

Unit 8

The Post War Era 1945-1970

How Individuals Impact the Period

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Unit 8 Overview

The approach to this unit looks at how individuals impact their time period. History as biography is one way to help students understand how individual people impact the overall trends of a time period. In this unit we first look at some of the general trends in the 1950s and 1960s such as the Cold War, the growth of suburbs, the Civil Rights Movement, women's rights, the growing economy, the Vietnam War, conformity, and the counter-culture movement. Then we look at how certain individuals connect to and impact the time period.

Critical Thinking

In terms of the Cold War, particular emphasis is placed on how culture and foreign policy can impact domestic life and individual values. In the student projects on the 1950s and 1960s, students explore biography as a study of history. Particular emphasis is placed on how individuals represent their time period and how they may significantly impact their period. The student presentations are designed to explore why particular choices were made and what impact that choice had on the period.

Decision Making

One emphasis is related to the decisions made in the Cold War. Using the Decision Education Foundation model, students rate the quality of the decision made during the Cold War period. During the student projects on the 1950s and 1960s, students are asked to analyze specific decisions made that impacted the time period. All of the decision making components are used to help students analyze the decisions including **framing, alternatives, values, gathering information, and commitment to follow through.**

The Lessons

Lesson #1: Power-point on the Cold War

The teacher looks at the reasons for the start of the Cold War

Lesson #2: Understanding the Cold War

The students look at a series of sheets that help them understand why the Cold War unfolded the way it did.

Lesson #3: Power-point on the 1950s

The teacher looks at the basic components of the 1950s

Lesson #4: Power-point on the 1960s

The teacher looks at the basic components of the 1960s

Lesson #5: Student projects on the 1950s and 1960s

The students explore a variety of topics related to how different individuals impacted the period of the 1950s and 1960s

Lesson #1

Basics of the Cold War

The power-point on *The Cold War* looks at the events and issues that unfold during the critical period of 1945-1952. This information on the Cold War is insufficient by itself to teach about the Cold War. Lesson #2 follows up the power-point with more specific information and activities that helps the students understand more about the Cold War.

Lesson #2

Understanding the Cold War

The Cold War is difficult for students to understand. For issues this complicated it is important for the teacher to explain certain concepts clearly. The following lesson lays out certain theories about the Cold War and asks students to respond to the theories based on the actual events that took place in the period immediately following World War II.

1. Begin by referring to the teacher notes sheets on *Key Differences between the U.S. and the Soviet Union*. The teacher can ask the students to create the 2 categories or the teacher can use the teacher handout as a template for a student handout. After going over the contrasting ideologies, ask the students to consider why such tension would begin to exist between the U.S. and the Soviet Union?
2. Next, refer to the information on *U.S. Foreign Policy Objectives in the Cold War*.
3. To apply the information above, use the student handout *Events in the Cold War, 1945-1959*. The students should consider our foreign policy objectives for each crisis situation that confronted the U.S.
4. In the domestic response section of the *Events in the Cold War* sheet, the teacher should conclude by showing the students the 5 minute film, *Duck and Cover* (available on You Tube under the title of the film). This fascinating film made for schools shows children in the 1950s what to do if an atomic bomb is dropped on America.

Key Differences between the U.S. and the Soviet Union

The United States

Economic Differences

Soviet Union

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capitalism based on free enterprise• Wealth in the hands of individuals and businesses• Upper, middle, and lower class	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communism based on government distributing profit and resources equally• One class of people
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Political Differences

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Democratic system	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Totalitarian system
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Key Values

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individualism-Each individual works for their own benefit• Competition• Working hard to make more money• Attaining wealth is highly praised in society	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The individual works for the benefit of the group• The worker is highly praised in society• Equality of all people socially and economically
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Major Challenges

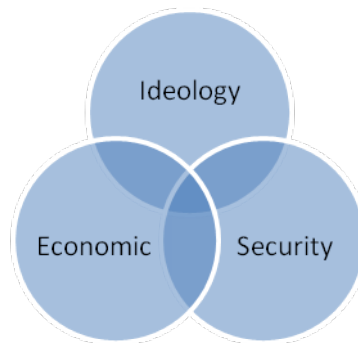
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Racism limits economic opportunity and freedom• New markets around the world helps capitalism continue to grow• Capitalism can exploit workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The government has a difficult time being efficient with worker output• Government is inefficient in distributing resources
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The Conflict with Each Other

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The U.S. was determined to stop the spread of Communism around the world and promote democracy and capitalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Soviet Union was determined to spread Communism around the world particularly in poor regions of the world
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Based on the information about the contrasting ideologies of each nation, why did tension begin to exist between the U.S. and the Soviet Union?

U.S. Foreign Policy Objectives in the Cold War



The Cold War Ideological Interests

- *Containment*-Communism needs to be contained where it currently exists without being able to spread to other parts of the world. If Communism spreads out around the world it will become even more of a threat to the U.S.
- *The Truman Doctrine*-The U.S. needs to support with arms and supplies free people around the world who are resisting Communism.

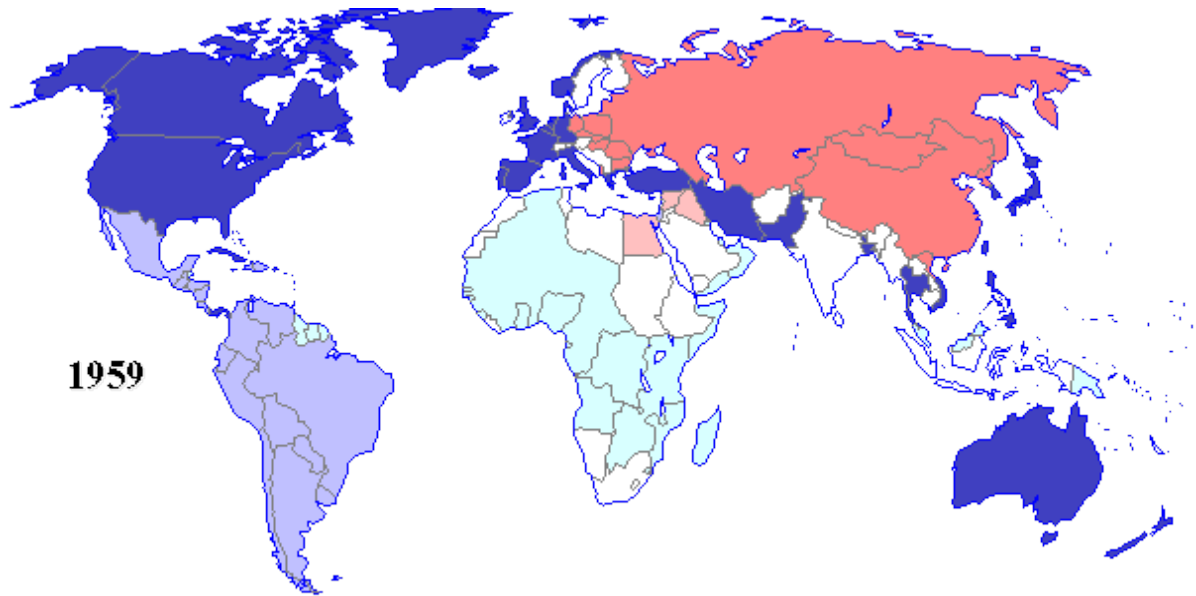
The Cold War Economic Interests

- Help build up the economies of regions of the world threatened by Communism. By building up a country's economy we help set up a potential trade partner and create stability in that country. The U.S. does not trade with Communist countries.

The Cold War Security Interests

- *The Arms Race*-The best deterrence to fighting an open war with the Soviet Union is to continue building nuclear bombs. If the Soviets build more nuclear bombs then we should build even more bombs.

Events in the Cold War, 1945-1959



Blue-America and its Allies

Green-Allied colonies

Red-Communist regions

Light blue-Regions influenced by the U.S.

Pink-Regions influenced by the Soviet Union

Based on the information on key differences between the U.S. and the Soviet Union and the sheet on U.S. Foreign Policy in the Cold War, fill in how the U.S. responded to each of the following situations:

1. Greece and Turkey, 1947

Britain was no longer able to finance the heavy burden of providing economic and military aid to Greece and Turkey after the war. Communist forces threatened to take over this region of the world.

What are our foreign policy objectives?

What actually happened?

2. Western Europe, 1947

Unit 8: Postwar America, 1945-1970

The countries of Germany, Italy, France, and Britain were economically devastated as a result of World War II. 70% of Western Europe's industry and 60% of its transportation system had been destroyed. The Soviet Union potentially threatened to take over much of Western Europe just as they had taken over Eastern Europe.

What are our foreign policy objectives?

What actually happened?

3. Japan, 1946

Japan had also been devastated by the war due in large part to heavy U.S. bombing and the dropping of the atomic bombs. The potential threat of Communism influencing Japan seemed real based on the fact that Japan had been so devastated.

What are our foreign policy objectives?

What actually happened?

4. China, 1945-1948

A bitter Civil War had been raging between Chinese pro-democratic Nationalists and Communist groups. If Communism takes over China then a quarter of the world's population will suddenly become communist.

What are our foreign policy objectives?

What actually happened?

5. The Soviet Union, 1949

The U.S. was shocked to find out that the Soviet Union had developed a nuclear weapon.

What are our foreign policy objectives?

What actually happened?

6. Korea, 1950

The Soviets had troops in the northern part of Korea above the 38th parallel. American troops were stationed below the line. In June, 1950 North Korean Communist troops burst below the 38th parallel and pushed the South Koreans further south.

What are our foreign policy objectives?

What actually happened?

7. Vietnam, 1959

Fearing that all of Asia may turn to Communism, the U.S. becomes increasingly concerned about the fact that communist forces in northern Vietnam will take over South Vietnam. The U.S. must decide if they want to commit U.S. forces to South Vietnam to prevent a takeover.

What are our foreign policy objectives?

What actually happened?

8. The Domestic Response

- The Loyalty Review Board investigated potentially disloyal organizations in the U.S. and over 3 million federal employees and school teachers.
- In 1951 Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were convicted of passing information to the Soviets about the atomic bomb. They went to the electric chair in 1953, the only people in American history ever executed in peacetime for espionage.
- Senator Joe McCarthy began accusing government officials of conspiring with communists. Opinion polls showed that a majority of Americans approved of McCarthy's tactics known as McCarthyism. When McCarthy accused the U.S. Army of being communist sympathizers, his irresponsible tactics were finally revealed publicly through the Army-McCarthy hearings.

- *Duck and Cover*, a film on what to do if the atomic bomb is dropped on America.

Analyzing the Decisions of the Cold War

The Frame

What was the main goal the U.S. government was trying to achieve in the Cold War?

What were the key foreign policy issues that were being decided?

What consequences was the government trying to avoid?

Information

Did the U.S. government seem to be relying upon the correct information about the potential threat of communism? What type of information were they relying upon?

Alternatives

In terms of how to address the issues in the Cold War, what were three possible alternatives available to government officials during the Cold War?

Values

What appeared to be the three issues that the U.S. government cared about the most during the Cold War?

Sound Reasoning

Why did the U.S. government choose the particular alternative they did during the Cold War?

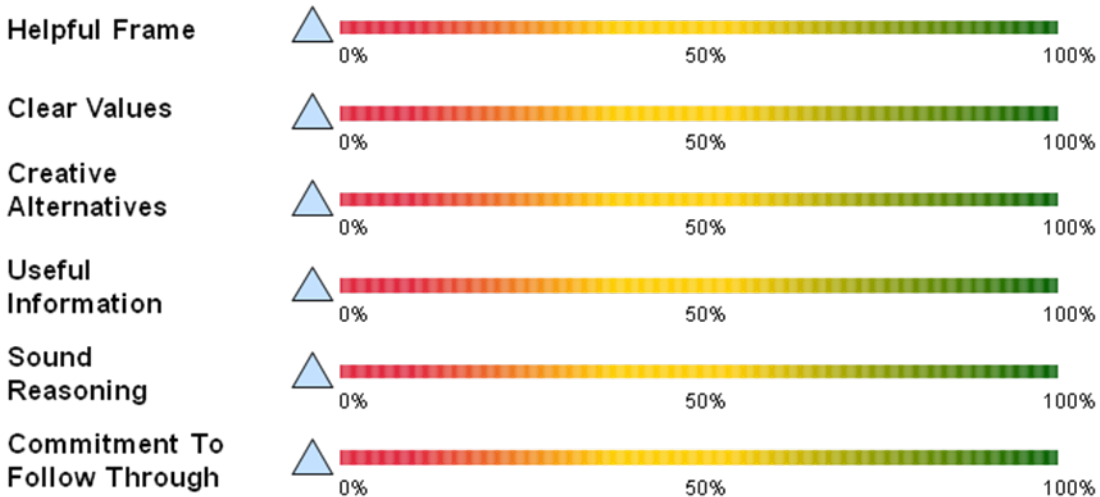
What major risks did the U.S. take in pursuing an active foreign policy?

Commitment to Follow Through

Did it appear that the U.S. was committed to follow through with the decisions they made during the Cold War?

Rating the Decisions in the Cold War

Rate the Cold War foreign policy from 1945-1970 on a scale of 0 to 100. On what basis do you rate your score?



100% is the point at which additional effort is not worth it.

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Lesson #3

General Trends of the 1950s

The power-point presentation on the 1950s is designed to consider some of the prevailing trends of the decade. The power-points do not present specific details about why these trends took place. The student research and presentations that follow is designed to bring a more depth of understanding to the decades.

Use the power-point presentation entitled *The 1950s* to present general characteristics of this decade

Lesson #4

General Trends of the 1960s

This power-point on *The 1960s*, like the information on the 1950s, is designed to give an overview of the general trends taking place in the decade. More detailed information about the time period is outlined in the student projects in the next lesson.

Lesson #5

Student Projects on the 1950s and 1960s

The 1950s and 1960s is an ideal time for students to launch into specific topics on one of the many influential people who profoundly impacted the period. What becomes unique about studying the 1950s and 1960s is that footage on the period is so widely available. The effective use of filming combined with clear analysis on the impact of a person is a powerful way for students to understand this historical time period. Students also take more ownership of what they are learning when they specialize in a topic and present their findings to their peers. This type of project requires that the teacher “let go” of the traditional style of teaching that requires that the teacher be the central focus of the classroom environment. The challenge with creating students projects and presentations is that the students naturally gravitate toward simply telling what happened in a time period. This project is designed for students to analyze how certain individuals impacted the 1950s and 1960s period. The lesson can be used as a research paper, a class project presented to the rest of the class, or both. Student projects can be presented in the form of power-point presentations or as a student narrated documentary. Student presentations also help reinforce analysis techniques when similar analysis strategies are used. In this case, students use the decision diagram to analyze critical decisions made during the period. The students practice good analysis techniques while the class learns from each other about the 1950s and 1960s.

1. For basic information about how to structure a research paper assignment, refer to previous lessons in Unit #4 on social and economic developments 1800-1860 or in Unit #7 on the 1920s period. For student projects, refer to the handout included on *Individuals that Impacted the 1950s and 1960s* and *Components of the Project*. The project is designed to combine student analysis with actual film footage from the period.

Individuals that Impacted the 1950s and 1960s

Your goal is to pick one person from the list below to research and to consider how they impacted the time period.

1. President Harry S. Truman and the Cold War
2. President Dwight D. Eisenhower as representing the conservatism of the 1950s
3. Joe McCarthy and the anti-communist crusade
4. Elvis Presley and the rise of rock music
5. Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier in baseball
6. President John F. Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis
7. President Lyndon B. Johnson and the escalation of the Vietnam War
8. Betty Friedan and the feminist movement
9. The Levitt family and the rise of suburbs in the 1950s
10. Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement
11. Malcolm X and the Black Muslim Movement
12. Jerry Rubin and the counterculture movement
13. Mohammed Ali and the rise of Black athletes
14. Sloan Wilson and his book, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*
15. David Riesman and his book, *The Lonely Crowd*
16. Rosa Parks and the Civil Rights Movement
17. Chief Justice Earl Warren and the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision
18. Marilyn Monroe and the perception of women
19. Lee Harvey Oswald and the assassination of Kennedy

20. Stokeley Carmichael and the Black Panther Movement

Components of the Project

I. Research what happened

In what is equivalent to a single paragraph, summarize what actually took place with your person. Here you need to summarize information taken from secondary sources and primary sources.

II. Historical context of your topic

Events in the 1950s and 1960s are connected to other major events and trends that took place in the period. Here you give historical context to your topic. How does your topic relate to the other major trends taking place in the time period?

III. Analysis of the decision they made

1. In 1-2 sentences state a thesis that directly answers to question you are addressing.
2. Use the decision diagram and the questions below to begin analyzing if you think your person made a good decision about what they were trying to accomplish during this period.

Frame

- What goals does your person wish to accomplish?
- What is the problem or opportunity that is giving rise to the need to make a decision?
- What are the negative consequences your person is trying to avoid?

Information

- What factual information is your person relying upon to base their decision?

Alternatives

- What are the different options available to your person?

Values

- What did they view as being important?

- Did your person represent a shift in values from the typical values of the time period?

Sound Reasoning

- Does there appear to be good rationale for why your person made the choice they did?

Commitment to follow through

- How did your person act on their decision?

IV. Show film footage on the event

Find the best possible film footage of 5-10 minutes about your topic that reinforces your thesis idea about your person or group.

V. Impact of your person on the time period

1. How do you assess how your person impacted the period?
2. Did your person significantly contribute to the period in a positive or negative way? Explain.

Putting together the presentation

Now use the information above to put together a 15 minute presentation to the rest of the class. Begin the presentation by stating your thesis. Then support your thesis in your presentation in a manner that is clear and interesting for the rest of the class.

Bibliography

^{i i} <http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/coldwar1.htm>