



President Reagan delivering the
“Pointe du Hoc” Speech, June 6, 1984

The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library & Museum Education Department

The Great Communicator Files: “Pointe du Hoc” Speech

“Pointe du Hoc” Address”

President Ronald Reagan was known as the Great Communicator. Inside this file of original documents from the Ronald Reagan Presidential Archives, you’ll uncover information relating to the speech President Reagan made at Pointe du Hoc, Normandy on the fortieth Anniversary of D-Day.

You’ll go behind the scenes of the Reagan White House to explore the role of a president as the leader of the western world and the methods the president and his team used for gathering information and writing an address to survivors of the Battle of Normandy and their families. You’ll also gain special insight into President Reagan’s speech-making style.

Then, you’ll have the opportunity to develop your own personal style of communication and translate it into an address of your own. Excerpts from the very best speeches will be highlighted on the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum website.





RONALD REAGAN:
“Pointe du Hoc Speech”

“Remarks on the 40th Anniversary of D-Day” delivered June 6, 1984 at the U.S. Ranger Monument, Pointe du Hoc, Normandy France.

Speechmaking
and
Speechwriting Activities:

*The Pointe du Hoc
Speech File*

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum
40 Presidential Drive, Simi Valley, CA 93065
www.reaganlibrary.com

*Engage
Excite
Educate*

The Great Communicator Files

Pointe du Hoc Speech – Teacher Answer Guide

OVERVIEW

Documents included:

- ▶ “President’s Backup Copy” – June 6, 1984
- ▶ Press Release of the President Reagan’s “Remarks of the President to Assembled Veterans at Pointe du Hoc,” June 6, 1984
- ▶ White House Staffing Memorandum – May 21, 1984
- ▶ “Presidential Address: Pointe du Hoc,” Draft, May 21, 1984
- ▶ Excerpts from *The Longest Day*, Cornelius Ryan, 1959
- ▶ Excerpt from The Book of Joshua, The Bible

EXAMINE THE SPEECH:

Document #1

1. This document was originally printed on large index cards. It was used by the president as he delivered his speech.
2. The speech was delivered at Pointe du Hoc, Normandy. The title refers to this and the second paragraph reads, “We stand on a lonely, windswept point on the northern shore of France.”
3. This speech was delivered on June 6, 1984. This is noted on the upper right corner of the document.”
4. This date marked the 40th anniversary of D-Day.

READ THE SPEECH:

5. Pointe du Hoc is a cliff located on the coast of Normandy, France four miles west of Omaha Beach. President Reagan referred to this cliff when he remarked on page 2, “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.”
6. The Rangers were from the United States. In the first paragraph on page 2, President Reagan remarked, “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.”
7. The mission of the Rangers was to capture the cliffs of Pointe du Hoc. Given that the Rangers landed at the bottom of the cliffs, this was a very difficult strategic position because the enemy could fire down on them as they tried to take the cliffs.
8. Bill Millin played the bagpipes (Page 4). The significance was that his playing the bagpipes in the middle of the battlefield provided a sense of purpose and patriotism.
9. Other countries that fought at Normandy against the Nazis included the Britain, Canada, and Poland.

Pointe du Hoc Speech – Teacher Answer Guide

10. The Marshall Plan was an aid plan sponsored by the United States after World War II to help rebuild Europe.
11. According to President Reagan, the Marshall plan was created to help both the U.S. allies and enemies in Europe rebuild and it led to the Atlantic Alliance (page 10).
12. According to President Reagan, the western forces maintained a presence in Europe to protect and defend democracy (Page 11).
13. President Reagan felt that Americans learned it is better to protect peace in Europe than to pursue a policy of isolationism. It is important to be prepared to work towards reconciliation and arms reduction (pages 11-12).
14. At the writing of this speech, President Reagan wanted to reconcile with the Soviet Union.
15. Answers will vary.

Document #2

1. This document originated from the office of the press secretary. We know this because it is in the title of the document below the phrase “The White House.”
2. The purpose of the document was to provide a written transcription of the speech to the press. I would presume this because it is a transcription of the speech released by the Office of the Press Secretary.
3. This document was sent at 1:20 pm.

Document #3

1. The title of this document is “White House Staffing Memorandum.”
2. The date of this document is May 21, 1984.
3. There are so many names written on the document because each of the people whose names are checked is expected to look at the speech.
4. This document was used for communication purposes – sharing the speech among members of the executive branch.
5. This White House Memorandum was circulated fourteen days prior to the delivery of the “Pointe du Hoc” speech.
6. The concern expressed is a factual question about whether or not the enemy was firing from on top of the cliffs.
7. Answers will vary.

Document #4

1. This document was written May 21, 1984.
2. This was written fourteen days prior to the delivery of the “Pointe du Hoc” speech.
3. This document is one of the drafts of the final speech.
4. Answers will vary.
5. Answers will vary.

Pointe du Hoc Speech – Teacher Answer Guide

Document #5

1. These documents are excerpts from the book, *The Longest Day*. You can tell because the title is at the top on the left.
2. One story relates to the placement of the Rangers at the bottom of the cliffs. The following are specific stories which were used in the speech:
 - Bill Millin playing the bagpipes surrounded by enemy fire.
 - Colonel Wolverton asking his parachute troops to bow with him in prayer.
 - Matthew Ridgway quoting the Book of Joshua from the Bible, “I will not fail thee nor forsake thee.

Document #6

1. This document is an excerpt from The Book of Joshua in The Bible.
2. This document is included in the file because the underlined quote is quoted in the speech.

Pointe du Hoc: Speech File

OVERVIEW

Look through the materials in your speech file. List three of the different documents that you see:

	<u>Title of Document</u>	<u>Date on Document</u> (if available)
1)	_____	_____
2)	_____	_____
3)	_____	_____

EXAMINE THE SPEECH:

(Document #1)

1. Look at the **speech**.

a. Why do you think it is written in such large letters?

b. Why doesn't the text take up the entire page?

c. What do you think this copy was originally used for?

2. **Where** was this speech delivered? How do you know?

3. What **date** was this speech delivered? _____

4. What is significant about this date?

Pointe du Hoc: Speech File

READ THE SPEECH:

5. Where is **Pointe du Hoc**? How do you know?

6. What country were the **Rangers** from? Quote the sentence which provides this information.

7. What was the mission of the Rangers upon landing at Normandy? What was so difficult about this mission?

8. What instrument did Bill Millin play? What was significant about this act?

9. Which other countries fought at Normandy against the Nazis?

--	--	--

10. What was the **Marshall Plan**?

11. What did President Reagan think was the significance of the Marshall Plan?

Pointe du Hoc: Speech File

12. According to President Reagan, why did the Western forces maintain a presence in Europe after World War II?

13. What **lesson** did President Reagan feel Americans learned from World War II?

List the quote that answers this question for you.

14. With which country did President Reagan want to reconcile at the writing of this speech? _____

15. List two-three sentences which you think are the most important quote in this speech.

Explain why you chose this quote.

(Document #2)

1. From which office does this document originate? How do you know this?

Pointe du Hoc: Speech File

2. What do you think was the purpose of this document?

What evidence did you use to draw this conclusion?

3. At what time was this document sent? _____

(Document #3)

1. What is the title of this document?

2. What is the date of this document? _____

3. Why are there so many **names** written on the document?

4. What, do you think, was this document used for?

5. How many days prior to the delivery of the "*Pointe du Hoc Speech*" was this document circulated? _____

6. What is the concern expressed in the response column?

7. Do you think this concern is important? Why or why not?

Pointe du Hoc: Speech File

(Document #4)

1. What date was this document written? _____, 19____
2. How many days before to the delivery of the “*Pointe du Hoc Speech*” was this document written? _____
3. What, do you think, this document is?

4. List two specific examples of how this document differs from the final version of the “*Pointe du Hoc Speech*.”
 - 1) _____

 - 2) _____

5. Do you prefer the original or the final version of each of these two examples?
 Original version Final version

(Document #5)

1. What type of document is this?

- How do you know this?
- _____

Pointe du Hoc: Speech File

2. List and describe three stories from this document that were used in the *Point du Hoc Speech*.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

(Document #6)

1. What **book** is this document from? _____

2. Why is this document included in the speech file?

Pointe du Hoc: Speech Writing

SPEECH ELEMENTS



1. Elements of a successful speech include:

- Attention-getting devices such as stories or interesting facts or jokes.
- Clear communication – understandable language and specific points, ideas and plans.
- Accurate information.
- Specific examples to back-up your ideas.
- An exciting ending such as a call to action or the repetition of a unifying theme.

2. Multiple Drafts and Lots of Practice

Successful speeches, including presidential speeches, generally have gone through numerous drafts and have often been seen and reviewed by more than one person. Presidents generally practice their speeches and receive suggestions on how to best present information to the public.

3. Know Thyself

Develop your own style. Present your speech in a manner which is consistent with and reflects your own personality.

THE POINTE DU HOC SPEECH ELEMENTS:

(On a separate sheet of paper)

List, describe and provide three examples of the elements of successful speech writing evidenced in President Reagan's "Pointe du Hoc Speech."

Pointe du Hoc: Speech Writing

CREATE YOUR OWN SPEECH:

1. **Brainstorm a list of issues which are important to you.** They can be school-based, local, state, national or international issues.

Some examples may include:

- creating grade restrictions for playing on an athletic team,
 - school-improvement efforts,
 - lowering the age required to obtain a drivers' license,
 - election reform,
- or
- foreign policy.

2. **Write a 250 word speech.** Make sure you incorporate the “elements of a successful speech” described above.
3. **Ask at least two other people you trust** to read over your speech and make comments and suggestions.
4. **Incorporate at least two of the** suggestions and change your speech to reflect these suggestions.
5. **Practice your speech** in front of at least two other people.
6. **Email your speech to reaganeducation@nara.gov.**

Excerpts from the very best speeches will be posted on the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum website.

Additionally, three times a year, one speech will be selected as the Great Communicator Student Winner. The student winner's speech will be posted in the rotunda of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

Each student winner will receive:

- ☺ four free passes to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Museum
- ☺ a certificate
- ☺ additional prizes from the museum gift store

The Great Communicator Files: Point du Hoc

Connections to California State Standards

The “Great Communicator Files” address both the secondary standards skills as well as standards-driven content.

Listed below are some relevant excerpts from the California Content Standards for history and social sciences.

GRADES SIX THROUGH EIGHT- HISTORICAL and SOCIAL SCIENCES ANALYSIS SKILLS

Research, Evidence, and Point of View

3. Students assess the credibility of primary and secondary sources and draw sound conclusion from them.

Historical Interpretation

2. Students understand and distinguish cause, effect, sequence, and correlation in historical events, including the long and short-term causal relations.

GRADE EIGHT- UNITED STATES HISTORY and GEOGRAPHY GROWTH and CONFLICT

8.4 Students analyze the aspirations and ideals of the people of the new nation.

2. Explain the policy significance of famous speeches (e.g., Washington’s Farewell Address, Jefferson’s 1801 Inaugural Address, John Q. Adams’s Fourth of July 1821 Address).

GRADES NINE THROUGH TWELVE: INTRODUCTION

Chronological and Spatial Thinking

1. Students compare the present with the past, evaluating the consequences of past events and decisions and determining the lessons that were learned.

Historical Research, Evidence, and Point of View

3. Students construct and test hypothesis; collect, evaluate, and employ information from multiple primary and secondary sources; and apply it in oral and written presentations.

The Great Communicator Files: Point du Hoc

Connections to California State Standards

Historical Interpretation

1. Students show the connections, causal and otherwise, between particular historical events and larger social, economic, and political trends and developments.

GRADE TEN

World History, Culture, and Geography: The Modern World

Students in grade ten study major turning points that shaped the modern world, from the late eighteenth century through the present, including the cause and course of the two world wars. They trace the rise of democratic ideas and develop an understanding of the historical roots of current world issues, especially as they pertain to international relations. They extrapolate from the American experience that democratic ideals are often achieved at a high price, remain vulnerable, and are not practiced everywhere in the world. Students develop an understanding of current world issues and relate them to their historical, geographic, political, economic, and cultural contexts. Students consider multiple accounts of events in order to understand international relations from a variety of perspectives.

10.8 Students analyze the causes and consequences of World War II.

3. Identify and locate the Allied and Axis powers on a map and discuss the major turning points of the war, the principal theaters of conflict, key strategic decisions, and the resulting war conferences and political resolutions, with emphasis on the importance of geographic factors.
4. Describe the political, diplomatic and military leaders during the war.
6. Discuss the human costs of the war, with particular attention to the civilian and military losses in Russia, Germany, Britain, the United States, China and Japan.

10.9 Students analyze the international developments in the post-World War II world.

1. Compare the economic and military power shifts caused by the war, including the Yalta Pact, the development of nuclear weapons, Soviet control over Eastern European nations, and the economic recoveries of Germany and Japan.
2. Analyze the causes of the Cold War, with the free world on one side and Soviet client states on the other, including competition for influence in such places as Egypt, the Congo, Vietnam, and Chile.

The Great Communicator Files: Point du Hoc Connections to California State Standards

3. Understand the importance of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, which established the pattern for America's postwar policy of supplying economic and military aid to prevent the spread of Communism and the resulting economic and political competition in arenas such as Southeast Asia, Cuba, and Africa.
 7. Analyze the reasons for the collapse of the Soviet Union, including the weakness of the command economy, burdens of military commitments, and growing resistance to Soviet rule by dissidents in satellite states and the non-Russian Soviet republics.
- 10.10 Students analyze the integration of countries into the world economy and the information, technological, and communications revolutions (e.g., television, satellites, computers).**

GRADE ELEVEN

United States History and Geography: Continuity and Change in the Twentieth Century

They learn that the United States has served as a model for other nations and that the rights and freedoms we enjoy are not accidents, but the results of a defined set of political principles that are not always basic to citizens of other countries. Students understand that our rights under the U.S. Constitution are a precious inheritance that depends on an educated citizenry for their preservation and protection.

11.7 Students analyze America's participation in World War II.

2. Explain U.S. and Allied wartime strategy, including the major battles of Midway, Normandy, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, and the Battle of the Bulge.
3. Identify the roles and sacrifices of individual American soldiers, as well as the unique contributions of the special fighting forces (e.g., the Tuskegee Airmen, the 442nd Regimental Combat team, the Navajo Code Talkers).

11.8 Students analyze the economic boom and social transformation of post-World War II America.

5. Describe the increased powers of the presidency in response to the Great Depression, World War II, and the Cold War.
7. Describe the effects on society and the economy of technological developments since 1945, including the computer revolution, changes in communication, advances in medicine, and improvements in agricultural technology.

The Great Communicator Files: Point du Hoc Connections to California State Standards

11.9 Students analyze U.S. foreign policy since World War II.

3. Trace the origins and geopolitical consequences (foreign and domestic) of the Cold War and containment policy...
4. Analyze the role of the Reagan administration and other factors in the victory of the West in the Cold War.

GRADE TWELVE

12.4 Students analyze the unique roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government as established by the U.S. Constitution.

2. Discuss Article II of the Constitution as it relates to the executive branch, including eligibility for office and length of term, election to and removal from office, the oath of office, and the enumerated executive powers.

12.8 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the influence of the media on American political life.

1. Discuss the meaning and importance of a free and responsible press.
2. Describe the roles of broadcast, print, and electronic media, including the Internet, as means of communication in American politics.
3. Explain how public officials use the media to communicate with the citizenry and to shape public opinion.

Principles of Economics

12.3 Students analyze the influence of the federal government on the American economy.

1. Understand how the role of government in a market economy often includes providing for national defense etc.