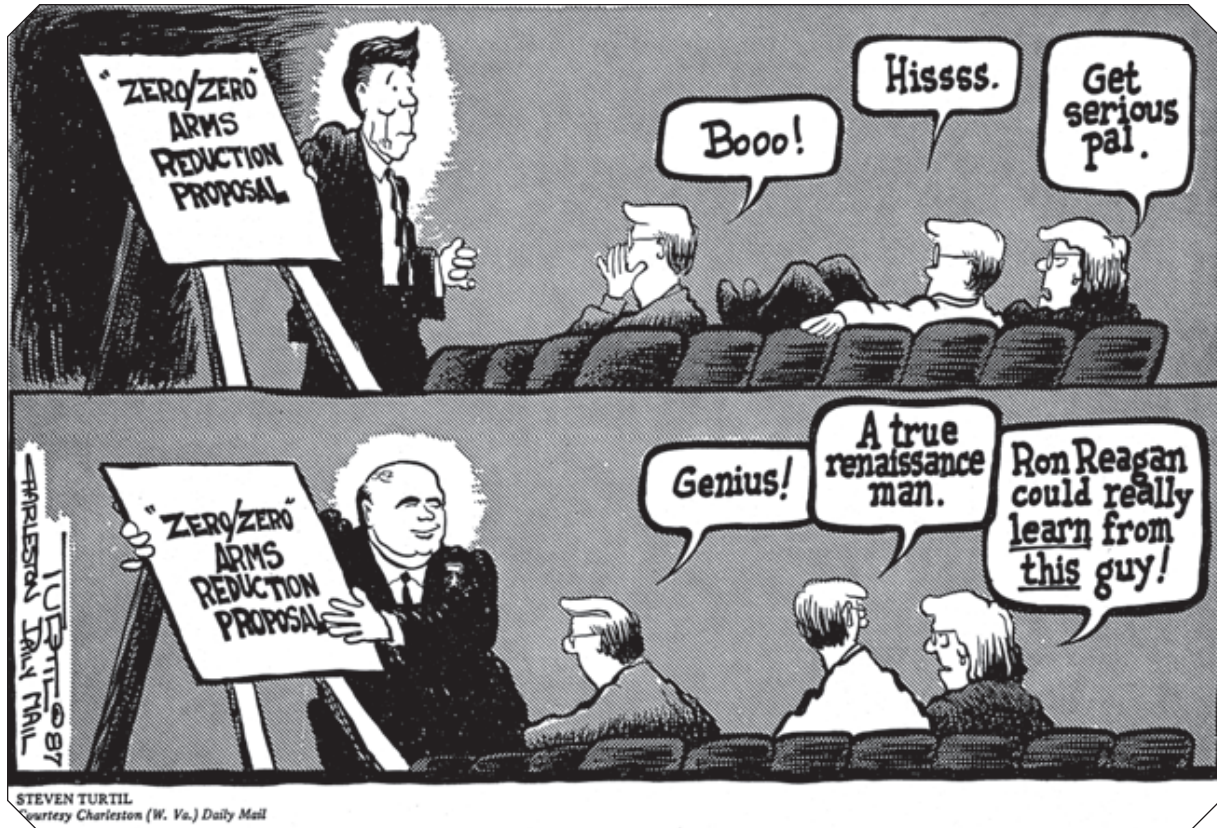
This political cartoon by Mike Peters appeared in the *Dayton Daily News* in 1984. The Soviet leader then was Yuri Andropov. He was one of several aging and fairly rigid top Soviet leaders during Ronald Reagan's early years as president.

In 1983, the Soviets broke off arms talks when the U.S. deployed its medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe. In 1984, Reagan began early work on SDI, the missile defense program that came to be known as "Star Wars." Here, Reagan is seen with

his finger on a button ready to launch a war if Andropov provokes him. His words are from a well-known movie in which Clint Eastwood plays a police officer always ready to use force when provoked.

Andropov was followed as Soviet leader by the ill and aging Konstantin Chernenko, who also died a few months after taking office. Chernenko was the last of the Soviet "hardliners" with whom Reagan had to deal. When Chernenko died in March 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev was picked to take over.

Visual Primary Source Document 2



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Information on Document 2

In 1983, Reagan carried out his pledge to place medium-range nuclear missiles in Western Europe to counter similar missiles put in place by the Soviets in the 1970s. At the same time, he offered his “zero/zero” option—an offer to get rid of all of our medium-range missiles in Europe if the Soviets would get rid of theirs. (All of these missiles were often called “Euromissiles.”)

Critics who saw Reagan as too warlike called the zero/zero option a trick. They said Reagan only made this offer because he

knew the Soviets would refuse it. Then he could go ahead with the deployment of his missiles. Yet these critics turned out to be wrong, at least in the long run. Once Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the Soviet Union, he began talking with Reagan. And in 1987, the two leaders signed an arms treaty carrying out the basics of the zero/zero option. This cartoon makes fun of Reagan’s critics for failing to give Reagan the credit the artist thinks he deserved.

Study the Document: Visual Source 1

Instructions: Take notes on these questions. Use your notes to discuss the documents and answer the DBQ.

1 Main Idea or Topic _____

What is this document about? That is, what overall point does it make about Ronald Reagan?

2 Context _____

What do you need to know to better understand this document? For example, how does knowing something about the Soviet leadership in the early 1980s help to understand the cartoon? Does it also help to know where the phrase “make my day” came from? Why or why not?

3 Visual Features _____

How is Reagan drawn? What visual features in the portrayal of him add to the cartoon’s main point?

4 Bias _____

What view or opinion is expressed here about Ronald Reagan? Do you agree or disagree with this opinion? Why?

5 Usefulness _____

This illustration does express a clear bias. Could a historian still use this document as evidence of some sort? If so, does its bias add to its usefulness as a primary source or make it less useful? Explain your answers.

Study the Document: Visual Source 2

Instructions: Take notes on these questions. Use your notes to discuss the documents and answer the DBQ.

1 Main Idea or Topic

What is this document about? That is, what overall point does it make about Ronald Reagan?

2 Context

What do you need to know about the “Euromissiles” debate of the early 1980s and Reagan’s “zero/zero” option in order to understand this cartoon? What else do you need to know to understand the bottom half of the cartoon?

3 Visual Features

If you look only at the visual features of the cartoon, it may seem to be making fun of Reagan and praising Gorbachev. It is only through the words that the real point of the cartoon is made—which actually criticizes those listening to the two leaders. Can you explain how the visual features and the words together make this clear?

4 Usefulness

This illustration does express a clear bias in favor of Reagan and against his critics, especially his critics in the press. Could a historian still use this cartoon as evidence of some sort? If so, does its bias add to its usefulness as a primary source or make it less useful? Explain your answers.

Comparing the Documents

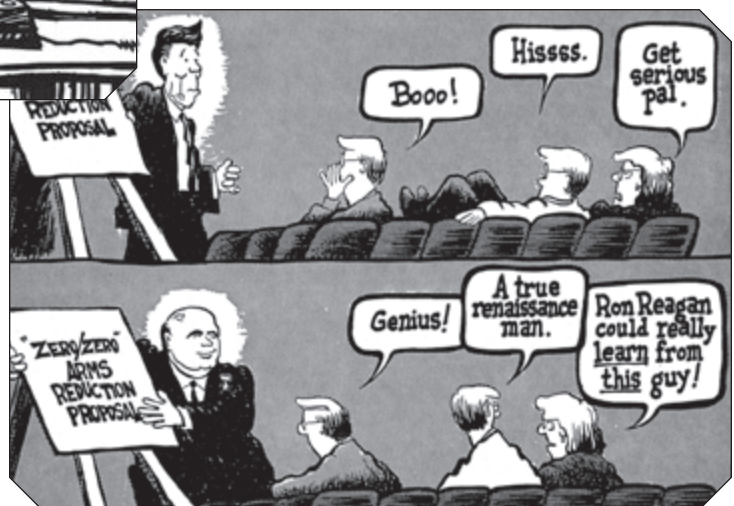
★ *The Visual Sources*

Answer the question by checking one box below. Then complete the statements on the Comparison Essay worksheet. Use all your notes to help you take part in an all-class debate about these documents—and to answer the final DBQ for the lesson.

Which of these two primary source documents would be most useful to a historian trying to understand the role Ronald Reagan played in the collapse of Soviet Communism?



Document 1 ☐



Document 2 ☐

Comparison Essay

I chose Document _____ because:

*I did **not** choose Document _____.*

However, a historian still might use the document in the following way:

Keep this in mind: Some sources are very biased. A biased source is one that shows you only one side of an issue. That is, it takes a clear stand or expresses a very strong opinion about something. A biased source may be one-sided, but it can still help you to understand its time period. For example, a biased editorial cartoon may show how people felt about an issue at the time. The usefulness of a source depends most of all on what questions you ask about that time in the past.

Written Primary Source Documents 1 & 2

Information on Documents 1 & 2

The first document below is part of a famous speech in which Ronald Reagan called the Soviet Union “evil.” Later in the speech he used the phrase “evil empire” for the Soviet Union and the nations it controlled. The other passage is from an interview with former Soviet dissident Natan Sharansky, who had spoken up for Jews and for human rights in the Soviet Union. In 1978, he was sentenced to 13 years in a Siberian prison. In 1986, he was released and allowed to move to Israel, where he became an official in the government.

Document 1

Yes, let us pray for the salvation of all of those who live in that totalitarian darkness [the Soviet Union]—pray they will discover the joy of knowing God. But until they do, let us be aware that while they preach the supremacy of the state, declare its omnipotence over individual man, and predict its eventual domination of all peoples on the Earth, they are the focus of evil in the modern world.

—President Reagan in a speech to the National Association of Evangelicals, March 8, 1983

Document 2

QUESTION: Were there any particular Reagan moments that you can recall being sources of strength or encouragement to you and your colleagues?

I have to laugh. People who take freedom for granted, Ronald Reagan for granted, always ask such questions. Of course! It was the great brilliant moment when we learned that Ronald Reagan had proclaimed the Soviet Union an Evil Empire before the entire world. There was a long list of all the Western leaders who had lined up to condemn the evil Reagan for daring to call the great Soviet Union an evil empire. . . . This was the moment. It was the brightest, most glorious day. Finally a spade had been called a spade. Finally, Orwell’s Newspeak was dead. President Reagan had from that moment made it impossible for anyone in the West to continue closing their eyes to the real nature of the Soviet Union.

It was one of the most important, freedom-affirming declarations, and we all instantly knew it. For us, that was the moment that really marked the end for them, and the beginning for us. The lie had been exposed and could never, ever be untold now. This was the end of Lenin’s “Great October Bolshevik Revolution” and the beginning of a new revolution, a freedom revolution—Reagan’s Revolution.

We were all in and out of punishment cells so often—me more than most—that we developed our own tapping language to communicate with each other between the walls. A secret code. We had to develop new communication methods to pass on this great, impossible news. We even used the toilets to tap on.

—Natan Sharansky, former Soviet dissident, in an interview in the Weekly Standard, June 21, 2004

Written Primary Source Documents 3 & 4

Information on Document 3 & 4

The first of these documents is from an editorial criticizing Ronald Reagan's famous "Evil Empire" speech to the National Association of Evangelicals on March 8, 1983. The other document is from an article by a well-known American economist giving a positive view of the Soviet economy in 1983. Such reports by various experts were common in the early 1980s.

Document 3

"I wonder how many people, reading about the [Evil Empire] speech or seeing bits on television, really noticed its outrageous character . . . Primitive: that is the only word for it. . . . What is the world to think when the greatest of powers is led by a man who applies to the most difficult human problem a simplistic theology—one in fact rejected by most theologians? . . . What must the leaders of Western Europe think of such a speech? They look to the head of the alliance for rhetoric that can persuade them and their constituents. What they get from Ronald Reagan is a mirror image of crude Soviet rhetoric. And it is more than rhetoric: everyone must sense that. The real Ronald Reagan was speaking in Orlando. The exaggeration and the simplicities are there not only in the rhetoric but in the process by which he makes decisions."

—Anthony Lewis, *New York Times*,
March 10, 1983

Document 4

"That the Soviet economy has made great material progress in recent years is evident both from the statistics and from the general urban scene. . . . One sees it in the appearance of solid well-being of the people on the streets, the close-to-murderous traffic, the incredible exfoliation of apartment houses, and the general aspect of restaurants, theaters, and shops. . . . Partly, the Russian system succeeds, because, in contrast with the Western industrial economies, it makes full use of its manpower."

—John Kenneth Galbraith,
Professor of Economics, Harvard
University, in *The New Yorker*, 1984.

Study the Documents: Written Sources 1 & 2

Instructions: Take notes on these questions. Use your notes to discuss the documents and answer the DBQ.

1 Main Idea or Topic _____

What overall view of the Soviet Union do these two documents present?

2 Author, Audience, Purpose _____

How does knowing something about the two authors help you to better understand the views they express here? Does it also help to know something about the audience for Reagan's speech? Why or why not?

3 Context _____

What else do you need to know about the Soviet Union in the 1970s and '80s, or about Soviet dissidents in those years, in order to better understand these documents?

4 Bias _____

At the time, many people criticized Reagan for his use of the word "evil" to describe the Soviet Union. From what you know about the Soviet Union in those years, do you think this use of the word "evil" was justified? Or do you think it was too biased a view for a U.S. president to express? Explain your answer.

Study the Documents: Written Sources 3 & 4

Instructions: Take notes on these questions. Use your notes to discuss the documents and answer the DBQ.

1 Main Idea or Topic

These two documents actually make two very different points, one about Reagan and one about the Soviet Union. Briefly, what are these two points?

2 Context

What events or trends in the Soviet Union do you need to know about in order to assess the accuracy of Galbraith's view of the Soviet Union? Just how accurate do you think that view was?

3 Bias

What one or two sentences or phrases in the editorial by Anthony Lewis best express its bias, or its opinion of Ronald Reagan? Do you agree or disagree with that opinion? Why?

4 Usefulness

How useful are each of these documents to a historian studying Ronald Reagan and his role in the fall of Soviet Communism? Could both documents be used for this purpose, or only one? Explain your answers.

Comparing the Documents

★ *The Written Sources*

Answer the question by checking one box below. Then complete the statements on the Comparison Essay worksheet. Use all your notes to help you take part in an all-class debate about these documents—and to answer the final DBQ for the lesson.

Which of these two primary source documents would be most useful to a historian trying to understand the role Ronald Reagan played in the collapse of Soviet Communism?

Part of a Reagan speech in which he described the Soviet Union as “evil,” and part of an interview with former Soviet dissident Natan Sharansky.

Documents 1 & 2 ☐

Passage from a 1983 Anthony Lewis editorial criticizing Ronald Reagan’s “Evil Empire” speech, and part of an article by John Kenneth Gailbraith on the Soviet economy in 1983.

Documents 3 & 4 ☐

Comparison Essay

I chose Documents _____ because:

*I did **not** choose Documents _____.*

However, a historian still might use the documents in the following way:

Keep this in mind: Some sources are very biased. A biased source is one that shows you only one side of an issue. That is, it takes a clear stand or expresses a very strong opinion about something. A biased source may be one-sided, but it can still help you to understand its time period. For example, a biased editorial cartoon may show how people felt about an issue at the time. The usefulness of a source depends most of all on what questions you ask about that time in the past.

Document-Based Question

Your task is to answer a document-based question (DBQ) on Reagan and the end of Soviet Communism. In a DBQ, you use your analysis of primary source documents and your knowledge of history to write a brief essay answering the question. Using all of the documents, answer this question.

Document-Based Question

Did Ronald Reagan’s leadership and his ideas play a major role—or perhaps the most important role—in the fall of Communism in the Soviet Union? Why or why not?

Below is a checklist of key suggestions for writing a DBQ essay. Next to each item, jot down a few notes to guide you in writing the DBQ. Use extra sheets to write a four- or five-paragraph essay.

- *Introductory Paragraph*
Does the paragraph clarify the DBQ itself? Does it present a clear thesis, or overall answer, to that DBQ?
- *The Internal Paragraphs—1*
Are these paragraphs organized around main points with details supporting those main ideas? Do all these main ideas support the thesis in the introductory paragraph?
- *The Internal Paragraphs—2*
Are all of your main ideas and key points linked in a logical way? That is, does each idea follow clearly from those that went before? Does it add something new and helpful in clarifying your thesis?
- *Use of Primary Source Documents*
Are they simply mentioned in a “laundry list” fashion? Or are they used thoughtfully to support main ideas and the thesis?
- *Concluding Paragraph*
Does it restate the DBQ and thesis in a way that sums up the main ideas without repeating old information or going into new details?

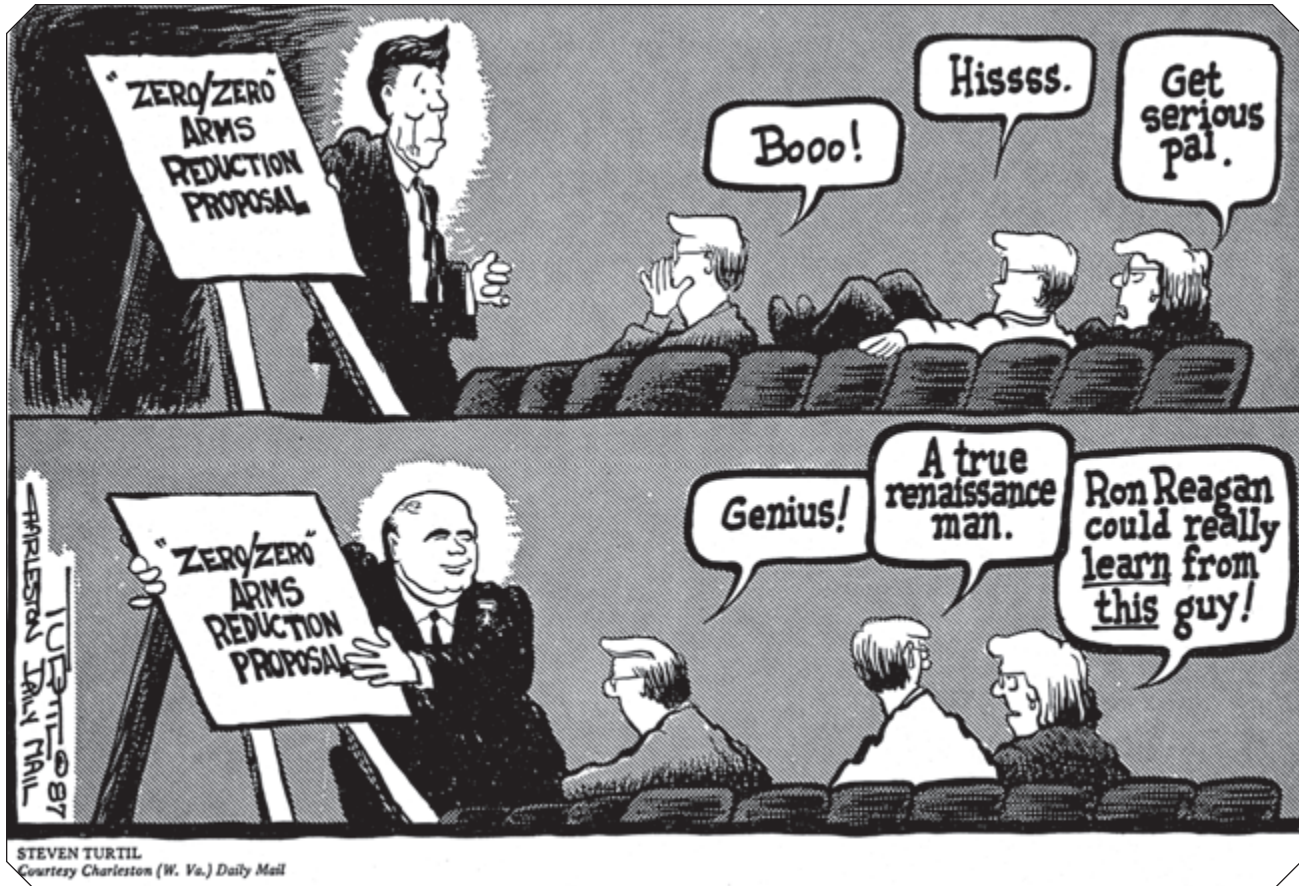
Visual Primary Sources

First Group—Document 1



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

First Group—Document 2



Courtesy of the Library of Congress