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# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

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Think of this book, and the other books in this series, not as a text, but as a menu. As a teacher, you select lessons from the menu. It was never intended that you would have everything on the menu—that would be overeating. [Take a look at the table of contents.] When choosing a lesson, look first at the problems on the student handout(s), and then at the student handout describing these problems’ historical outcomes. If you like what you see, take a look at the lesson plan for ideas on using the handouts. You can teach all of the lessons by giving students a problem handout, having them discuss what they would do, and finally distributing the outcomes handout. You may also consult the “Quick Motivator” section of a lesson plan to use the handouts as a short introduction to class.

On the other hand, you can think of this book as a “how-to” guide for teaching specific decision-making skills while also covering significant events in United States history. The book posits a general guideline of ten distinct skills, organized under the acronym **P-A-G-E** to help students remember these skills. Take a look at the explanation of **P-A-G-E** in the introduction to this book, under the section titled “Guide to Thoughtful Decision Making.” This section explains each of the ten skills and includes examples.

Every lesson in this series analyzes the historical topic in terms of **P-A-G-E**. Each lesson targets specific skills, letting the content and the actual decision in history determine the skills emphasized in the lesson. Take a look at the skills grid for each lesson on page 1 of this book. Handouts are frequently used to focus students on using specific skills. For example, many lessons include a list of questions designed to provoke more questions from students, as well as to give them ideas of the types of questions to ask. Other lessons give students a list of assumptions and ask which they assumed in making their decisions. The other skills have similar handouts.

Whether you try the problem-discussion-outcome approach or concentrate more on specific decision-making skills, I hope these books will help make you a more effective teacher and help your students learn United States history in a way that will help prepare them to make more thoughtful decisions as citizens.

Kevin O’Reilly

# INTRODUCTION

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## RATIONALE: Hindsight Versus Foresight

When we study history, it is all too easy to sit in judgment of those who came before us. We read it after the fact; we see it in hindsight. Given the benefit of such 20/20 hindsight, some historical figures seem to have been very misguided or downright silly in their decisions. Why didn't they anticipate the consequences of their choices? How could they have been so shortsighted? Sports enthusiasts call this sort of analysis "Monday morning quarterbacking."

However, it's not so easy to laugh at the follies of past decision makers if we are confronted with decisions in history before we learn the actual results. In such a situation, we find ourselves making some of the same mistakes that historical characters made, and we sometimes commit new errors they did not make. This method of studying history, which we might call "foresight history," is far more challenging—and engaging—than the traditional retroactive method to which we are inured.

In short, when we learn history by hindsight we risk becoming more arrogant and complacent. If, on the other hand, we learn history by *foresight*, by casting ourselves in the role of those historical figures and making decisions as they did—without knowing the outcome—we can learn humility and gain a great deal of empathy for them. Students in my classes constantly exclaim, "This is hard!" as opposed to, "This is boring!"

Foresight history also helps students improve key decision-making skills they will use again and again as citizens. Schools of law, medicine, business, and nursing, along with the military and many other institutions, use case-study methods, where students are forced to make decisions about a particular case and then analyze their thinking. If each of these varied disciplines values decision making so much, shouldn't we be training all our future citizens how to make good decisions?

History provides many benefits for those who study it. Historical knowledge can be liberating all by itself, letting us draw back the veil of ignorance and see the present with eyes enlightened by the past. The more knowledge of history we possess, the better we understand our societies and ourselves. Study and evaluation of primary sources, discussions of motives, debates about significance, analyzing causes and effects, and many other strategies are vital to history courses. The lessons here on decision making are meant to support and enhance these other methods of studying history, not replace them with a more "practical" type of history.

# THE COLD WAR & THE 1950s

## Introduction

### OVERVIEW

This volume on postwar America consists of eight lessons: five focus on foreign policy, and three on domestic matters. Since the start of the Cold War dominated this period, this book deals with it extensively. As with the other volumes in the *Decision Making in U.S. History* series, this book does not attempt to cover all the major topics from this time period. Rather, lessons were constructed around interesting decision-making problems.

### SKILLS GRID FOR THIS VOLUME

X = part of lesson

E = emphasized in the lesson

Skill	Lesson							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Underlying problem	X	X			E	X		X
Point of view	E			X	X	E		E
Assumptions/emotions		E						
Ask—context	E	X		E	X	X	X	X
Ask—sources					X	X		
Ask—analogies	X			X		X		
Goals? Realistic?		X	E	X	X	X	X	E
Options. Ethical?		X						E
Unintended consequences	X	E		X	E	X	E	
Play out option	X	X		X		X	X	X

# LESSON 1: YALTA, 1945

## Teacher Pages

### OVERVIEW

The Yalta Conference marked a pivotal moment in both U.S. and world history. The focus shifted from the battlefields of World War II to the negotiations and hostilities that would come to characterize the Cold War. This lesson asks students to make decisions on four issues: the future of eastern Europe, the division of Germany, the establishment of the United Nations, and the end of the war with Japan.

These questions actually came up over the course of three separate conferences: the Tehran Conference, the Yalta Conference, and the Potsdam Conference. For the sake of simplicity, this lesson condenses the issues and concentrates on the best known of the three conferences—Yalta.

### VOCABULARY

- Yalta—Conference in 1945 between the U.S., Britain, and the Soviet Union
- Joseph Stalin—Dictatorial leader of the Soviet Union
- Franklin Roosevelt—President of the U.S. during the Depression and World War II
- Winston Churchill—Prime Minister of Britain in the late 1930s and early 1940s
- Lublin Poles—Communist leaders in Poland put into power by the Soviet Union
- London Poles—Polish leaders in exile in London who wanted to return to Poland and promote a democratic, capitalist society
- Reparations—Payments by one country for damages caused to another in the act of war
- United Nations—International organization that aims to settle disputes and prevent wars
- Veto—The power of one political group or individual to cancel the decision of another. In the U.N. Security Council, proposals have to pass unanimously, so a single negative vote vetoes that proposal.
- Declaration of Liberated Europe—Pledge to allow free elections in countries liberated from the Nazis

### DECISION-MAKING SKILLS EMPHASIZED

- Identify underlying problem
- Consider other points of view
- Ask questions about context
- Ask about analogies
- Predict unintended consequences
- Play out options

# LESSON 1: YALTA, 1945

## Student Handout 1: Problems

### Conference

It is February 1945, and you are President Franklin D. Roosevelt. You have come to the Russian city of Yalta to meet with your allies, Prime Minister Winston Churchill of Britain and Joseph Stalin of the Soviet Union. The war in Europe is rapidly coming to a close. The Soviets are marching towards Germany from the east through Poland and Hungary, while British and American forces close in on Germany from the west.



You have had successful meetings with Churchill and Stalin before; at those times, all three leaders shared a common goal—to defeat Germany.

Now with the defeat of Hitler’s army all but certain, the three nations must plan for the postwar world. What will happen to lands seized by the Nazis? What will happen to Germany itself? Can the U.S., Britain, and the Soviet Union do anything to ensure that a global conflict like this one never happens again? The U.S. and the Soviet Union have been allies during the war, but no one is confident that their cooperation will continue during peacetime. The Soviets are communist, and Stalin seems to want to promote the spread of communism. The U.S. and Britain are capitalist democracies, and they want to see similar governments established throughout Europe. It seems inevitable that these two goals will come into conflict.

You also know that you still need Stalin’s powerful “Red Army” to defeat the Nazis. The U.S. also still has to wage a bloody and costly war in Asia against Japan, and you may need Stalin’s help to defeat the Japanese as well. Some of your advisors estimate that if the U.S. ends up having to invade Japan, as many as one million U.S. troops could die. American scientists have secretly worked to develop an atomic bomb that might force the Japanese to surrender, but you don’t know if it will be ready in time, or if it will actually work. Having the Soviets join the war in Asia might be the only way to defeat Japan without a catastrophic loss of American lives, so you cannot risk losing Stalin’s support.

# LESSON 1: YALTA, 1945

## Student Handout 3: Role Play

Here is the agenda for the Yalta Conference. Decide what your position will be for each item on the agenda:

### POLAND (EASTERN EUROPE)

1. Should the Soviet-sponsored Lublin Poles control the government until a new government can be formed?
2. Should Poland have free elections with international observers on hand to ensure that the process is fair?
3. Should the Soviet Union get land from eastern Poland?
4. Should the Allies agree on a policy of allowing democracy in eastern Europe, including a guarantee of free elections?

### GERMANY

1. Should the occupation zones be temporary, followed by a unified German government?
2. Should Germany pay reparations of \$10 billion to the Soviet Union?

### UNITED NATIONS

1. Should the Soviet Union get 15 votes in the General Assembly?
2. Should major countries get an unlimited veto?

### THE WAR AGAINST JAPAN

1. Should the Soviet Union join the war against Japan in exchange for control of land in Asia?