



## Handout 1 - Reagan and the Cold War: A Document-Based Question

Suggested reading period: 15 minutes

Suggested writing time: 45 minutes

**Directions:** *The following question requires you to construct a coherent essay that integrates your interpretation of the documents and your knowledge of the time period addressed in the question. High scores will be earned only by essays that both cite key pieces of evidence from the documents and draw on outside knowledge of the period.*

**Question:** Did President Ronald Reagan’s Cold War policies serve to heighten or to reduce tensions with the Soviet Union?

**Document A:** *Excerpt from the “Evil Empire” speech, by Ronald Reagan, 1983*

“As good Marxist-Leninists, the Soviet leaders have openly and publicly declared that the only morality they recognize is that which will further their course, which is world revolution . . . Morality is entirely subordinate to the interests of class war. And everything is moral that is necessary for the annihilation of the old, exploiting social order and for uniting the proletariat.

Well, I think the refusal of many influential people to accept this elementary fact of Soviet doctrine illustrates an historical reluctance to see totalitarian powers for what they are . . .

Let us pray for the salvation of all of those who live in that totalitarian darkness—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.”



**Document B:** *Lyrics of "Russians," by Gordon Sumner and Serge Prokofieff, 1985*

In Europe and America there's a growing feeling of hysteria. Conditioned to respond to all the threats In the rhetorical speeches of the Soviets. Mister Krushchev said, "We will bury you." I don't subscribe to this point of view. It'd be such an ignorant thing to do If the Russians love their children too. How can I save my little boy from Oppenheimer's deadly toy? There is no monopoly on common sense On either side of the political fence. We share the same biology, regardless of ideology.	Believe me when I say to you, I hope the Russians love their children too There is no historical precedent To put the words in the mouth of the president? There's no such thing as a winnable war, It's a lie we don't believe anymore. Mister Reagan says, "We will protect you." I don't subscribe to this point of view. Believe me when I say to you, I hope the Russians love their children too We share the same biology, regardless of ideology. But what might save us, me and you, Is if the Russians love their children too
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**Document C:** *Political cartoon by Steve Greenberg, 1987*





**Document D:** *Excerpt from the “Tear Down This Wall” speech by Ronald Reagan, 1987*

“I understand the fear of war and the pain of division that afflict this continent—and I pledge to you my country’s efforts to help overcome these burdens. To be sure, we in the West must resist Soviet expansion. So we must maintain defenses of unassailable strength. Yet we seek peace; so we must strive to reduce arms on both sides. Beginning ten years ago, the Soviets challenged the Western alliance with a grave new threat, hundreds of new and more deadly SS-20 nuclear missiles, capable of striking every capital in Europe. The Western alliance responded by committing itself to a counterdeployment unless the Soviets agreed to negotiate a better solution; namely, the elimination of such weapons on both sides. For many months, the Soviets refused to bargain in earnestness. As the alliance, in turn, prepared to go forward with its counterdeployment, there were difficult days—days of protests like those during my 1982 visit to this city—and the Soviets later walked away from the table.

But through it all, the alliance held firm . . . Because we remained strong, the Soviets came back to the table. And because we remained strong, today we have within reach the possibility, not merely of limiting the growth of arms, but of eliminating, for the first time, an entire class of nuclear weapons from the face of the Earth.”

**Document E:** *Lyrics of “Reagan’s In,” by Wasted Youth, 1981*

Reagan’s in we’re going for good	All this s*** it’s just no use
We’ll fight and kill the best we could	Men unite don’t be abused
No one cares if we die	You have to go it’s not your choice
Reinstate the draft and tell us lies	Sure we’ll go but hear our voice
You fight a war where no one wins	Reagan’s in we’re going for good
Where people die and bodies burn	Reagan’s in we’re going for good
Reagan don’t care, he won’t fight	Shoot
He’ll try and send us with all his might	Kill
There he goes another one	Shoot
Kill that man his values are wrong	Kill
It ain’t movies it’s not T.V.	Shoot
It’s pretty rough man you will see	Kill
	Shoot and die!



**Document F:** *Lyrics of "Human Error," by Subhumans, 1981*

There's a bomb going off in Belfast	Meanwhile baby wonders
There's a war in Vietnam	"What's a nuclear war?"
There's a T.V. documentary	And mummy says to tell the truth, I'm really not quite
To help you understand	sure
But the other channel is better	And the rest of the world was ignorant
Cos it doesn't tax your mind	Because they weren't told more
Relax in the ignorance of your home	The pamphlet said 'Just stay at home, avoid the
As man destroys mankind	threat of war
And the rest of the world has gone to sleep	The computer pressed the button
Because they couldn't care less	The rain was full of lead
The world is going, so am I	And more bombs dropped on Belfast
It's such a bloody mess	And Vietnam went dead
There's an arms race in America	The T.V. Documentary
The race that no one wins	Outlined the possible cause
If somebody pushed the button	It was just a human error
The accidental sin	Because man invented war
	And the rest of the world has gone to hell
	Because they never cared more
	The children cried before they died
	So this is nuclear war

**Document G:** *Excerpt from "The End of History?" by Francis Fukuyama, 1989*

"In watching the flow of events over the past decade or so, it is hard to avoid the feeling that something very fundamental has happened in world history. The past year has seen a flood of articles commemorating the end of the Cold War, and the fact that 'peace' seems to be breaking out in many regions of the world . . .

What we may be witnessing . . . is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government."



**Document H:** *Lyrics of "Ronnie, Talk to Russia," by Prince Rogers Nelson, 1981*

Ronnie talk to Russia before it's too late	Ronnie talk to Russia before it's too late
Before it's too late	Before it's too late
Before it's too late	Before it's too late
Ronnie talk to Russia before it's too late	Ronnie talk to Russia before it's too late
Before they blow up the world	Before they blow up the world
You go to the zoo, but you can't feed	Before they blow up the world
guerrillas	Before they blow up the world
Can't feed guerrillas	Don't ya blow up my world
Left-wing guerrillas	Don't you blow up my world
You can go to the zoo, but you can't feed	
guerrillas	
Who want to blow up the world	
Ronnie if you're dead before I get to meet ya	
Before I get to meet ya	
Before I get to meet ya	
Ronnie if you're dead before I get to meet ya	
Don't say I didn't warn ya	