Behind me stands a wall that encircles the free sectors of this city, part of a vast system of barriers that divides the entire continent of Europe. From the Baltic South, those barriers cut across Germany in a gash of barbed wire, concrete, dog runs, and guard towers. Farther south, there may be no visible, no obvious wall. But there remain armed guards and checkpoints all the same -- still a restriction on the right to travel, still an instrument to impose upon ordinary men and women the will of a totalitarian state.

Yet, it is here in Berlin where the wall emerges most clearly; here, cutting across your city, where the news photo and the television screen have imprinted this brutal division of a continent upon the mind of the world.

Standing before the Brandenburg Gate, every man is a German separated from his fellow men.

Every man is a Berliner, forced to look upon a scar.

President Von Weizsäcker has said, "The German question is open as long as the Brandenburg Gate is closed." Well today -- today I say: As long as this gate is closed, as long as this scar of a wall is permitted to stand, it is not the German question alone that remains open, but the question of freedom for all mankind.

…

Where four decades ago there was rubble, today in West Berlin there is the greatest industrial output of any city in Germany: busy office blocks, fine homes and apartments, proud avenues, and the spreading lawns of parkland. Where a city's culture seemed to have been destroyed, today there are two great universities, orchestras and an opera, countless theaters, and museums. Where there was want, today there's abundance -- food, clothing, automobiles. From devastation, from utter ruin, you Berliners have, in
freedom, rebuilt a city that once again ranks as one of the greatest on earth. Now the Soviets may have had other plans.

In the 1950s -- In the 1950s Khrushchev predicted: "We will bury you."

But in the West today, we see a free world that has achieved a level of prosperity and well-being unprecedented in all human history. In the Communist world, we see failure, technological backwardness, declining standards of health, even want of the most basic kind -- too little food. Even today, the Soviet Union still cannot feed itself. After these four decades, then, there stands before the entire world one great and inescapable conclusion: Freedom leads to prosperity. Freedom replaces the ancient hatreds among the nations with community and peace. Freedom is the victor.

And now -- now the Soviets themselves may, in a limited way, be coming to understand the importance of freedom. We hear much from Moscow about a new policy of reform and openness. Some political prisoners have been released. Certain foreign news broadcasts are no longer being jammed. Some economic enterprises have been permitted to operate with greater freedom from state control.

Are these the beginnings of profound changes in the Soviet state? Or are they token gestures intended to raise false hopes in the West, or to strengthen the Soviet system without changing it? We welcome change and openness; for we believe that freedom and security go together, that the advance of human liberty -- the advance of human liberty can only strengthen the cause of world peace.

There is one sign the Soviets can make that would be unmistakable, that would advance dramatically the cause of freedom and peace.

General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization: Come here to this gate.

Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate.

Mr. Gorbachev -- Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!

I understand the fear of war and the pain of division that afflict this continent, and I pledge to you my country's efforts to help overcome these burdens. To be sure, we in the West must resist Soviet expansion. So, we must maintain defenses of unassailable strength. Yet we seek peace; so we must strive to reduce arms on both sides.
COLD WAR – SPEECH ANALYSIS
REAGAN’S ‘TEAR DOWN THIS WALL’

Directions: Complete the following questions based on the included speech excerpts.

1. What is President Reagan referencing or addressing in the first paragraph of the included speech?

2. At the end of the first paragraph of the included speech, President Reagan speaks of a ‘totalitarian’ state.
   a. What is meant by the word ‘totalitarian’? If you are unsure, look the word up in a dictionary or using an online dictionary tool.
   b. What nation is he called ‘totalitarian’? How do you know?

3. What does President Reagan mean by “Every man is a Berliner, forced to look upon a scar”?

Answer questions #4 by considering the excerpt of the speech below.

President Von Weizsäcker has said, "The German question is open as long as the Brandenburg Gate is closed." Well today – today I say: As long as this gate is closed, as long as this scar of a wall is permitted to stand, it is not the German question alone that remains open, but the question of freedom for all mankind.

4. What ‘question’ do you think President Reagan is referring to here?
Where four decades ago there was rubble, today in West Berlin there is the greatest industrial output of any city in Germany: busy office blocks, fine homes and apartments, proud avenues, and the spreading lawns of parkland. Where a city's culture seemed to have been destroyed, today there are two great universities, orchestras and an opera, countless theaters, and museums. Where there was want, today there's abundance -- food, clothing, automobiles. From devastation, from utter ruin, you Berliners have, in freedom, rebuilt a city that once again ranks as one of the greatest on earth.

5. What event caused the ‘rubble’ that President Reagan refers to in this passage?

6. What is President Reagan saying in the passage in regards the reason why West Berlin is so prosperous?

7. Why do you think he focuses on this reason (from question #6) for why West Berlin is so prosperous?

8. What evidence/statement does President Reagan provide to suggest that Communism is failing?

And now -- now the Soviets themselves may, in a limited way, be coming to understand the importance of freedom. We hear much from Moscow about a new policy of reform and openness. Some political prisoners have been released. Certain foreign news broadcasts are no longer being jammed. Some economic enterprises have been permitted to operate with greater freedom from state control.

9. What Soviet policies is President Reagan referring to in the above passage?

10. According to President Reagan, what kinds of changes are these reforms bringing to the Soviet Union?
11. According to President Reagan, what is the greatest thing that can strengthen world peace?

12. Near the end of the speech, President Reagan uses the work ‘liberalization’. What does this word mean?

13. What kind of approach is President Reagan supporting in the last paragraph of the included speech?

14. Why do you suppose this speech and the phrase ‘tear down this wall’ part are so famous and memorable?

15. To what extent do you think this was a powerful speech from a United States President? Explain your reasoning.
COLD WAR – SPEECH ANALYSIS
REAGAN’S ‘TEAR DOWN THIS WALL’

Directions: Complete the following questions based on the included speech excerpts.

1. What is President Reagan referencing or addressing in the first paragraph of the included speech?

He is referring to the Berlin Wall and the ‘Iron Curtain’ as symbols of the ideological divide that exists in Europe during the time of the Cold War.

2. At the end of the first paragraph of the included speech, President Reagan speaks of a ‘totalitarian’ state.
   a. What is meant by the word ‘totalitarian’? If you are unsure, look the word up in a dictionary or using an online dictionary tool.

A totalitarian state is one in which the government (usually a single dictator) controls all aspects of society within the nation. For example, the government will control or attempt to control the schools, economy, family life, etc.
   b. What nation is he called ‘totalitarian’? How do you know?

He is referring to the Soviet Union because he is speaking about its authority and control over Eastern Europe.

3. What does President Reagan mean by “Every man is a Berliner, forced to look upon a scar”?

He is talking about the unity that exists within the city but that there is a ‘scar’ in the form of the Berlin wall that has divided the city.

Answer questions #4 by considering the excerpt of the speech below.

President Von Weizsäcker has said, "The German question is open as long as the Brandenburg Gate is closed." Well today -- today I say: As long as this gate is closed, as long as this scar of a wall is permitted to stand, it is not the German question alone that remains open, but the question of freedom for all mankind.

4. What ‘question’ do you think President Reagan is referring to here?

He is referring to the question of the freedom of Germany, and ultimately the idea that all human kind is in danger from a lack of freedom based on what the Berlin Wall represents.
5. What event caused the ‘rubble’ that President Reagan refers to in this passage?

World War II

6. What is President Reagan saying in the passage in regards the reason why West Berlin is so prosperous?

He is suggesting that the freedom provided to the city through capitalism and democracy have afforded it the opportunity to improve and overcome earlier issues.

7. Why do you think he focuses on this reason (from question #6) for why West Berlin is so prosperous?

Because he is highlighting the fact that freedom is not allowed in Eastern Germany and Eastern Berlin and he is comparing the successes (or lack thereof) of the two ideologies.

8. What evidence/statement does President Reagan provide to suggest that Communism is failing?

He states “In the Communist world, we see failure, technological backwardness, declining standards of health, even want of the most basic kind -- too little food. Even today, the Soviet Union still cannot feed itself.”

9. What Soviet policies is President Reagan referring to in the above passage?

Perestroika and Glasnost  ***Teacher may want students to further research.

10. According to President Reagan, what kinds of changes are these reforms bringing to the Soviet Union?

They are bringing elements of economic and social freedom that had previously not existed in the Soviet Union. ***Teacher may want students to further research.
11. According to President Reagan, what is the greatest thing that can strengthen world peace?

The spread and acceptance of freedom as an ideology. Also, the tearing down of the Berlin Wall would symbolize this acceptance of freedom.

12. Near the end of the speech, President Reagan uses the work ‘liberalization’. What does this word mean?

Liberalization refers to the idea that people are free to choose. Reagan is using the term in both an economic and a social sense.

13. What kind of approach is President Reagan supporting in the last paragraph of the included speech?

He is proposing a balance approach, in which the United States maintains its defenses against Soviet expansionism but also in which the United States still seeks peace.

14. Why do you suppose this speech and the phrase ‘tear down this wall’ part are so famous and memorable?

***Student responses may vary. In general, students could focus on the idea that the Berlin Wall would be torn down a few years after this speech and Reagan’s statements here were prophetic.

15. To what extent do you think this was a powerful speech from a United States President? Explain your reasoning.

***Student responses may vary. Students should analyze the speech as an effective tool at conveying a message. Did Reagan get his message across effectively? Why or why not?

The final two questions in this set can be used as a great discussion/debate starters in your classroom.