

Cold War Lesson Plan

Central Historical Question:

Who was primarily responsible for the Cold War – the United States or the Soviet Union?

Materials:

- Cold War PowerPoint
- Copies of Cold War Timeline
- Copies of Cold War Documents A-D
- Copies of Guiding Questions

Plan of Instruction:

1. Do Now: *What do you remember about the Cold War from previous history classes?*
Elicit student answers.
2. Review:
 - *Differences between communism and capitalism.*
 - *US and Soviet Union were allies in WWII.*
 - *After WWII, Europe was in ruins, and former colonial empires were crumbling. This set the scene for increased competition between the two superpowers, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.*
 - *The Soviet Red Army remained in Eastern Europe after the war, which led to the Soviet Bloc. At the same time, the United States developed policies of containment – in particular, the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan.*
2. Timeline and Origins of the Cold War PowerPoint. Hand out Cold War Timeline and lead students through it using PowerPoint slides to draw attention to key events:
 - Slide 2: The Iron Curtain Speech
Note: An audio clip of the Iron Curtain speech is available in the Library of Congress' archives: <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/churchill/wc-coldwar.html#252>
 - Slide 3: The Truman Doctrine
 - Slides 4-5: The Marshall Plan
 - Slide 6: NATO and Warsaw Pact
 - Slide 7: Introduce today's Central Historical Question:
Who was started the Cold War, the United States or the Soviet Union?

Over the past decades historians have disagreed over this question. Today, we are going to look closely at some Cold War documents in order to address the question for ourselves.
3. Pass out Documents A and B along with Guiding Questions. Students read documents, answer questions, and record their initial hypothesis regarding the Central Historical Question.

4. Share out answers and discuss.
 5. Pass out Documents C and D. Students read documents, answer questions, and record their second hypothesis.
 6. Share out answers and discuss.
 7. Whole class discussion:
 - Who was primarily responsible for the start of the Cold War? What evidence do you have to support your claim?
 - Which of these documents do you believe is most trustworthy? Why?
 - Did anyone's hypothesis change? How and why?
 - What other evidence would you need to strengthen your claim?
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Citations:

Document A

"Iron Curtain Speech" Winston Churchill, March 1946, Fulton, Missouri.

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/churchill-iron.html>

Document B

"Truman Doctrine Speech," President Truman to Congress, March 12, 1947.

<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/harrystrumantrumandoctrine.html>

Document C

Nikolai Novikov, telegram to Soviet Leadership, September 1946.

<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=904>

Document D

Secretary of Commerce and former Vice President Henry A. Wallace letter to President Harry S. Truman, July 23, 1946, in Papers of Harry S. Truman, President's Secretary's Files, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Missouri.