



## The Ronald Reagan Civil Discourse Project for Educators

### Civil Discourse Overview:

#### President Reagan's Example: Debate Ideas, Not People

The friendship between President Ronald Reagan and Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill serves as a prime example of the fact that civility and personal relationships can overcome division, even when there are drastically opposing viewpoints. President Reagan, a conservative Republican, and O'Neill, a fiercely liberal Democrat, consistently engaged in debates that targeted policy and principles rather than each other as individuals. This approach allowed them to challenge each other's ideas without disrespecting the other as a person. By keeping their criticism aimed at concepts rather than each other as people, President Reagan and Speaker of the House O'Neill demonstrated that it is possible to disagree passionately on issues while preserving civility and respectful dialogue. Although the two often found themselves at odds due to policy disagreements and political divides, their relationship took on a warmer tone outside the office where they bonded over their shared Irish heritage and the pleasure of sharing stories.

The relationship between President Ronald Reagan and Tip O'Neill underscores the importance of focusing on issues rather than personal attacks in order to foster more constructive and respectful dialogue. By separating ideas from individuals, civil discourse can prevail, enabling participants to disagree passionately yet maintain mutual respect.

[President Reagan remarks on Tip O'Neill](#)

## What Is Civil Discourse?

Civil discourse is productive dialogue that includes both speaking and listening. Civil discourse never includes shouting, a domination of the discussion, or personal attacks. It is more than just politeness or agreeing with the other person. Civil discourse is an invitation to exchange ideas with the goal of understanding and not necessarily agreeing and can occur as informally as a conversation and as formally as an organized debate. Civil discourse often means discussing issues that are not easily resolved and participants must deal head on with disagreement and competing values, listen to differing perspectives, and consider their own values and opinions.

When teachers intentionally foster a culture of respect and plan for opportunities for discussion, classrooms can be an ideal environment for students to practice exchanging ideas, respectfully listening to diverse opinions and experiences and exploring different viewpoints.



## Why Teach Civil Discourse?

In a democratic society, the ability to engage in civil discourse is critical. It's not just about effectively voicing viewpoints and ideas but also about disagreeing respectfully and listening actively to others. These skills are foundational for informed decision-making and consensus-building. When students learn to

discuss topics thoughtfully, they develop critical thinking, empathy, and the capacity to consider diverse perspectives. This can foster a classroom culture where ideas are exchanged freely and constructively.

However, in today's digital world dominated by social media, instant communication and emojis as a means of expression, these essential skills have become underdeveloped. Many young people are accustomed to communicating in abbreviated, immediate formats, where subtlety and depth are often lost and the speed and brevity of online interactions encourage quick reactions over thoughtful dialogue. As a result, students may struggle to engage in meaningful discussions that require patience, active listening, and the ability to articulate reasoned arguments and viewpoints.

Civil discourse goes beyond expressing oneself; it's an exchange about things that matter and involves genuinely listening to diverse perspectives, not just politely waiting for a turn to speak. It's about actively engaging with others' viewpoints, seeking to understand them, and committing to engage in a meaningful conversation. The classroom provides an ideal opportunity for practicing civil discourse. Where there is a culture of civility and open-mindedness, the classroom can be a structured and safe environment for students to build respectful relationships with their peers and practice expressing their ideas without fear of conflict. With teachers acting as moderators, students have the opportunity to learn to develop and present their viewpoints effectively before engaging in discussions on controversial topics. Teachers can guide and support the practice of civil discourse using methodologies such as structured frameworks for class-wide and small group discussion, debate, role-playing, storytelling, and other forms of respectful civic discourse.

The foundation of our democratic society rests on the ability and willingness of the citizens to listen to diverse perspectives and engage in civil discourse. In a commencement address at Eureka College, President Reagan told the audience,

*"Peace is not the absence of conflict, but the ability to cope with conflict by peaceful means."*

**This is true of civil discourse and disagreement. Students will undoubtedly be confronted with differing ideas and strong opinions that run counter to their own- there will be conflict. However it is the way in which they approach that conflict that will lead either to division or to tolerance, disconnection or relationship. As a result, the task of properly equipping our young people to effectively articulate their perspectives and fair-mindedly consider those of others is a critical component of “a well informed citizenry”.**

## **President Ronald Reagan: “The Great Communicator”**



President Ronald Reagan earned the title of “The Great Communicator” because of his unique ability to inspire and connect with people through his communication style. His speeches were characterized by optimism, honesty and a clarity that resonated deeply with the American public and beyond.

Ronald Reagan’s gift for communicating was cultivated over the course of many years. From sports broadcasting and acting in Hollywood to his time as the president of the Screen Actors Guild and the host of the G.E. Theater, Ronald Reagan developed, not only a growing interest in politics but a flair for storytelling, negotiating, developing a story and connecting with his audiences. In 1964, in a political speech he gave on behalf of the Barry Goldwater campaign for president, Ronald Reagan gave his famous “A Time for Choosing” speech. It

was clear what he would do next in life. He stepped out on the political stage, first as governor of California and then President of the United States.

President Reagan had a talent for simplifying complex issues into easily understandable messages, making his policies and vision transparent and accessible to a wide audience which made him credible to his audience. President Reagan spoke to the people, as he said, "*...not over their heads or through them.*" He came across as sincere and conversational, even in the most formal and solemn speeches. He was also able to communicate in a way that connected to the values and the emotions of those who heard him. He tapped into Americans' sense of patriotism and pride and their values of liberty, equality, family and faith. In addition to turning around a poor economy and ending the Cold War, President Reagan communicated an undeniable sense of strength, optimism, and national pride in his speeches and addresses and restored the morale of the nation. President Reagan's ability to inspire hope and confidence through his speeches played a crucial role in shaping his legacy as a communicator and a leader.

Students can enhance their own communication skills by studying President Ronald Reagan's communication style. Reagan demonstrated the importance of simplicity, clarity, honesty, optimism, storytelling, and empathy in effective communication. By teaching these powerful techniques and providing opportunities for students to practice bringing them into their daily discourse, not only will we help to foster meaningful and supportive learning environments in schools, but we will be helping to shape effective decision-makers and future leaders of our nation.

## Shift Your Classroom Culture

### 1. Set Ground Rules

**The classroom provides an ideal opportunity for practicing civil discourse.** Work to create a *culture of civility, open-mindedness and collaboration* so that students can feel safe to share their honest opinions and ideas. In order to create

a space that is safe for the expression of differing opinions, establish ground rules for discussion.

### **A CULTURE OF EXPECTATIONS**

Begin by telling the students that one of your goals for the class is to help them learn to participate in discussion with each other. Tell them that they will be participating in different types of discussions and conversations for different purposes. Do a whole group brainstorm for the characteristics of a good discussion. You may want to ask leading questions like:

- “What’s the difference between discussing and fighting?”
- “What does it look/sound like when a respectful discussion is happening?”
- “Is it a good or a bad discussion when people yell? Interrupt? Why?”
- “Are discussions better when people have reasons and evidence to support their ideas?”
- “When do you feel the most comfortable about expressing your opinions? When do you feel uncomfortable?”
- “How can people show that they respect each other in discussions?”

Consider putting students into small groups and ask them to come up with 5 Ground Rules to ensure civil and productive class discussions. You can then have groups share out and agree on 5 or take their ideas and develop a set of Ground Rules based on their ideas (or in another creative way).

You can also generate a list of “What Respectful Discussions Look Like in Our Classroom” for display. Then post Ground Rules (and respectful discussion characteristics) and refer to them often.

## **2. Active Listening**

### **A CULTURE OF LISTENING**

A critical component of civil discourse is the ability to listen to the other person. Active listening is crucial as it promotes mutual understanding and respect. When we truly focus on what the speaker is saying, we can better grasp their perspective and respond thoughtfully. Listening respectfully and engagingly can

help to build bridges between differing viewpoints which ultimately leads to more effective and respectful communication.

If it is not already an expectation in your classroom, spend some time discussing SLANT for active listening:

- Practice having students "show you" what it looks like when they are not paying attention to you. They may slouch, turn around, put their heads down, take out their phone..... Point out examples of what you see.
- Share the SLANT chart with students and then have them show you what active listening looks like when you are speaking. Point out examples of what you see.
- Put students into pairs and have them take turns, one speaking while the other is actively listening (and demonstrating SLANT).
- Periodically revisit SLANT and/or point out when SLANT is and is not happening during the course of any given day. Point out examples of specific behaviors you see when a student is actively listening.

<b>Sit Up</b>	<b>Sitting up straight in your seat makes you more likely to pay attention to a speaker than if you are slouching in your seat.</b>
<b>Lean Forward</b>	<b>Learning forward at your desk shows that you are interested in and listening to the speaker and that the speaker has your full attention.</b>
<b>Ask Questions</b>	<b>Asking questions at appropriate times allows you to engage with a speaker and reaffirm what you have heard.</b>
<b>Nod Your Head "Yes" or "No"</b>	<b>Nodding your head "yes" or "no" shows that you are listening to the speaker and that you understand and agree or understand and disagree with what they are saying. It also shows that you are invested in what you are hearing.</b>
<b>Track Speaker With Your Eyes</b>	<b>Intentionally following the speaker with your eyes shows respect for the speaker. It can also help keep you engaged with the content and keep you from getting distracted by things around you.</b>

### 3. Discourse Across the Curriculum

## **A CULTURE OF INTENTIONALITY**

**Reflection:** Too often, teachers expect immediate answers when they ask a question but meaningful discussions take time. Give students think-time; time to explore the topic from different angles, reflect on personal ideas, gather and review relevant facts and make observations before they respond. While this may not be an effective use of time in all lessons, earmark lessons where this can happen for the students. Consider providing time for reflection; assigning journal prompts that ask open-ended, opinion questions give students the chance to reflect on and take the time to more thoroughly express their ideas privately first and then, if the assignment is structured this way, to share out their response to the class.

**Expand Discussion:** Rather than having a student respond aloud to a question at the end of a story and then moving immediately on to the next question when their answer is “correct”, take the time to ask others if they agree or disagree and why or why not? Encourage them to expand upon their peers’ responses or counter them with ideas or evidence of their own. In math or science class, ask a student to explain how they arrived at an answer. Then ask if anyone came to the result a different way and have them explain how and why they chose that method. Use these opportunities to draw students’ attention to the way participants in the discussion used discourse skills to state facts and opinions and listen to the facts and opinions of others, and to the possibility of changing perspectives. This type of low stakes discussion not only provides opportunities to practice critical thinking, clear communication and civil disagreement but it can contribute to a culture of trust among peers where students feel safe to express dissenting ideas.

**Vary the Types of Discussion:** Plan for opportunities for paired, small group and all-class discussions, as each of these require different skills and give students opportunities to practice civil discourse in diverse situations.

### 4. Ask Open-Ended Questions

## A CULTURE OF MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS

Fostering critical thinking skills in students is a foundational goal in our schools, and one of the most effective strategies to achieve this is through the use of open-ended questions in the classroom. Open-ended questions, unlike closed-ended questions, do not have a single correct answer and require students to engage in higher-order thinking processes. They are designed to elicit more than a simple factual response and encourage students to elaborate, analyze, and synthesize information. For instance, instead of asking, "For whom was the capital of the United States named?" which requires a factual answer ("George Washington"), a more open-ended question like, "How does the choice to name the capital of the United States after George Washington reflect the values and priorities of the early American leaders?" prompts students to explore and discuss various aspects of the topic.

Open-ended questions foster critical thinking by stimulating curiosity, offering opportunities to evaluate various perspectives and providing a platform for developing the skills for solving complex problems. By confronting questions that require more than rote memorization, students learn to identify issues, generate potential solutions.

Open-ended questions also encourage reflective thinking, a crucial component of critical thinking. Time for reflection promotes the process of metacognition, or understanding of one's own thoughts, prompting students to reflect on their thought processes, think through in order to understand their reasoning, evaluate their conclusions and articulate their points of view. Collectively, these skills contribute to more effective and deeper critical thinking, which is essential for academic success and problem-solving in various contexts.

Open-ended questions are also critically important to promoting civil discourse, as they often require students to engage in discussions with peers who may have differing viewpoints. This form of communication is integral to critical thinking, as it involves presenting arguments, listening to others, and considering alternative viewpoints.

[Open-Ended Question Stems for Educators](#)

Intentionally plan for open-ended questions and the discussions that will result. Socratic questioning is a communication style that allows a person to stimulate another person's thinking through open-ended questions. By using Socratic questioning, teachers promote independent, higher-level thinking in their students, giving them ownership of what they are learning through discussion, debate and analysis of material.

Consider using these question stems to help you develop critical thinking questions instead of just comprehension questions:

### **Clarification**

- I'm not sure I understand (character, action, event, description, purpose)
- Tell me more about (character, action, event).
- What evidence supports your viewpoint/claim?

### **Cause and Effect**

- Why do you think (event, reaction) happened?
- How could (event, reaction) have been prevented?
- Do you think (event, reaction) would happen that way again? Why?

### **Compare / Contrast**

- What is (event) similar to in our own time?
- How does this (incident/situation/event) remind you of (current event)?

### **Point of View / Perspective**

- Are there other ways to look at this?
- That's a good point. What about...?

### **Tips for using open-ended questions:**

- Plan questions with intentionality.
- Draw as many students as possible into the discussion.
- Allow time (at least thirty seconds) for students to respond.
- Follow up on students' responses.
- Periodically summarize key points that have been discussed.

## 5. Classroom Layout

### A CULTURE OF COLLABORATION

A well thought-out classroom layout can help promote student engagement and support effective collaboration and communication.

#### Consider the physical layout of your classroom:

Where do you stand during a discussion? Shift from a “sage on the stage” to a “guide on the side”. Move around the room or be seated as well, rather than standing at the front of the class while students sit in rows in front of you.

Consider how the set up of the student desks can contribute to civil discourse:

- Are they brainstorming? Think about having them sit facing each other, boardroom style, all around a long table/series of desks. This can be replicated to create multiple small group boardroom settings.
- Are they debating an argument or is it a whole group discussion? If student desks are facing each other (facing-off), this may give more of a confrontational feel. Consider putting student desks/chairs in a circle so that there is a sense of equal power and voice.
- A fishbowl layout (a circle within a circle) or modified fishbowl (a circle within a half circle) allow a smaller group to engage in discussion while a larger group listens and roles can quickly be shifted by having students move between the inner and outer circles.

## **ELA Lesson 1: Context**

## Simple, Clear and True

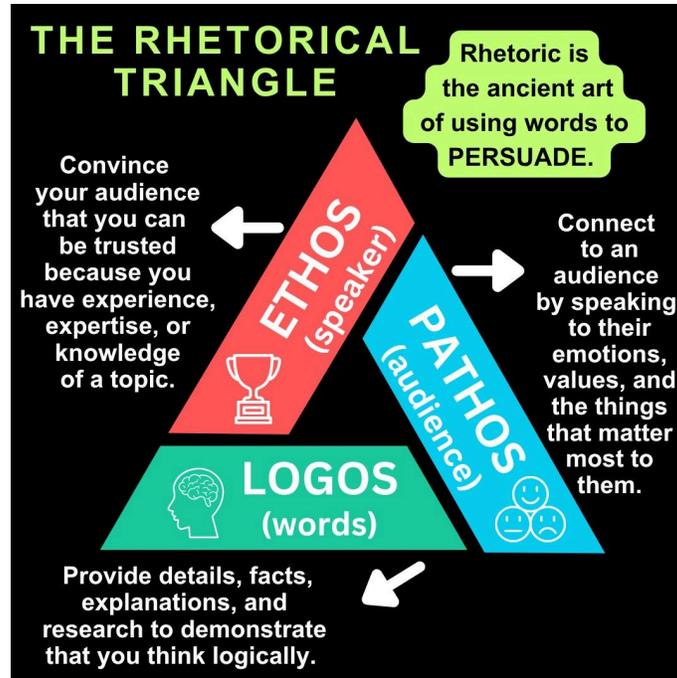
President Ronald Reagan is often celebrated, not only for his policies, but also for his remarkable ability to engage and connect with the American people through his speeches. Known as "*The Great Communicator*," Reagan's approach to communication was marked by his masterful use of language—*simple, clear, and true*. His speeches reflected his deep understanding of his audience and the importance of connecting on a personal level as well as the power of using accessible language. Reagan's speeches were crafted to resonate with everyday Americans, breaking down complex issues into easily grasped concepts while remaining grounded in honesty and authenticity. President Reagan's clear, simple, and truthful communication style made him a masterful communicator and shaped his effectiveness as a leader.

In the short excerpt below from a radio address by the citizen Ronald Reagan in 1978, two years before he became President of the United States, it is easy to sense the heartfelt place from which President Reagan spoke and understand the reason why his audiences were so drawn to him.

## [In His Own Voice](#)

### Rhetorical Triangle: Ethos, Pathos and Logos

President Reagan's speeches were also exemplary in their use of rhetorical strategies, including integrating appeals to *ethos, pathos, and logos* (credibility, emotion, logic) to persuade his audience: his personable nature helped build a strong rapport and establish trust with listeners, he had a remarkable ability to tap into the American people's hopes, fears, and aspirations, sharing personal anecdotes and stories that resonated with the public, and he simplified complex concepts into straightforward, logical arguments that were easy for the average citizen to understand.



## Rhetorical Devices

President Reagan also used a variety of *rhetorical devices* in his speeches which further made them more memorable and persuasive. Techniques such as repetition for emphasis, analogies to simplify concepts and anecdotes to illustrate points- and even poetic devices like metaphor and alliteration- further enhanced his arguments, making them more impactful and engaging. These skillful use of rhetorical devices combined with his appeal to ethos, pathos and logos and his use of simple, clear and truthful language not only ensured that his policies would be effectively communicated but also that his audience would be deeply moved.

## ELA Lesson 1 (MS): How We Communicate For Educators: Preparing to Teach the Lesson

1. Refamiliarize yourself with the characteristics that made President Reagan The Great Communicator (*Teacher support can be found in the OVERVIEW and CONTEXT sections of the course.*)

2. Refamiliarize yourself with the SLANT graphic. Use this link to create an **EDUCATOR/STUDENT COPY** of the SLANT graphic.

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ksiTjXjq67IkiGQgwS0Gg\\_6Lq3oBcsZsfxcnXF5sqgU/copy](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ksiTjXjq67IkiGQgwS0Gg_6Lq3oBcsZsfxcnXF5sqgU/copy)

3. Familiarize yourself with Reagan's Challenger speech in light of those characteristics. Use this link to view the **EDUCATOR COPY** of the speech with comments:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ybGumx8GlkAu4HRHhtLkaN\\_y1Qf5Gxar1Q2E7qn6MFA/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ybGumx8GlkAu4HRHhtLkaN_y1Qf5Gxar1Q2E7qn6MFA/edit?usp=sharing)

4. Familiarize yourself with components of the Rhetorical Triangle and Reagan's application in the Challenger Speech. Use this link to create an **EDUCATOR/STUDENT COPY** of the Rhetorical Triangle:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1M3jFuXLEQaEmZx5ODI-iFACid0HywcYyij7cOGSHWF0/copy>

5. Link to create **STUDENT COPY** of Challenger Speech:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1gTmPdB1ROlloZw1HwaLRFb4Ut816QTfL-zLCbUb5WWs/copy>

6. Links to **VIDEOS** for use with the lesson: (*Please note that for some videos, smaller excerpts will be shown to students and provided in the Civil Discourse LESSON*)

Whopper commercial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cPxx2DikIA>

George Washington Challenger commercial:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OnQXRxW9VcQ>

It's Morning Again in America commercial:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pUMqic2IcWA>

Archival Video: Space Shuttle Challenger Disaster:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yibNEcn-4yQ>

President Reagan's Challenger Disaster Speech:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qa7icmqgsow&t=72s>

7. Link to create **STUDENT COPY** of Independent Practice (Google doc)

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Y3i8SeHbWyR7uguWmOsuP Ome-d1jzb79x JANPqeHdA/copy>

## **For Students: Tap Into Prior Knowledge**

1. Review ground rules for disagreement.
2. Review guidelines for active listening: SLANT

## **Lesson Objectives**

1. Students will be able to differentiate between and explain how good communicators appeal to an audience's ethos, pathos and logos.
2. Students will be able to identify elements of President Reagan's speech which demonstrate simple, clear and true and explain why they helped make the speech effective.
3. Students will be able to identify elements of President Reagan's speech which appeal to Ethos, Pathos and Logos.

## **Introducing Discourse in the Classroom**

Opening a discussion with students about their fear of expressing honest opinions in front of others can be enlightening and empowering. Many students may feel hesitant to voice their true thoughts due to concerns about judgment, conflict, or social repercussions. By addressing these fears, teachers create a safe space where students can explore the reasons behind their apprehension and

understand that their voices matter. This conversation naturally leads into a broader discussion about civil discourse—an essential skill for respectful and productive communication. Emphasizing the importance of civil discourse helps students appreciate how thoughtfully and respectfully expressing differing opinions fosters a more dynamic learning environment where students not only enhance their own communication skills but also contribute to a culture of mutual respect and understanding.

1. Pose this question:

***What worries and fears prevent students from openly sharing their ideas or expressing their opinions in school or in social settings?***

This can be done in a number of ways but the goal is to give students the opportunity to answer honestly. Here are a couple of ideas for ways to do this:

- write the question on a large sheet of paper and have students write responses on post-its and stick them to the larger paper
- have students respond anonymously in a digital poll and share results with the group (for example, Slido.com offers a free, open-text poll option)
- put students in small groups and have them generate a list of reasons to share with the bigger group

2. Briefly go over findings, asking students to elaborate on the reasons that were shared and establish that these concerns are the reason for this dive into Discourse.

3. Define "discourse", the goal of "civil discourse", and why it matters

4. Introduce The Great Communicator, President Ronald Reagan, as foundational in our approach to DISCOURSE

*(Teacher support for definitions, rationale, goals and information about President Reagan's connection to the course can be found in the OVERVIEW and CONTEXT sections of the course.)*

## **Anticipatory Set**

Begin by showing this commercial (or similar commercial that has obvious attempts to appeal to an audience/make connections) without any introduction. (link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cPxx2DikIA>)

Then, lead the class in a whole group share-out asking questions like:

- To whom do you think this commercial was "speaking"?
- What emotions do you think the producers were attempting to "stir up"?
- To whom do you think this commercial does not speak?

Then introduce President Reagan in the context of "speaking to the audience": President Ronald Reagan was considered the Great Communicator because his communication style was **SIMPLE, CLEAR and TRUE**. He connected with his audience and made them feel as though he was talking to them when he spoke. The President was honest about the issues he spoke of and used words that every American could understand and relate to. Because of this, audiences trusted President Reagan and the decisions he made.

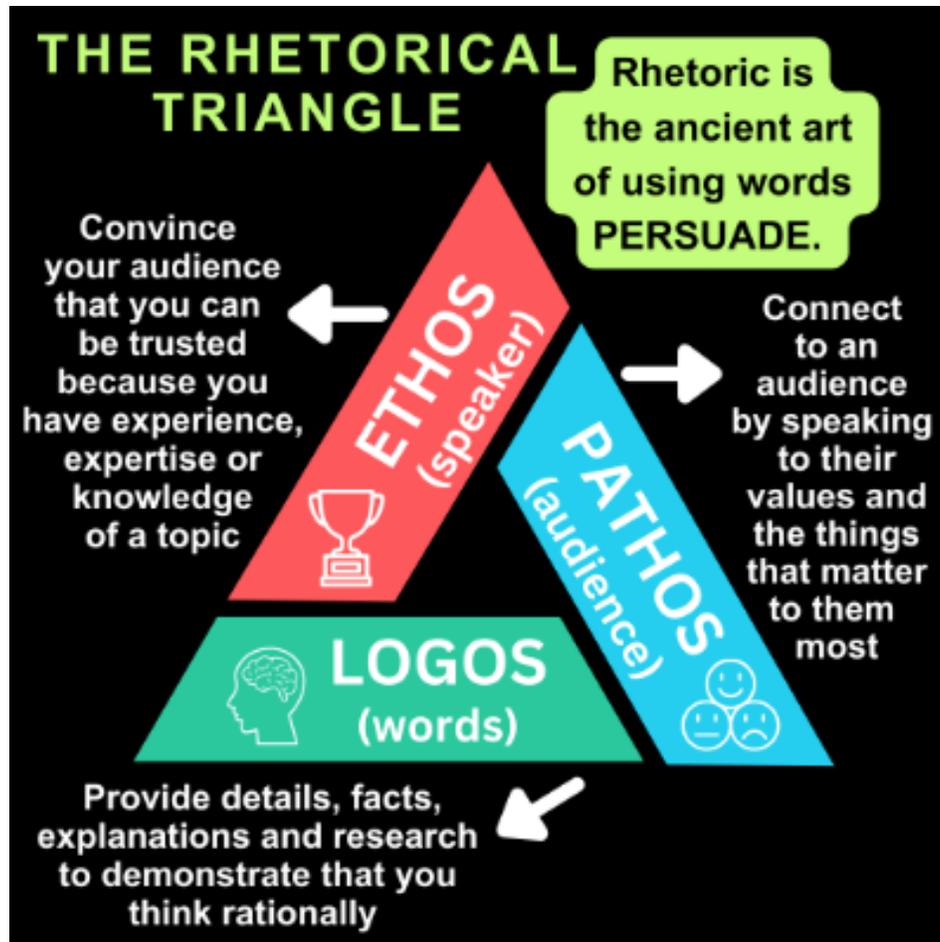
Share these words of advice from President Reagan with the students (or post them!):

*"Talk to your audience, not over their heads or through them. Don't try to talk in a special language... just use normal everyday words."*

*"My actor's instinct simply told me to speak the truth as I saw and felt it."*

## **Methodology Part 1: Introduce the Overarching Concept**

1. Introduce the RHETORICAL TRIANGLE: A speaker's ability to move their audience depends on their ability to appeal to their audience in three areas: **ETHOS** (convince audience that you are an expert/can be trusted), **PATHOS** (connect to audience values) and **LOGOS** (provide details and facts)



2. Advertisers focus on their audience and then use images and words that connect with them.

Encourage the students to consider what they see and hear and even "unspoken messages" in the following commercials:

- [The Original George Washington Challenger Commercial](#)\* (or similar commercial that has obvious attempts to appeal to audience/make connections)
- [Reagan Presidential Ad: "It's Morning Again in America"](#)

Show commercials (ending with the Reagan commercial) and then discuss as a whole group the ways (sights, sounds, ideas) that the commercials appeal to *ethos, pathos and logos*.

## Methodology Part 2: Connecting to "The Great Communicator"

In his speeches, President Reagan was able to effectively appeal to the audience in each of the three ways which made him effective.

1. Explain that the students will be listening to and looking at a speech President Reagan made after the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster. Give some context (first teacher on board, students all over the country watching in their classrooms) and then show a video of the explosion **0:00-1:18**).

[Archival: Space Shuttle Challenger News](#)

2. Briefly discuss as a whole group or in small groups with whole group share-out: Who do you predict was the "audience" for President Reagan's speech and why do you think this?

3. Show the video of President Reagan's Challenger Disaster speech:

[President Reagan's Challenger Disaster Speech](#)

Then:

As a whole group, have students share-out examples of how it demonstrated simple, clear, true language and ways he appealed to ethos, pathos, logos and whether the words he used addressed his audience.. (What did they see? Hear?)

4. Hand out copies (or share digital copies) of the **text** of the Challenger speech. In pairs or small groups, have students highlight and label specific words and phrases that demonstrate President Reagan's simple, clear and true language and appeals to ethos, pathos and logos.

5. Come back as a whole group and have student share out specific examples in the text of the speech. Consider marking up speech as students share in a way that whole class can see. (A "marked up" teacher copy of the speech can be found in the Preparing to Teach section)

*\*In addition to words that evoke emotion, point out the concise and precise words used and help students understand how that makes the message clear\**

## Lesson Extension

Students may use this activity called to further practice concepts learned in the lesson.

- Link to create **STUDENT COPY** of Independent Practice (Google doc)

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Y3i8SeHbWyR7uguWmOsuP Ome-d1jzb79xJANPqeHdA/copy>

## ELA Lesson 1 (HS): How We Communicate

### For Educators: Preparing to Teach the Lesson

1. Refamiliarize yourself with the characteristics that made President Reagan The Great Communicator (*Teacher support can be found in the OVERVIEW and CONTEXT sections of the course.*)

2. Refamiliarize yourself with the SLANT graphic. Use this link to create an **EDUCATOR/STUDENT COPY** of the SLANT graphic.

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ksiTXjhq67IkiGOgwSOGg\\_6Lq3oBcsZsfxcnXF5sqgU/copy](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ksiTXjhq67IkiGOgwSOGg_6Lq3oBcsZsfxcnXF5sqgU/copy)

3. Familiarize yourself with Reagan's Farewell Address in light of those characteristics. Use this link to view the **EDUCATOR COPY** of the speech with comments:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RbXx6SYvcM67V\\_6Sz6t2e5ARlhLRwTrH3eb0thFEpNU/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RbXx6SYvcM67V_6Sz6t2e5ARlhLRwTrH3eb0thFEpNU/edit?usp=sharing)

4. Familiarize yourself with the Rhetorical Triangle. Use this link to create an **EDUCATOR/STUDENT COPY** of the Rhetorical Triangle:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1M3jFuXLEQaEmZx5ODI-iFACid0HywcYyij7cOGSHWF0/copy>

5. Familiarize yourself with the list of Rhetorical Devices and Reagan's application of them in the Farewell Address. Use this link to create a **EDUCATOR/STUDENT COPY** of the Rhetorical Devices:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RDpyEtwKQ60dQZ9bVL4U3NAyZ13AscYUBsS5afsOeuo/copy>

6. Link to create **STUDENT COPY** of Farewell Address:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZbxnjyN-L3crV8hIqKK2QHX9CV00K6iUfFwgem4QAGQ/copy>

7. Link to create **STUDENT COPY** of Identifying Rhetorical Devices activity

- Identifying Rhetorical Devices: DEFINE THE DEVICE (missing the definition)

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ybwMc799OiqhBxpf4dzXtJpPy7Xcg-3Xz-nQRIA40oU/copy>

- Identifying Rhetorical Devices: GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF THE DEVICE (missing the example)

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1otGvAWHwC\\_6oqinKvh52hEAbiYNxivyPwACSpB4DTTvU/copy](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1otGvAWHwC_6oqinKvh52hEAbiYNxivyPwACSpB4DTTvU/copy)

8. Links to **VIDEOS** for use with the lesson: *(Please note that for some videos, smaller excerpts will be shown to students and provided in the Civil Discourse LESSON)*

[President Reagan's Farewell Address to the Nation](#)

[President Reagan's Farewell Address to the Nation- 6 min clip](#)

[President Reagan's Challenger Disaster Speech](#)

9. Link to create **STUDENT COPY** of Independent Practice.

Device/Definition/Example can be cut into strips, shuffled and then matched by students. *(Please note that this is also provided as a digital activity in the LMS)*

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Bo66ts7\\_Ls-HGWMMY7RAyDMYGSaBFB6DJSDSCFqYR0/copy](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Bo66ts7_Ls-HGWMMY7RAyDMYGSaBFB6DJSDSCFqYR0/copy)

**For Students: Tap Into Prior Knowledge**

1. Review ground rules for disagreement
2. Review guidelines for active listening: SLANT

\*Rhetorical Triangle: An mini-version of the Middle School lesson on the Rhetorical Triangle (appeals to *ETHOS*, *PATHOS* and *LOGOS*) will be used in the Anticipatory Set for this lesson. Refer to the Middle School lesson for additional context and ideas.

## Lesson Objectives

1. Students will be able to define a list of rhetorical devices used in speech making.
2. Students will be able to recognize rhetorical devices and appeals to ethos, pathos and logos used in select speeches by President Reagan.

## Introducing Discourse in the Classroom

Opening a discussion with students about their fear of expressing honest opinions in front of others can be enlightening and empowering. Many students may feel hesitant to voice their true thoughts due to concerns about judgment, conflict, or social repercussions. By addressing these fears, teachers create a safe space where students can explore the reasons behind their apprehension and understand that their voices matter. This conversation naturally leads into a broader discussion about civil discourse—an essential skill for respectful and productive communication. Emphasizing the importance of civil discourse helps students appreciate how thoughtfully and respectfully expressing differing opinions fosters a more dynamic learning environment where students not only enhance their own communication skills but also contribute to a culture of mutual respect and understanding.

1. Pose this question:

## *What worries and fears prevent students from openly sharing their ideas or expressing their opinions in school or in social settings?*

This can be done in a number of ways but the goal is to give students the opportunity to answer honestly. Here are a couple of ideas for ways to do this:

- write the question on a large sheet of paper and have students write responses on post-its and stick them to the larger paper
- have students respond anonymously in a digital poll and share results with the group (for example, Slido.com offers a free, open-text poll option)
- put students in small groups and have them generate a list of reasons to share with the bigger group

2. Briefly go over findings, asking students to elaborate on the reasons that were shared. and establish that these concerns are the reason for this dive into Discourse.

3. Define "discourse", the goal of "civil discourse", and why it matters

4. Introduce The Great Communicator, President Ronald Reagan, as foundational in our approach to DISCOURSE

*(Teacher support for definitions, rationale, goals and information about President Reagan's connection to the course can be found in the OVERVIEW and CONTEXT sections of the course.)*

## **Anticipatory Set**

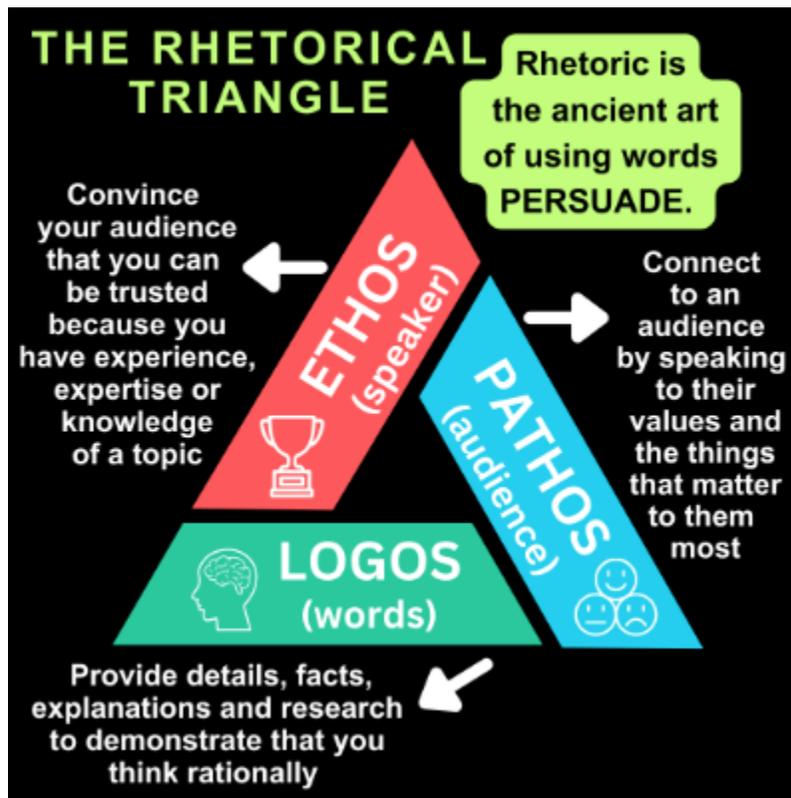
1. Begin by showing this commercial (or similar commercial that has obvious attempts to appeal to an audience/make connections) without any introduction.  
(link: [📺 Whopper Whopper \(Extended\)](#))

Then, lead the class in a whole group share-out asking questions like:

- To whom do you think this commercial was "speaking"?

- What emotions do you think the producers were attempting to "stir up"?
- To whom do you think this commercial does not speak?

2. Introduce the RHETORICAL TRIANGLE: A speaker's ability to move their audience depends on their ability to appeal to their audience in three areas: **ETHOS** (convince audience that you are an expert/can be trusted), **PATHOS** (connect to audience values) and **LOGOS** (provide details and facts)



3. Advertisers focus on their audience and then use images and words that connect with them.

Encourage the students to consider what they see and hear and even "unspoken messages" in the following commercials:

- [The Original George Washington Challenger Commercial](#)\* (or similar commercial that has obvious attempts to appeal to audience/make connections)
- [Reagan Presidential Ad: "It's Morning Again in America"](#)

Show commercials (ending with the Reagan commercial) and then discuss as a whole group the ways (sights, sounds, ideas) that the commercials appeal to *ethos, pathos and logos*.

## Methodology Part 1: Introduce the Overarching Concept

Rhetoric is the art of using language to *persuade* and *engage* an audience. In one way, this means appealing to the different aspects of the rhetorical triangle: ethos, pathos, and logos. But another way speakers persuade and engage their listeners is through the use of "tools" called rhetorical devices. Speeches that are carefully crafted using rhetorical devices like metaphors, parallelism, and alliteration make these appeals more powerful and make the speaker's message more effective and impactful.

1. Begin by displaying a list of the rhetorical devices for the lesson, without definitions or examples, assuring students that there are some that they have already learned and are familiar with. Begin by having students point out any devices they recognize and define or give an example of the device. *At this point, do not formally define the devices for the students.*

2. Once students have verbally shared out any devices that are familiar to them, have students work in pairs to write a definition for each device based on the example provided:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ybwMc799OiqhBxpf4dzXtJpPy7Xcg-3Xz-nQRIA40oU/copy>

\*If your students are well versed in these devices and are familiar and comfortable with their definitions, consider doing the same type of pair work, but instead provide them the doc with the definition and have them craft examples:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1otGvAWHwC\\_6oqinKvh52hEAbiYNxiyPwACSpB4DTTvU/copy](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1otGvAWHwC_6oqinKvh52hEAbiYNxiyPwACSpB4DTTvU/copy)

3. Return to the whole group and have students share aloud the definitions they wrote. Then provide a formal definition for each (students should copy the definitions in their notes).

## Methodology Part 2: Connecting to "The Great Communicator"

In his speeches, President Reagan was able to effectively appeal to the audience in each of the three ways (ethos, pathos and logos) AND he utilized many of the rhetorical devices, which made him a very effective speaker.

1. Explain that the students will be listening to and looking at President Reagan's Farewell Address to the Nation upon leaving the Presidency at the end of his term.
2. Briefly discuss as a whole group or in small groups with whole group share-out: Who do you think was the audience for President Reagan's speech and why do you think this?
3. Show the excerpt of the video of President Reagan's Farewell Address:

Then:

As a whole group, have students share-out examples of how it demonstrated simple, clear, true language and ways he appealed to ethos, pathos, logos. (What did they see? Hear?)

4. Hand out copies (or share digital copies) of the **text** of the Farewell Address speech. In pairs or small groups, have students highlight examples of rhetorical devices and specific words and phrases that demonstrate President Reagan's appeals to ethos, pathos, logos.
5. Come back as a whole group and have student share out specific examples in the text of the speech. Consider marking up speech as students share in a way that whole class can see. (A "marked up" teacher copy of the speech can be found in the Preparing to Teach section)

*\*In addition to words that evoke emotion, point out any concise and precise words used and help students understand how that makes the message clear\**

[President Reagan Farewell speech 6 min clip](#)

## **Lesson Extension**

1. This activity can be done by students independently or in pairs. The sheet contains DEVICES, DEFINITIONS and EXAMPLES that should be cut into strips and shuffled. Students should work to match the three components correctly.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Bo66ts7Ls-HGWMMMy7RAyDMyGSaBFB6DJSDFcYR0/copy>

AND/OR

2. Using President Reagan's address to the Nation after the Challenger disaster, have students highlight examples of rhetorical devices and specific words and phrases that demonstrate President Reagan's appeals to ethos, pathos and logos.

Link to the text of the Challenger speech:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1gTmPdB1ROlloZw1HwaLRFb4Ut816QTfL-zLCbUb5WWs/copy>

## **Social Studies Lesson 1: Context**

### **The Reagan Doctrine and Civil Disagreement**

In the “Simple, Clear and True” lesson, students are introduced to the effectiveness of President Reagan’s simple, clear and honest language as well as the power of rhetorical language and appeals to emotions, values and logic to communicate effectively to his audience. This lesson will give students the opportunity to learn the ways these communication techniques can be used when the goal is persuasion and/or civil disagreement.

The connection between civil discourse and The Reagan Doctrine, particularly the principles of “confront boldly” and “peace through strength”, lies in the balance between being both assertive and respectful. The Reagan Doctrine emphasized a firm stance against adversaries, advocating for a **bold confrontation** of threats while maintaining a readiness to **back arguments with solid evidence**. President Reagan’s strategy of “**peace through strength**” highlighted the need for strong defense to prevent threats and maintain stability.



## Applying Features of the Reagan Doctrine to Discourse

In civil discourse, this translates to the need for students to be able to state their views clearly and confidently without being aggressive. And just as the Reagan Doctrine advocated for preparedness, engaging in civil discourse requires

participants to be well-informed and prepared to defend their views with reason and evidence. By following these principles, students can address differing opinions firmly while still being respectful, leading to a more meaningful exchange of ideas.

The ability to disagree civilly is crucial in any democratic society, as it ensures that diverse perspectives can be heard and considered without devolving into conflict or division. Civil discourse fosters constructive dialogue and mutual respect, allowing individuals to engage with opposing viewpoints thoughtfully. The use of persuasion and rhetorical devices explored in the previous lesson is an important way to strengthen one's position in a disagreement. Effective persuasion involves presenting arguments in a way that is both logical and relatable, often utilizing rhetorical techniques such as analogies, metaphors, and reasoning to clarify and emphasize key ideas. By appealing to shared values (*pathos*), presenting logical arguments (*logos*) and using clear and compelling language, individuals can articulate their positions more convincingly.

## **Social Studies Lesson 1: How We Disagree**

### **For Educators: Preparing to Teach the Lesson**

1. Refamiliarize yourself with the characteristics that made President Reagan The Great Communicator (*Teacher support can be found in the OVERVIEW and CONTEXT sections of the course.*)

2. Refamiliarize yourself with the SLANT graphic. Use this link to create an **EDUCATOR/STUDENT COPY** of the SLANT graphic.

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ksiTXjhq67IkiGQgwS0Gg\\_6Lq3oBcsZsfxcnXF5sqgU/copy](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ksiTXjhq67IkiGQgwS0Gg_6Lq3oBcsZsfxcnXF5sqgU/copy)

3. Refamiliarize yourself with the Rhetorical Triangle. Use this link to create an **EDUCATOR/STUDENT COPY** of the Rhetorical Triangle (if needed)

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1M3jFuXLEQaEmZx5ODI-iFACid0HywcYyij7cOGSHWF0/copy>

4. Refamiliarize yourself with the list of rhetorical devices. Use this link to create an **EDUCATOR/STUDENT COPY** of the rhetorical devices (if needed)

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RDpyEtwKQ60dQZ9bVL4U3NAyZ13AscYUBsS5afsOeuo/copy>

5. Link to create **EDUCATOR/STUDENT COPY** of Disagreement Stems:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/15hOa9kw1cpAIKxHzjTwFnQ0tQbpsDyU-fhzswOM0J7s/copy>

6. Prepare "Big Paper" posters (or Google docs) with discussion statements.

## **For Students: Tap Into Prior Knowledge**

1. Review ground rules for disagreement
2. Review guidelines for active listening: SLANT

3. Review the Rhetorical Triangle (appeals to *ETHOS*, *PATHOS* and *LOGOS*) and rhetorical devices.

- <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1M3jFuXLEQaEmZx5ODI-iFACid0HywcYyij7cOGSHWF0/copy>
- <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RDpyEtwKQ60dQZ9bVL4U3NAyZ13AscYUBsS5afsOeuo/copy>

## Lesson Objectives

1. Students will be able to recognize the difference in tone of civil and uncivil disagreements.
2. Students will be able to use disagreement stems to civilly disagree with peers who have differing opinions.

## Introduction

When we find ourselves in a disagreement, our goal is to sway others to see our perspective by using solid arguments and persuasive techniques to effectively communicate our point of view. By appealing to another person's sense of ethos, pathos, and logos, as well as using various rhetorical devices to more effectively express our point of view, we can make our arguments more effective and engaging.

But in any disagreement, it's crucial not only to present solid arguments but also to maintain civility and respect throughout the exchange. While we strive to persuade others by focusing on the strength of our points, it is equally important to avoid personal attacks and to maintain a respectful tone. Engaging in a respectful manner helps keep the discussion constructive and allows for a more productive exchange of ideas. By challenging ideas and not attacking the person we disagree with, we can foster an environment where differing viewpoints can be discussed openly. And at the end of a civil disagreement, while neither side

may come to agree with the other's point of view, each can feel heard and respected.

## Anticipatory Set

1. Begin by "modeling" typical disagreement dialogues between young people by having a couple of students engage in a dialogue with you. You can do this by picking a couple of students ahead of time and giving them a "sentence starter" in which they will fill in the blank to create their "piece" of the dialogue:

*(for example)*

Student: "Taylor Swift is the best singer."

Teacher: "No way-she's the worst and I'm tired of hearing her fans talk about her all the time."

Student: "Purple is my favorite color."

Teacher: "Ew. That's such an ugly color. Nobody likes that color."

Student: "I love to swim. Do you want to come with me?"

Teacher: "No! Swimming is boring. Why would I want to go with you?"

2. Whole group: what do you notice about those conversations (*negative words, rude, shuts down conversation...*)

## Methodology Part 1: "The Great Communicator" and His Friend Tip

The friendship between President Ronald Reagan and Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill is a great example of how personal relationships can help overcome big differences in opinions when disagreements are respectful. President Reagan, a

conservative Republican, and Speaker of the House O'Neill, a very liberal Democrat, often debated policies and ideas without making it personal. They focused on discussing their views rather than attacking each other as individuals; as President Reagan shared,

*"... have it out on the issues rather than on each other".*

This way, they could argue about issues passionately while still being respectful. Despite their political disagreements, they had a very friendly relationship outside of work, enjoying their shared Irish background and stories.

The relationship between President Ronald Reagan and Tip O'Neill demonstrates that concentrating on the issues rather than personal attacks can lead to more effective and respectful discussions. By separating individuals from their ideas and using language that is respectful, it's possible to have strong disagreements while still maintaining civility and openness to ideas.

[Remarks honoring Tip O'Neill](#)

## **Methodology Part 2: Civil Disagreement**

1. Explain that the goal of Civil Disagreement is to learn how to respectfully disagree with someone's opinions and effectively communicate their own

- Remind students to keep in mind the Rhetorical Triangle (appealing to an "audience" sense of ethos, pathos and logos) when they are attempting to convince the other person that their point of view is the "correct" one.
- Introduce DISAGREEMENT STEMS
- Practice using stems in a whole group setting using the same examples from the Anticipatory Set
- Discuss how the tone was changed by using respectful disagreement stems

**HERE ARE 2 IDEAS FOR COMPLETING THIS ACTIVITY:**

## #1: Big Paper Gallery Walk

Display the following statements (or generate others) in the center of large papers/ posters spread around the room:

*Pineapple belongs on pizza.*

*Homework benefits students.*

*Zoos should be outlawed.*

*Video games are unhealthy for teens.*

*All sports should be coed.*

- Establish the ground rules: A) students will work IN SILENCE and that they can only respond to the statements or other students statements/responses *in writing*. B) if they agree with something, they can use the stem “I agree/I think this is true because...” and that if they disagree they should utilize the stems from the anchor chart when writing their responses. C) students should draw a line from the statement they are responding to to their own response (this will help track conversation chain)
- By their statements, students are working to both CIVILLY DISAGREE AND PERSUADE OTHERS TO SEE THEIR PERSPECTIVE.
- For 10-15 mins., students move around the room organically between the various posters and write statements IN SILENCE in response to and/or disagree with statements (either the original statement or classmates’ responses)

## #2: DIGITAL "Big Paper"

- Create a *different* Google doc for each statement (above in red) and give students editing access.
- Establish the ground rules: A) students will work IN SILENCE and that they can only respond to the statements or other students statements/responses *in writing*. B) if they agree with something, they can use the stem “I agree/I think this is true because...” and that if they disagree they should utilize the stems from the anchor chart when writing their responses. C) (Students can choose or be assigned a text color to "track" conversation chains.

- By their statements, students are working to both CIVILLY DISAGREE AND PERSUADE OTHERS TO SEE THEIR PERSPECTIVE.
- For 10-15 mins., students move between the shared docs and write statements IN SILENCE in response to and/or disagree with statements (either the original statement or classmates' responses)

3. When the time is up, put students into small groups and give them a Big Paper (or assign them one of the shared docs) and ask them to read through the chains of responses and discuss what they notice (tone, examples of *ethos*, *pathos*, *logos*, examples of less-than-civil disagreement etc.).

4. Whole group share out of their findings.

## Lesson Extension

Provide students with the following prompt and ask them to Reflect and Write:

*Choose 1 of the statements from the Big Paper activity that you strongly disagree with and write a disagreement response utilizing a disagreement stem and providing details to explain your point of view.*

For further practice with Disagreement Stems and verbalizing disagreement, you can follow up on another day by having students volunteer to read their opinion aloud and permit students to respectfully disagree using Disagreement Stems.

## ELA Lesson 2: Context

### Present Like the President: Be An "Actor"!

*For years, I've heard the question: "How could an actor be president?"  
I've sometimes wondered how you could be president and not be an actor. -President  
Ronald Reagan*

President Reagan earned the title of The Great Communicator because he naturally and successfully combined his leadership skills with his acting skills; not only did he understand the national and international issues of the times, as a president must, but he also knew how to impactfully communicate his messages to the American people. President Reagan was professionally trained as an actor and a spokesperson and so he was very talented. So learn your lines like an actor would!

President Reagan **utilized notecards** when he made speeches: sometimes the notecards had one-liners or funny jokes or stories he wanted to share with the audience and sometimes the speech itself was written on notecards. Using notecards is a good compromise between reading your speech, which President Reagan said, *“does not hold an audience”* and trying to *“memorize every word you want to say.”*

President Reagan also utilized **marked up notecards** to help maintain the pace of his speech. By underlining and “chunking” sentences and phrases, the President could emphasize small group words so that they were understandable and gave his audience a moment to think about what he said. It also allowed President Reagan to focus on **smaller bits of text at a time so that he could look up and make eye contact** with the audience. This technique can help a speaker not to lose his or her place when moving between reading from the cards and looking up at the audience.

[The Notes video](#)

## **Present Like the President: Know Your Audience!**

Students learned in previous lessons the way President Reagan used simple, clear and honest language as well as rhetorical language and appeals to emotions, values and logic to communicate effectively to his audiences. The Presentation lesson will focus on concrete ways students can improve their presentations by modeling after the President’s techniques.

A fundamental rule that Reagan called his “little secret” was that a speaker should always talk *to* his audience, *“not over their heads or through them.”* The President focused on the interests and concerns of his audiences and spoke as if he was *“talking to a group of friends... not to millions, but to a handful of people in a living room...”*. This “conversational” style created a connection and a sense of trust between the audience and the President.

Knowing the audience means knowing what they need to hear. President Reagan stated, *“There was a specific audience out there I could see in my mind, and I sort of aimed my words at them.”*

Whether it was in a small social setting or in an address to the Nation, President Reagan enjoyed making people laugh and his sense of humor served him well. Throughout his political career, President Reagan used that humor to soften the impact of serious messages or moments, like when, upon seeing his wife Nancy just before being wheeled into surgery after an assassination attempt he told her, “Honey, I forgot to duck”. He enjoyed making jokes at his own expense, recognizing that self-deprecating humor not only amused an audience but also served as a way to deflect criticism. So President Reagan used humor to counter personal attacks, particularly those about his age and the fact that he was, at the time, the oldest sitting president ever; for example when asked about his age by the moderator of a debate he famously joked, “I will not make age an issue of this campaign. I am not going to exploit, for political purposes, my opponent’s youth and inexperience.” Similarly, When a Democratic presidential nominee accused him of “government by amnesia,” the President Reagan responded by saying, “I found that remark about my alleged amnesia to be unwarranted. If only I could recall who made it.” In these ways, Reagan always had the last, and funniest, word.

And President Reagan's use of humor fostered strong connections with the American people, as he came across as genuine and relatable and his words put people at ease. His naturally cheerful disposition coupled with his ability to laugh at himself and engage in light-hearted banter helped to bridge the gap between politician and the public; the public trusted him and therefore had confidence in

the messages that followed the humor. The heartfelt way he used humor was a powerful rhetorical tool in his “The Great Communicator” toolbelt.



## ELA Lesson 2: The Art of Effective Presentation

### For Educators: Preparing to Teach the Lesson

1. Refamiliarize yourself with the characteristics that made President Reagan The Great Communicator (*Teacher support can be found in the OVERVIEW and CONTEXT sections of the course.*)

2. Have Reagan quotes prepared for display. (*included in lesson in blue font*)

3. Familiarize yourself with President Reagan's Pointe du Hoc speech (text and video) in terms of the focus of the lesson: utilizing notecards in speech making to "chunk" thoughts for ease of emphasis and pause and to facilitate eye contact.

4. Link to create **STUDENT COPY** of "Know Your Audience" Activity (doc):

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1oI8LV7zPWiuYEE048c0DH6JdB\\_hc81nL0mUWh8G7T5E/copy](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1oI8LV7zPWiuYEE048c0DH6JdB_hc81nL0mUWh8G7T5E/copy)

5. Familiarize yourself with the video excerpts the students will view and analyze for the focus presentation techniques of using notecards to facilitate emphasis and eye contact, knowing the audience and humor.

6. Link to create a **STUDENT COPY** of "Look More Closely at The Great Communicator" Lesson Extension activity (doc)

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RfM5zBNg4RZuAv9mH--G1hGmT1tcfq2vu22LXuVd22Q/copy>

DoDA Pointe du Hoc

## **For Students: Tap Into Prior Knowledge**

Previously, you learned that effective speakers, like President Reagan, choose their words to appeal to their audiences.

1. Review these ways, including the Rhetorical Triangle (appeals to *ETHOS*, *PATHOS* and *LOGOS*) and rhetorical devices.

- <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1M3jFuXLEQaEmZx5ODI-iFACid0HywcYyij7cOGSHWF0/copy>

- <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RDpyEtwKQ60dQZ9bVL4U3NAyZ13AscYUBsS5afsOeuo/copy>

## Lesson Objectives

1. Students will be able to identify specific examples of the following effective speech-making techniques in President Reagan's speeches: audience-specific language, the use of words/phrases and pauses for emphasis, his ability to connect with his audience using eye contact, humor and anecdotes.
2. Students will be able to explain how those techniques make the speech effective.

## Introduction

In previous lessons, you learned that President Reagan used simple, clear and honest language as well as rhetorical language and appeals to emotions, values and logic to communicate effectively to his audience. President Ronald Reagan also mastered the art of speech-making by personally engaging with the audience and infusing his presentations with humor and stories. He knew that choosing and emphasizing the right words and maintaining eye contact would forge a deeper connection with his audience. By incorporating humor and stories and speaking directly to the emotions of his listeners, President Reagan turned his speeches into engaging experiences that not only captured attention but also built relationships of trust and connection.

By exploring President Reagan's key speech-making skills and learning to use them in your own presentations, you can also become a great communicator.

## Anticipatory Set

Begin by having the following sentence displayed, highlighting in some fashion, the italicized word in each line:

- “*I* didn't eat those cookies.”

- “I didn’t *eat* those cookies.”
- “I didn’t eat *those* cookies.”
- “I didn’t eat those *cookies*.”

1. Either in small groups or in whole group, have a student/teacher read out each of the statements, one at a time, putting a verbal emphasis (and any facial cues).

2. Discuss how, despite the fact that the words are exactly the same, placing the emphasis on a different word changes the message; changing the emphasis on specific words can shift the meaning or intensity of a message and alter its overall impact. How a speaker chooses to emphasize his or her words plays a crucial role in communication by highlighting key ideas and guiding listeners’ attention and can ultimately shape the effectiveness of his or her point.

## Methodology Part 1: Present Like the President

### BE AN ACTOR!

President Reagan was an actor before he went into politics and one of the things actors must do before their scenes are filmed is to memorize their lines. However as President, President Reagan did not memorize the speeches and address he gave; he used notecards with important points he wanted to be sure and underlined phrases and sentences to “chunk” information. By doing this, President Reagan was able to look up and make eye contact with the audience often while making speeches, pausing and emphasizing important points while also not losing his place. President Reagan believed this was a good compromise between just reading your speech word for word which *“does not hold an audience”* and trying to *“memorize every word you want to say.”*

1. Show the students the images of President Reagan’s notecards from an excerpt of his Pointe du Hoc speech on the anniversary of D-Day.

~~The President has seen~~  
(NOONAN) WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6, 1984

POINTE DU HOC

WE ARE HERE TO MARK THAT DAY IN HISTORY WHEN THE ALLIED ARMIES JOINED IN BATTLE TO RECLAIM THIS CONTINENT TO LIBERTY. FOR 4 LONG YEARS, MUCH OF EUROPE HAD BEEN UNDER A TERRIBLE SHADOW. FREE NATIONS HAD FALLEN, JEWS CRIED OUT IN THE CAMPS, MILLIONS CRIED OUT FOR LIBERATION. EUROPE WAS ENSLAVED, AND THE WORLD PRAYED FOR ITS RESCUE. HERE, IN NORMANDY, THE RESCUE BEGAN. HERE THE ALLIES STOOD, AND FOUGHT AGAINST TYRANNY IN A GIANT UNDERTAKING UNPARALLELED IN HUMAN HISTORY.

WE STAND ON A LONELY, WINDSWEEP POINT ON THE NORTHERN SHORE OF FRANCE. THE AIR IS SOFT, BUT, 40 YEARS AGO AT THIS MOMENT, THE AIR WAS DENSE WITH SMOKE AND THE CRIES OF MEN; THE AIR WAS FILLED WITH THE CRACK OF RIFLE FIRE AND THE ROAR OF CANNON.

- 2 -

AT DAWN ON THE MORNING OF THE 6TH OF JUNE, 1944, 225 AMERICAN RANGERS JUMPED OFF THE BRITISH LANDING CRAFT AND RAN TO THE BOTTOM OF THESE CLIFFS. THEIR MISSION WAS ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT AND DARING OF THE INVASION;-- TO CLIMB THESE SHEER AND DESOLATE CLIFFS AND TAKE OUT THE ENEMY GUNS. THE ALLIES HAD BEEN TOLD THAT SOME OF THE MIGHTIEST OF THOSE GUNS WERE HERE, AND THEY WOULD BE TRAINED ON THE BEACHES TO STOP THE ALLIED ADVANCE.

THE RANGERS LOOKED UP AND SAW THE ENEMY SOLDIERS AT THE EDGE OF THE CLIFFS SHOOTING DOWN AT THEM WITH MACHINE GUNS AND THROWING GRENADES. AND THE AMERICAN RANGERS BEGAN TO CLIMB. THEY SHOT ROPE LADDERS OVER THE FACE OF THESE CLIFFS AND BEGAN TO PULL THEMSELVES UP. WHEN ONE RANGER FELL, ANOTHER WOULD TAKE HIS PLACE; WHEN ONE ROPE WAS CUT, A RANGER WOULD GRAB ANOTHER AND BEGIN HIS CLIMB AGAIN.

2. Discuss whole group what they notice (underlined sentences, some longer than others) and how they expect those “chunks” to sound like and look like in the President’s speech (pauses, points where the President looks up)

3. Show students the video (below) of that same excerpt of the speech and have them analyze the President’s performance of the speech in light of his use of notecards

4. Discuss their noticings as a whole group. Consider asking questions like:

- How would his performance have looked different if he read the whole speech word for word?
- How do you think underlining and chunking sentences in the speech impacted how it sounded?
- What words or phrases did you hear and/or see on the card have more emphasis? Why do you think he emphasized those words?

## Methodology Part 2: Present Like the President! (continued)

### KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE!

Remind students that as they learned in earlier lessons, part of what made President Reagan an effective speaker was that he was very good at understanding who his audience was and choosing the right words that “spoke to them”. Knowing the audience means knowing what they need to hear. President Reagan stated, *“There was a specific audience out there I could see in my mind, and I sort of aimed my words at them.”* The President focused on the interests and concerns of his audiences and spoke as if he was *“talking to a group of friends... not to millions, but to a handful of people in a living room...”*.

This “conversational” style created a connection and a sense of trust between the audience and the President.

1. In pairs, have students complete the “Know Your Audience” activity
2. As a whole group, discuss student revisions of statements, having students identify the words/tone in the statements that needed to be changed in order to aim the message to the audience and why.

### MAKE THEM LAUGH!

President Ronald Reagan had a remarkable ability to use humor and storytelling to connect with his audience and emphasize important points. He often began his speeches with an anecdote or a light-hearted joke, which helped break the ice and establish a bond with his audience. His humor wasn’t just for entertainment; it was a tool he used that softened his message and made his arguments more persuasive. And by sharing relatable stories, President Reagan made complex

issues more accessible and engaging, allowing his audience to see his points through vivid and memorable examples.

1. Provide students with the context for the video they will see:

- On March 30, 1981, there was an assassination attempt on President Reagan. President Reagan underwent surgery to remove a bullet that punctured his lung and just missed his heart and he spent 12 days in the hospital recovering.
- This video excerpt was the first speech President Reagan made to the American people after that assassination attempt.

2. Show students the video clip below.

3. Have a whole group discussion, asking questions such as:

- Knowing what the President had gone through prior to this speech, how would you have expected his mood or voice to be? Why? (*students may say things like angry, weak, fearful, vengeful...*)
- Were you surprised by President Reagan's mood in the opening of this speech?
- In what ways do you think President Reagan's use of a funny anecdote affected the audience and the American people watching at home? Why do you think that?

4. Share that in addition to this moment, there were other humorous comments President Reagan made during this scary time, all of which served to lighten the atmosphere and help the "audience" let down their guard and connect with him.

- Before he was wheeled into the operating room, President Reagan looked up at his wife, Nancy, and told her: "*Honey, I forgot to duck.*"
- In the operating room before surgery to remove the bullet, Reagan whispered to the surgical team, "*Please tell me you're Republicans.*"

5. Spend some time facilitating a conversation with students about the important role humor and light-hearted anecdotes can play in situations (arguments, debates, speeches) that might otherwise be uncomfortable or heated.

[Address on the Program for Economic Recovery](#)

## Lesson Extension

This Extension activity can be done in a variety of ways. Below are a couple of ideas:

- **SMALL GROUPS-WHOLE GROUP DISCUSSION:** Each video clip can be shown to the whole group, one at a time. After each video excerpt is shown, have students discuss the prompts above and then share out whole group.
- **"EXPERT GROUPS"- WHOLE GROUP SHARE OUT:** Small groups can be "assigned" one video to watch. They can then discuss the prompts in regard to the one video. Then the teacher can show the whole class one video at a time and have the "expert group" share out their findings with the class.
- **INDEPENDENT PRACTICE:** Students can be assigned the videos to watch and then respond to the prompts on their own.

In this Lesson Extension, students will watch excerpts of speeches to various audiences and will be asked to consider the following:

- *Who do you think was the audience for this speech and how do you know? What elements (consider words, rhetorical devices, setting ...) demonstrate that President Reagan **knew** his audience was and was **specifically and personally addressing them**?*
- *Did President Reagan effectively balance reading the message from his cards **AND** connecting with his audience? Cite specific examples from the speech to support your answer? Give an example of when a word or phrase was emphasized or a pause was made that was impactful to you as you listened. Why/how was it impactful?*

- *Did President Reagan incorporate humor or anecdote in the speech? Why do you think that was an effective tool to use and how do you think it would impact the audience?*

## Reagan Address Against Drugs

## Social Studies Lesson 2: Context

### More Than Words

President Ronald Reagan was an effective speaker, not only because of the words he spoke but also because of his masterful use of non-verbal communication. Reagan's approach to nonverbal communication enhanced his ability to connect with audiences and deliver impactful messages.

President Reagan's body language and non-verbal communication was a crucial component of his impact. Through expressive facial cues, eye contact, confident posture and purposeful gestures, Reagan was able to enhance his verbal messages and forge a strong connection with his audience. President Reagan also had a natural ability to adapt his body language to different contexts and audiences demonstrating how versatile he was as a communicator. Whether addressing the nation in times of crisis, delivering a light-hearted joke at a social event or addressing young children at an elementary school, Reagan skillfully adjusted his nonverbal communication to suit the occasion. This adaptability helped him to maintain engagement and effectively convey his message with a wide variety of audiences.

President Reagan serves as a prime example of how mastery of nonverbal communication can significantly amplify the effectiveness of spoken words.

### **Facial Expressions**

Facial expressions were a crucial element of President Reagan's nonverbal communication. His ability to convey warmth and approachability through his facial expressions was instrumental in building a connection with his audience. President Reagan communicated to the audience what he was feeling by the expressions on his face; from a warm smile to a furrowed brow of grief, Reagan communicated relatability and his expressions of emotion through non-verbal communication established trust and rapport. His use of note cards while making speeches also allowed him to maintain eye contact with his audience while he spoke, forging a deeper connection. This emotional connection was essential in reinforcing the trustworthiness of his messages and fostering a sense of unity with his audience.



### Posture and Gestures

President Reagan's posture and overall demeanor also played a significant role in his effectiveness as a speaker. His sense of calm, his confident, upright posture and deliberate movements and hand gestures to emphasize key points or significant statements projected authority and composure. This self-assuredness helped to underscore the confidence he expressed in his policies and ideas, enhancing the credibility of his speeches. The President's relaxed yet confident presence allowed him to command attention and convey a sense of stability, which was particularly effective during times of national uncertainty.



I can make these three pictures instead of one

## Social Studies Lesson 2 (MS): The Impact of Non-Verbal Communication

### For Educators: Preparing to Teach the Lesson

1. Refamiliarize yourself with the characteristics that made President Reagan The Great Communicator (*Teacher support can be found in the OVERVIEW and CONTEXT sections of the course.*)

2. Familiarize yourself with the photo of President Reagan taken while he was delivering his address to the Nation regarding the Challenger disaster. View it in terms of the focus of the lesson: examples of non-verbal cues and body language, what "messages" they communicate and the effectiveness in the context of the moment.

3. Familiarize yourself with the excerpt of the 1980 debate between Ronald Reagan and President Jimmy Carter (video) in terms of the focus of the lesson: examples of non-verbal cues and body language and what "messages" they communicate, both positively and negatively.

4. Link to create **STUDENT COPY** of "Debate Analysis" Activity (doc):

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1X4S-1TVIR8HJg4RREif0bnywJduWVpM79WY9ijY2JUE/copy>

5. Prepare materials (paper or digital) to create an "anchor chart" for classroom use.

## **For Students: Tap Into Prior Knowledge**

1. Review the many ways you have learned about how to effectively communicate with an audience:

- <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1M3jFuXLEQaEmZx5ODI-iFACid0HywcYyij7cOGSHWF0/copy> (Rhetorical Triangle)
- <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RDpyEtwKQ60dQZ9bVL4U3NAyZ13AscYUBsS5afsOeuo/copy> (rhetorical devices)
- Be an Actor (Balance reading your message and making eye contact with the audience.)
- Know your Audience (Choose the words they need to hear.)
- Make them Laugh (Sharing humor or a light-hearted story can engage your audience.)

## Lesson Objectives

1. Students will be able to recognize non-verbal communication as an important form of communication.
2. Students will be able to identify non-verbal communication that contributes both positively and negatively to the overall effect a speaker has on an audience.

## Introduction

Every day, we interact with family, friends, and even strangers, but only a portion of our communication is actually **spoken words**. Research shows that nonverbal communication, body language like posture, facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, and tone of voice makes up most of our interactions. These nonverbal communication elements all play a crucial role in how we express ourselves and understand others. Often, we often don't recognize the many ways we communicate nonverbally because these behaviors are just a natural part of the way we connect with others so we do not give them special thought... they just happen!

But when your goal is to make a persuasive and effective speech or an engaging and informative presentation, it's critical to be very aware of how you are communicating to your audience **without even speaking**.

## Anticipatory Set

1. Have students partner-up with a peer they feel comfortable talking with and have pairs spread out throughout the classroom.
2. Give the students a prompt and tell the students that they are to simply chat about the topic(s) with their partner. Consider a simple prompt like *“Talk about a time where you had to make a difficult decision. What was the conflict and what did you decide? What was the result of your decision?”*
3. After 15–30 seconds of their conversations and without explanation, instruct students to **continue the conversation** while making direct and unwavering eye contact. Students should stare at their partner while speaking and not look anywhere else.

After another 15–30 seconds, ask students to stop making eye contact and look away from their partner (i.e., at the floor, over their shoulder, etc.) **while continuing the conversation**. Students should not look their partner in the eye.

Continue this pattern, instructing to students to incorporate other non-verbal cues into their conversation, as time allows. (*\*You may need to add in an additional topic in order for students to have information to talk about without stopping*)

Other non-verbal cues include:

- Body Language – *Instruct students to speak while holding their arms crossed/folded at their chest, then with their hands on their hips.*

- Facial Expressions – Instruct students to speak with as little expression as possible and then with as much as possible (no smiling/frowning or exaggerated smiling/frowning...etc.)
- Hand Gestures – Instruct students to put their hands by their sides and continue the conversation without moving them or using any hand gestures. Then, reserve it and instruct them to use big, exaggerated hand gestures while speaking.
- Speed and Intonation of Speech – Instruct students to speak quickly progressing to one thought to the next without any pauses, then very slowly perhaps with a lot of pauses and use of filler words (i.e., umm, so, uh, hmm... etc.). Instruct students to speak flatly/in monotone.

4. Come back as a whole group and discuss the experiment (how the non-verbal communication impacted the message of the speaker, what non-verbal communication or combinations would make an audience feel more/less engaged etc.) Elicit a consensus that non-verbal communication is an important component of communication and can have an impact on a speaker's message and audience response.

## **Methodology Part 1: "Speaking Without Words"**

1. Begin by displaying this picture of President Reagan.
2. Put students into small groups of 2-3 and without giving the students any background about the picture, ask them to discuss what they notice about President Reagan's non-verbal communication. Then come back to whole group and have students share-out their noticings. *\*Elicit responses regarding his facial expression (serious, furrowed brow), his posture (sitting tall, leaning toward the camera) and what his hands are and are not doing (holding the paper in both hands, no gestures)*

3. Then share with the students that this photo was taken while President Reagan was addressing the American people after the Space Shuttle Challenger explosion (remind them that they analyzed the speech in a previous lesson).

Ask students for the reasons why the President's non-verbal communication was effective in this particular context. \*

*Elicit connections like:*

- *It was a tragic event so his somber, serious face, evident by the furrowed brow expresses his sadness.*
- *Leaning in toward the camera shows that President Reagan is engaged with and speaking directly to the audience.*
- *His eye contact shows that he is looking beyond the camera and out at the American people.*
- *Keeping his hands still/no gestures makes him appear calm and steady.*

Go on to ask additional open-ended questions like:

- *If the President were crying while giving this speech, would it have been more or less effective? Why?*
- *If President Reagan were leaning back in his chair in a more relaxed posture, what do you think that would have communicated to the American people?*

4. Explain to the students that since most experts agree that at least 70% of our communication with other people is non-verbal, that means that it is crucial for us to make sure that our body language and non-verbal cues are "saying" what we want them to say.

[Civil Discourse: RR Challenger speech](#)

## Methodology Part 2: "The Great Non-Verbal Communicator"

1. Explain to students that debates play an important role in the presidential election season, as voters get an opportunity to learn where a candidate stands on various issues and their plans for policies. But debates can also give voters an insight into who the candidate is as a person: Do they come across as sincere or over-rehearsed, confident or timid, capable or weak?

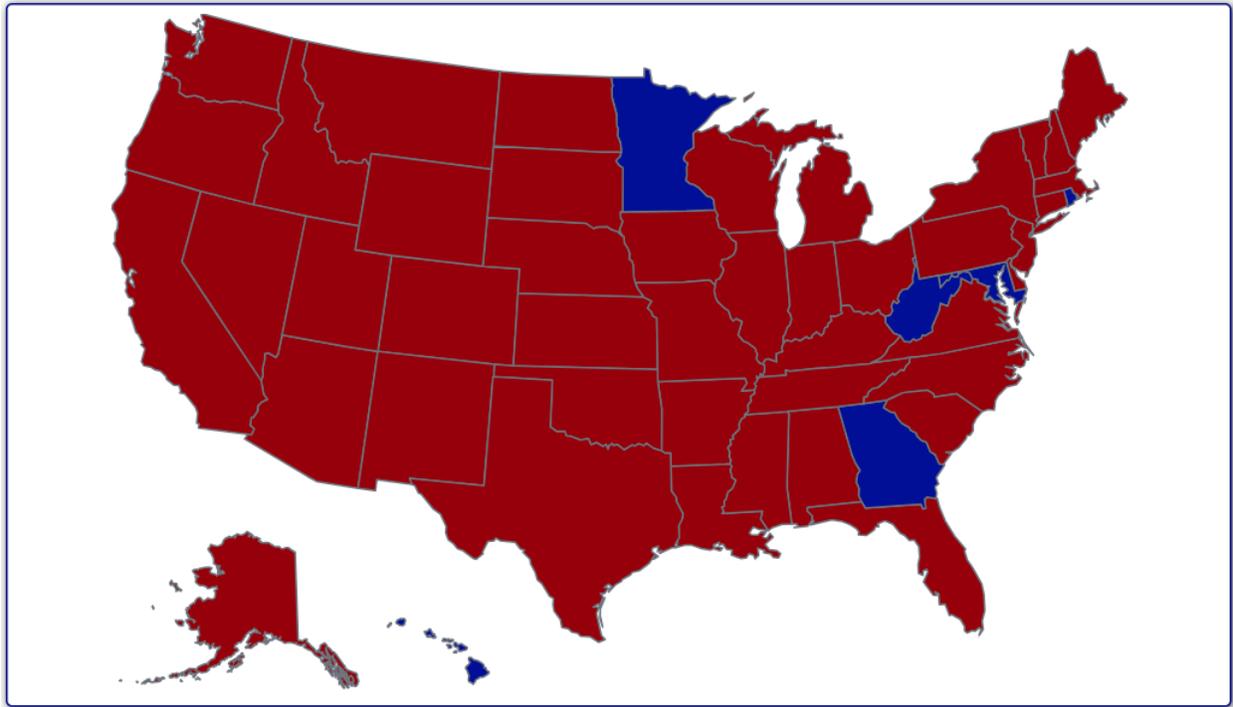
2. Tell students that they will be watching an excerpt from the 1980 presidential debate between Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter, who was running for re-election as President. Explain that instead of listening to the candidates speak, however, they will *watch the debate with the volume turned off* and analyze their non-verbal communication and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the candidates based on just their body language.

- Ask students to take notes as they watch, identifying specific cues and what those cues "tell them" about each candidate.
- Have students work with a partner, share thoughts and organize their findings on the graphic organizer titled "Debate Analysis".
- Have pairs share out with the whole group and use their findings (and any additional content you can add) to create an anchor chart (T-chart) of examples of non-verbal cues and body language that projects positively and negatively of the speaker.

3. Replay the excerpt of the debate again, *this time with the volume on* and discuss any additional thoughts the students have about the candidates performances, both strengths and weaknesses.

4. Conclude by emphasizing again the importance of non-verbal communication as a critically impactful form of communication. Share that President Reagan went on to win the election in a landslide; his confidence and the way he connected with the American people with ease, evident in his verbal and non-verbal communication style, contributed substantially to his overall appeal

to voters. Share this image of the electoral map from 1980 showing the states that **Reagan won in red** and the ones **Carter won in blue**.



## Lesson Extension

1. Tell students that they will now have the opportunity to apply the lessons they have learned from President Reagan's communication style to demonstrate their understanding of effective communication, both verbal AND non-verbal, by writing and presenting their own speech.

- Explain that they are no longer students but important members of a National Medical Board whose task it is to make critical and life-changing decisions.
- Present the following scenario to the students:

*Five people suffer from a rare disease which is profoundly impacting their quality of life and ability to function. The disease is terminal and to this point, incurable. Fortunately, doctors have finally come up with the only medicine that can cure the disease.*

*However **they only have enough to cure one person.***

*Who do you think should receive the life saving-dose? Your task now is to persuade your team which **ONE PATIENT ONLY** should be saved.*

- Present the Patient information to the students.

2. After being given time to reflect, students should organize their position and reasons and then write a short speech that explains their patient choice and the reasons they chose this person to be saved. **Their speech will be presented to the class.** Therefore students should carefully choose and apply techniques that President Reagan utilized in order to effectively communicate, both verbally and non-verbally, their position and persuade their "audience"- their classmates who are also members of the Medical Board. These techniques can include:

1. simple and clear language that speaks to the audience
2. appeals to ethos, pathos and logos
3. appropriate eye contact (looking up from notecards/paper)
4. the use of pauses, tone or gestures for emphasis
5. an anecdote that helps emphasize their position
6. appropriate non-verbal communication such as facial expressions, tone of voice, posture and gestures

### **Educator Ideas:**

- Consider *recording* the student speeches so that they can analyze their own presentations, practice, make adjustments and re-record until they are satisfied with their messaging. This reflection and practice loop will support student learning.

- Consider a civil disagreement extension: Have students present their speech to a small groups of students. Then allow students to respectfully share their dissented opinions using disagreement stems. For more support with civil disagreement practice, this can be done whole group as the teacher moderates.

## The Patients



### The Patients



**Male, age 23:** He is the star quarterback of a professional football team who spends time every summer tutoring and teaching football to disadvantaged children to give them the same chance he got in life.

**Female, age 15:** She is the only child in the family. She is very kind, has many friends, works hard in school and plans to become a nurse when she grows up.

**Male, age 36:** He is extremely rich and gives millions of dollars to charity each year. He promises that if he is given the lifesaving medication, he will build a special clinic to treat people who get this disease in the future.

**Male, age 42:** He is the only parent of five young children aged 4-12 and because he has no other family to help him, works two jobs to support and keep his family together. If he does not survive, his children will be sent to foster homes.

**Female, age 56:** She is a brilliant scientist who has made many important medical discoveries which saved the lives of countless people. At the time she was diagnosed, she was working on a major medical breakthrough for curing cancer.

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# **SOCIAL STUDIES LESSON 2 (HS): The Impact of Non-Verbal Communication**

## **For Educators: Preparing to Teach the Lesson**

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2. Familiarize yourself with the photo of President Reagan taken while he was delivering his address to the Nation regarding the Challenger disaster. View it in terms of the focus of the lesson: examples of non-verbal cues and body language, what "messages" they communicate and the effectiveness in the context of the moment.

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5. Prepare materials (paper or digital) to create an "anchor chart" for classroom use.

[ReaganCarter Debate Clip](#)

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But when your goal is to make a persuasive and effective speech or an engaging and informative presentation, it's critical to be very aware of how you are communicating to your audience **without even speaking**.

## Anticipatory Set

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Continue this pattern, instructing to students to incorporate other non-verbal cues into their conversation, as time allows. (*\*You may need to add in an additional topic in order for students to have information to talk about without stopping*)

Other non-verbal cues include:

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4. Come back as a whole group and discuss the experiment (how the non-verbal communication impacted the message of the speaker, what non-verbal communication or combinations would make an audience feel more/less engaged etc.) Elicit a consensus that non-verbal communication is an important component of communication and can have an impact on a speaker's message and audience response.

## Methodology Part 1: "Speaking Without Words"

1. Begin by displaying this picture of President Reagan.

2. Put students into small groups of 2-3 and without giving the students any background about the picture, ask them to discuss what they notice about President Reagan's non-verbal communication. Then come back to whole group and have students share-out their noticings. *\*Elicit responses regarding his facial expression (serious, furrowed brow), his posture (sitting tall, leaning toward the camera) and what his hands are and are not doing (holding the paper in both hands, no gestures)*

3. Then share with the students that this photo was taken while President Reagan was addressing the American people after the Space Shuttle Challenger explosion (remind them that they analyzed the speech in a previous lesson).

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4. Explain to the students that since most experts agree that at least 70% of our communication with other people is non-verbal, that means that it is crucial for us to make sure that our body language and non-verbal cues are "saying" what we want them to say.

Civil Discourse: RR Challenger speech

## Methodology Part 2: "The Great Non-Verbal Communicator"

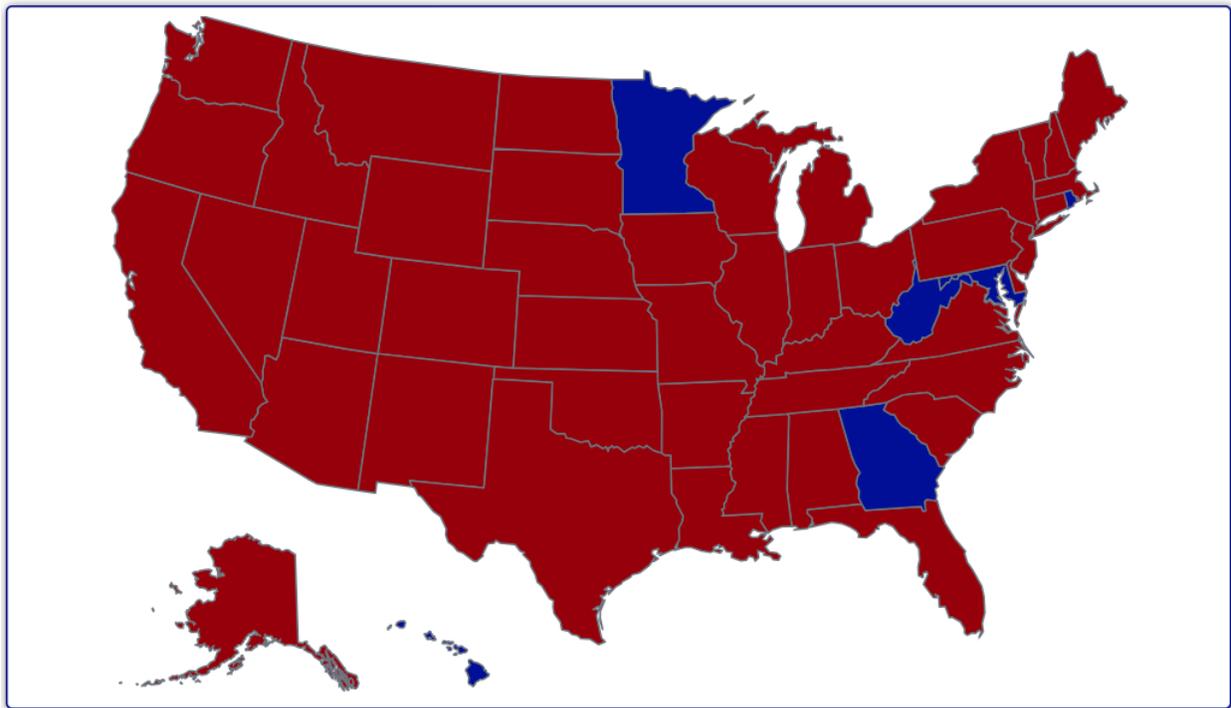
1. Explain to students that debates play an important role in the presidential election season, as voters get an opportunity to learn where a candidate stands on various issues and their plans for policies. But debates can also give voters an insight into who the candidate is as a person: Do they come across as sincere or over-rehearsed, confident or timid, capable or weak?

2. Tell students that they will be watching an excerpt from the 1980 presidential debate between Ronald Reagan and Present Carter, who was running for re-election as President. Explain that instead of listening to the candidates speak, however, they will *watch the debate with the volume turned off* and analyze their non-verbal communication and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the candidates based on just their body language.

- Ask students to take notes as they watch, identifying specific cues and what those cues "tell them" about each candidate.
- Have students work with a partner, share thoughts and organize their findings on the graphic organizer.
- Have pairs share out with the whole group and use their findings (and any additional content you can add) to create an anchor chart (T-chart) of examples of non-verbal cues and body language that projects positively and negatively of the speaker.

3. Replay the excerpt of the debate again, *this time with the volume on* and discuss any additional thoughts the students have about the candidates performances, both strengths and weaknesses.

4. Conclude by emphasizing again the importance of non-verbal communication as a critically impactful form of communication. Share that President Reagan went on to win the election in a landslide; his confidence and the way he connected with the American people with ease, evident in his verbal and non-verbal communication style, contributed substantially to his overall appeal to voters. Share this image of the electoral map from 1980 showing the states that **Reagan won in red** and the ones **Carter won in blue**.



## Lesson Extension

1. Tell students that they will now have the opportunity to apply the lessons they have learned from President Reagan's communication style to demonstrate their understanding of effective communication, both verbal AND non-verbal, by writing and presenting their own speech.

2. In the 1980 Presidential campaign, Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush ran on the Republican ticket and won. Today, the students will step back into time and choose a new running mate for Ronald Reagan who they believe would have also yielded winning results.



- Explain that they are no longer students but **campaign managers in the Presidential campaign of 1980**, who will be supporting a NEW Vice Presidential candidate to run on the ticket with Ronald Reagan.

- They should consider the contributions that person will bring to the ticket such as:
  1. their character (what do they do that tells you who they are)
  2. their scale of influence and ability to bring in voters
  3. the "image" they would bring to the Office (to compliment/balance/strengthen that of the President)
  
- Present the following "CANDIDATES FOR VP" to the students.
  1. Taylor Swift
  2. Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson
  3. Beyonce
  4. Greta Thunberg
  5. Tom Brady

2. After being given time to reflect, students should organize their position and reasons and then write a short speech that explains their patient choice and the reasons they chose this person to be saved. Their speech will be presented to the class. Therefore students should carefully choose and apply techniques that President Reagan utilized in order to effectively communicate, both verbally and non-verbally, their position and persuade their "audience"- their classmates who are also campaign managers who may have a different candidate in mind. These techniques can include:

1. simple and clear language that speaks to the audience
2. appeals to ethos, pathos and logos
3. appropriate eye contact (looking up from notecards/paper)
4. the use of pauses, tone or gestures for emphasis
5. an anecdote that helps emphasize their position
6. appropriate non-verbal communication such as facial expressions, tone of voice, posture and gestures

## Educator Ideas:

- Consider *recording* the student speeches so that they can analyze their own presentations, practice, make adjustments and re-record until they are satisfied with their messaging. This reflection and practice loop will support student learning.
- Consider a civil disagreement extension: Have students present their speech to a small group of students. Then allow students to respectfully share their dissenting opinions using disagreement stems. For more support with civil disagreement practice, this can be done whole group as the teacher moderates.



