

Teaching Guide:

Cold War in North Carolina

Note for Teachers:

This is the Teaching Guide for the Cold War in North Carolina Case Study:
museumofthenewsouth.org/schools/cold-war-in-north-carolina/

Sections:

Background Information

Activity Instructions and Rubrics

Student Objectives

Relevant NC 8th Grade Social Studies Standards

Background Information

After World War II ended, the United States became involved in another global conflict known as the Cold War. The Soviet Union wanted to expand its influence into Europe and Asia to protect itself from another disastrous invasion, while the United States wanted to promote and protect democracy. The Cold War was a long struggle for global supremacy from 1945 to 1989 that pitted the capitalist United States against the communist Soviet Union. The Cold War was mostly ideological disagreements about governance and economic values. However, it was fueled by political policies, suspicion, espionage, technological advancements, and proxy wars. It also happened alongside the Civil Rights Era. Many of those conversations and movements around equality and opportunity were juxtaposed with the fear of communism and its promised version of equality.

Following the war, many countries in Europe and Africa were repaired, reassigned, and rebuilt. The United States and the Soviet Union divided Germany and the city of Berlin with the Berlin Wall. America hoped to entice ally countries toward democratic values and passed the Marshall Plan, which helped provide funds to rebuild those countries. The United States also adopted a policy known as containment, which worked to prevent communism from spreading and contain it behind the "Iron Curtain," the land under the control and influence of the Soviet Union and China.

The United States and the Soviet Union competed in technological advancements including developing new weapons, nuclear technology, and cultural innovations. The most famous example is known as the space race, which began with the launch of the Soviet Union's spy satellite Sputnik 1. Due in large part to fear about each country spying on the other, both governments poured funding into aerospace research, which had a major impact on the development of NASA and moon travel.

Many United States citizens were victims of the "Red Scare" during the 1950s, which was a hysterical fear of communist spies and sympathizers infiltrating the country. This fueled McCarthyism, named for Senator Joseph McCarthy, who eventually lost respect after even accusing the Army of communist sympathizing. The overall fear and mistrust of communism still permeates American culture today. Fear of nuclear attack was also a staple of the Cold War. Many people built bomb shelters and participated in bomb drills. Videos such as "Duck and Cover" were shown in classrooms around the country, and people were encouraged to have evacuation plans in their homes and cities. *The Twilight Zone* television show questioned the necessity for bunkers in a famous episode called, "The Shelter," which offered commentary on the human experience of the Red Scare and nuclear proliferation.

During the Cold War, two proxy wars known as the Korean War and the Vietnam War broke out due to the push and pull of communist and democratic ideologies. Once a unified country, communist North Korea and South Korea remain separate today due in large part to the stalemate outcome of the Korean War. That war continues to permeate cultural dialogue about hyper communism versus hyper democratization. Vietnam was an unpopular conflict fueled by the “Domino Theory,” the idea that if one country fell to communism its bordering countries would too. The United States was unsuccessful in preventing a communist takeover in Vietnam. The Vietnam War became a controversial one that left many American veterans without proper care and was heavily protested alongside the Civil Rights Movement.

One of the most frightening moments of the Cold War was the Cuban Missile Crisis. In October of 1962, leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union engaged in a tense, 13-day political and military standoff over the installation of nuclear-armed Soviet missiles on Cuba, just 90 miles from American shores.

The Cold War came to an end in the 1980s as the Soviet Union began to see uprisings from countries under their control or influence. Attitudes on nuclear weaponry, space travel, and war were shifting and preventing the Cold War from thriving as it once had. In 1989, Germans tore down the Berlin Wall, putting a symbolic end to the Cold War. By 1991, the Soviet Union had dissolved into independent countries.

Activity Instructions and Rubrics

Letter

Have students write a letter to the editor about Americans' fear of nuclear weapons or communism. An optional grading rubric is included.

These are possible reasons people write to an editor:

- They agree with content and want to say something about a topic
- They disagree with content and want to explain why
- They want to provide some additional information about the subject

Well-written letters are:

- Written clearly
- Brief (short)
- Supported with claims backed up by facts

Students may use this suggested format for their letters:

Date:

Dear Editor,

Paragraph 1: Summarize the issue of your choice about Americans' fear of communism OR nuclear weapons.

Paragraph 2: STATE your claim on the topic.

Paragraph 3: Back up your claim with at least 3 facts from the sources studied. Hint: You will need to reference these in your paragraph.

Paragraph 4: Thank the editors for reading your letter.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Modifications:

- Modify the length and number of sources required.
- Allow multilingual learners to complete this assignment in a different language or use a dictionary to choose appropriate words for their letter.

Extension: Ask students to complete a second submission from the perspective of someone living today. The submission should be in a different format from an editorial, such as a letter to an elected official or a blog post.

Poster or Cartoon

Ask students to imagine they are running to be a United States Senator from North Carolina. They will design a campaign poster that indicates their stance on the Cold War and addresses North Carolinians' fear of communism. Students should use both images and text. Images may be drawn or printed. They should cite sources on the back of the poster, including any image used that they did not create.

OR

Ask students to create a political cartoon that either supports or disagrees with North Carolinians' fear of communism. They should use both images and text. Images may be drawn or printed. They should cite sources on the back of the cartoon, including any image used that they did not create. For more information on teaching students how to create political cartoons, use these suggested search terms: "drawing political cartoons kennedy center."

An optional grading rubric is included.

Modifications:

- Have students choose a campaign poster or political cartoon from the Cold War and analyze it.
- Allow multilingual learners to complete this assignment in a different language or use a dictionary to choose appropriate words for their letter.

Extension: Have students complete both a poster and a cartoon which take opposite stances on the influence of communism during the Cold War.

Cold War in North Carolina: Letter to the Editor Rubric

Points	Idea/Focus	Content Development	Organization	Style & Conventions
4	The writer clearly addressed the prompt. They understood the topic and took a clear stance. The topic is clearly stated and the writer maintained a sharp, distinct focus/stance throughout the letter.	The writer uses evidence from the sources to persuasively support the claim.	The letter is organized in clear, easy to follow paragraphs. The writer uses transitions to create flow. Writing is in paragraph form where dialogue is not used.	The letter follows the prescribed format and includes a clear header, salutation, body and closing. The language and tone is formal, but appropriate for the audience. Correct grammar, spelling and capitalization are used throughout the composition.
3	The writer addressed the prompt and took a stance. The topic is stated and the writer maintained a focus throughout the composition.	The writer uses some evidence from the sources to persuasively support the claim.	The letter is organized in paragraphs. The ideas are connected using transitions.	The letter mostly follows the prescribed format. The language and tone is formal. It contains no more than 2 errors in grammar, spelling or punctuation.
2	The writer did address the prompt but the stance is unclear or disorganized. The topic is stated but there is little focus beyond that in the composition.	The writer used only one piece of evidence from the sources to attempt to support the claim.	The letter does have paragraphs, but is missing key elements.	The letter is missing more than one element of the format. The language and tone is not appropriate (informal) and contains no more than 4 errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
1	The writer did not address the topic and did not maintain a clear claim regarding the assigned topic.	The writer does not use any evidence to support the claim.	The letter is not organized into paragraphs. The language and tone is severely informal and does not convey a point of view.	The included format is not used. The letter contains 5 or more errors in spelling, grammar or punctuation

Cold War in North Carolina: Poster or Cartoon Rubric

	6	5-4	3-2	1-0
Meets Basic Requirements	Student's project follows all instructions.	Student's project is missing a minor point from instructions.	Student's project is missing a major point but is still completed.	Student's project does not conform to more than one major point.
Organization & Preparation	The project is of excellent quality and it is apparent that the student spent time in preparing it.	The project is of good quality and it is apparent that the student spent some time.	The project is of fair quality and seems rushed.	The project appears to have been hastily created and appears messy or disorganized.
Knowledge & Concept of the Topic	The project demonstrates higher level understanding of an issue.	The project demonstrates an understanding of an issue.	The project demonstrates recognition of an issue but not a clear understanding.	The project demonstrates that the student is still struggling to understand the issue.
Creativity of the Product	The project style, color, and impact align perfectly with the student's ideas.	The project style, color, and impact align well with the student's ideas.	The project style, color, and impact do not align well with the student's ideas.	The project style, color, and impact seem disjointed and rushed.
Visual Expression of Ideas	The project is rich with symbolism. The message goes beyond a statement and reflects an in-depth opinion providing a claim to the prompt.	The project is rich with symbolism. The message goes beyond a statement and reflects an in-depth opinion answering one of the "questions to answer."	The project demonstrates little symbolism. The message does not really go beyond a statement (for example "communism is bad") and does not reflect an in-depth opinion answering more than one of the "questions to answer."	The project demonstrates little to no symbolism. The message does not really go beyond a statement (for example "communism is bad") and does not reflect an in-depth opinion.

Student Objectives

1. Students will be able to identify how North Carolinians may have felt about the fear of communism and nuclear attack.
2. Students will be able to draw conclusions from multiple sources about the Cold War.
3. Students will be able to construct a claim by writing a letter and creating an artistic visual interpretation of the time period.

Relevant NC 8th Grade Social Studies Standards

- I.1.5** Identify evidence that draws information from multiple perspectives.
- I.1.6** Construct claims and counterclaims using evidence while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both based on multiple sources.
- 8.C&G.1** Understand how democratic principles have influenced the government structure and policies of North Carolina and the nation.