

Guatemala Lesson Plan

Central Historical Question:

How and why did the United States fight the Cold War in Guatemala?

Materials:

- Copies of Two Textbook Accounts Worksheet
- Copies of CIA Declassified Document
- OPTIONAL: Copies of Original CIA Documents (PDF)

Plan of Instruction:

1. Introduction: *As we've learned, the Cold War started heating up after WWII. The United States passed policies—the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine—to prevent the spread of Communism in Europe. We've also learned that the United States sent troops to Korea to fight Communist North Korea.*

Throughout the Cold War, the United States also engaged in covert (or underground/hidden) action.

Today, we're going to look at what happened in Guatemala.

2. Hand out Two Textbook Accounts and have students complete in pairs.
3. Debrief: What happened in Guatemala?

Whole class discussion:

- Why did the United States get involved in Guatemala?
 - What are some differences between Textbook A and Textbook B? What details appear in only one of the textbooks and not the other?
 - How do the details affect the overall story?
 - Why do you think one textbook found these details important to include but the other did not?
 - What more do you want to know about what happened in Guatemala?
4. Hand out declassified CIA document. (Explain what 'declassified' means).

Write the following questions on the board. Students should answer in pairs:

- What type of document is this?
- What does it say about the U.S. involvement in Guatemala?
- What else was happening in 1954 that would have influenced the United States's decision to use covert methods in Guatemala?

- Does this document challenge the textbook accounts? Why or why not?

5. Debrief as whole class. Discussion:

- Why is this event in Guatemala considered part of the Cold War?
- How does this event help you understand the United States' behavior during the Cold War?
- Are you surprised by this story? Why or why not?

Citations:

"Guatemalan Communist Personnel to be disposed of during Military Operations of Calligeris", Origin deleted, Undated. <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB4/>