

## Assignment Discovery Lesson Plan The Cuban Missile Crisis

**Subject**  
Modern History

**Grade level**  
8-12

**Duration**  
One or two class periods

**Objectives**  
Students will

- review facts about the Cold War, and
- research and write a news article about a Cold War event.

**Materials**

- Computer with Internet access
- Print resources about the Cold War
- Audio or video recorder

**Procedures:**

1. Review information about the Cold War: What was the Cold War? Who was involved? Was it really a war? Did direct military confrontation occur? Which countries were involved besides the United States and Soviet Union? The following overview may help direct the discussion:

*The Cold War describes the tense and hostile relationship between the Soviet Union and the U.S. between 1945 and 1992. The communist government of the Soviet Union wanted to convert other countries to communism. The U.S. pledged to support free countries so they could resist communism. Both countries had nuclear weapons and were capable of launching a nuclear war.*

*Other countries took sides in this international conflict. Many Western European countries sided with the U.S. to form NATO (National Atlantic Treaty Organization) in 1949. Eastern European countries signed the Warsaw Pact and formed an alliance with the Soviet Union.*

2. Give students the following timeline of Cold War events. You may want to print out copies or put the information on an overhead projector:

1945: Yalta Agreement  
1947: Truman Doctrine  
1947: Marshal Plan

1948: Berlin Airlift  
1949: NATO formed  
1950: Korean War begins.  
1952: U.S. tests first hydrogen bomb in Marshall Islands.  
1953: Soviet Union tests first hydrogen bomb.  
1953: Korean War ends.  
1955: Warsaw Pact organized  
1957: Launch of *Sputnik*  
1950s: McCarthy Hearings  
1961: Berlin Wall built  
1961: Bay of Pigs  
1962: Cuban Missile Crisis  
1963: Installation of a Hot Line  
1969: Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) begins.  
1979: Invasion of Afghanistan  
1987: Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty  
1989: Berlin Wall comes down.  
1990: Unification of East and West Germany  
1991: Collapse of the Soviet Union

3. Explain to students that they will research one Cold War event. (You may assign more than one student to an event such as the Korean War and have them write about different aspects.) Based on their research, students will write a mock news article about the event and include direct quotes and images. Remind students that their articles should answer the following: who was involved, what happened, where the event happened, when it took place, and why it was significant. Each article should include at least one image, such as a map or photograph.

4. The following Web sites provide useful information:

CNN: The Cold War  
<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold.war/kbank/>

The Cold War Museum  
<http://www.coldwar.org/>

The Cold War  
[http://www.geocities.com/the\\_coldwar/](http://www.geocities.com/the_coldwar/)

Cold War Policies  
<http://history.acusd.edu/gen/20th/coldwar0.html>

National Archives Learning Curve: Cold War  
<http://learningcurve.pro.gov.uk/coldwar/>

Yahoo: The Cold War  
[http://dir.yahoo.com/Arts/Humanities/History/By\\_Time\\_Period/20th\\_Century/Cold\\_War/](http://dir.yahoo.com/Arts/Humanities/History/By_Time_Period/20th_Century/Cold_War/)

5. Have students display their articles in chronological order on a classroom bulletin board. (You may photocopy articles for students to read outside of class.)

6. Once students have read all the articles, hold a discussion about the Cold War. To review what they've learned, follow the timeline and select students who will explain each event's significance.

### **Evaluation**

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

**3 points:** Students were highly engaged in class discussions; demonstrated a good understanding of the Cold War; wrote a complete and organized news article that answered all questions about the event and included several other important details.

**2 points:** Students participated in class discussions; demonstrated an understanding of the Cold War; wrote a complete and organized news article that answered most of the questions about the event and included some other important details.

**1 point:** Students participated minimally in class discussions; demonstrated an incomplete understanding of the Cold War; wrote an incomplete and disorganized news article that did not answer basic questions about the event and included few or no other important details.

### **Vocabulary**

#### **Cold War**

**Definition:** The hostile relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union that existed in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Context:** The threat of a nuclear attack was one of the most frightening aspects of the Cold War.

#### **Communism**

**Definition:** A system of government in which all means of production are owned by a single party; a social system in which property and goods are owned in common

**Context:** During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Soviet Union and China were two powerful communist countries.

#### **NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)**

**Definition:** An international political alliance formed to settle disputes peacefully and defend member countries against outside aggressors

**Context:** NATO was formed in 1949 by the United States and Western European nations in response to the threats associated with the Cold War.

#### **Warsaw Pact**

**Definition:** A military alliance of communist eastern European nations formed in 1955 in response to the Cold War

**Context:** The nations of the Warsaw Pact included the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, and Romania.

### **Credit**

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