

**Curriculum links:** Government, economy and society in the Republic of Ireland, 1949-1989 - Changing attitudes towards Irish language and culture; the impact of television; case study: the impact of RTE, 1962-1972

### RTÉ Archives: President first on new television service, 1961

Access the video clip [here](#).



#### Activity 1

The arrival of a television service in Ireland in 1961 marked a huge development in technology and communications in Ireland.

Before watching the clip, think about the development in technology and communications that have taken place during your lifetime.

- What developments have occurred?
- What impact have these developments had on your life?
- Has the impact been positive or negative?

#### Activity 2

Divide into small groups of 3-4 students. Watch the video clip and complete the following discussion questions in your small groups. Feedback your answers to the class.

1. For the first part of his address, President Éamon de Valera speaks to the audience in Irish. What does this tell you about values and attitudes towards the Irish language in Ireland in the 1960s?

---

---

---

---

2. During his address, de Valera mentions his fears and concerns about the new developments in communications technology. He states:

"I must admit that sometimes when I think of television and radio and their immense power I feel somewhat afraid. Like atomic energy, it can be used for incalculable good but it can also do irreparable harm. Never before was there in the hands of men an instrument so powerful to influence the thoughts and actions of the multitude."

Explain in your own words the points made by de Valera above. Do you think de Valera was correct in his assessment of the potential impact of radio and television?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

3. It could be argued that in his speech de Valera's points are out-dated and that he seems out of touch with the social changes taking place in Ireland in the 1960s. Based on your knowledge of Ireland in the 1960s, do you think this is a fair assessment? Debate this question with your classmates.