The Cold War

Backwards Planning Curriculum Units

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

How To Use This Unit

Backwards planning offers an innovative yet simple approach to meeting curriculum goals; it also provides a way to keep students engaged and focused throughout the learning process. Many teachers approach history instruction in the following manner: they identify a topic required by state and/or national standards, they find materials on that topic, they use those materials with their students, and then they administer some sort of standard test at the end of the unit. Backwards planning, rather than just starting with a required instructional topic, goes a step further by identifying exactly what students need to know by the end of the unit—the so-called "enduring understandings." The next step involves assessment: devising ways to determine whether students have learned what they need to know. The final step involves planning the teaching/learning process so that students can acquire the knowledge needed.

This product uses backwards planning to combine a PowerPoint presentation, activities that involve authentic assessment, and traditional tests (multiple-choice and essay) into a complete curriculum unit. Although the materials have enough built-in flexibility that you can use them in a number of ways, we suggest the following procedure:

1. Start with the "essential questions" listed on slide 2 of the PowerPoint presentation (these also appear in the teacher support materials). Briefly go over them with students before getting into the topic material. These questions will help students focus their learning and note taking during the course of the unit. You can also choose to use the essential questions as essay questions at the end of the unit; one way to do this is to let students know at the outset that one of the essential questions will be on the test—they just won't know which one.

2. Next, discuss the activities students will complete during the unit. This will also help focus their learning and note taking, and it will lead them to view the PowerPoint presentation in a different light, considering it a source of ideas for authentic-assessment projects.

3. Present the PowerPoint to the class. Most slides have an image and bullet points summarizing the slide's topic. The Notes page for each slide contains a paragraph or two of information that you can use as a presentation script, or just as background information for your own reference. You don't need to present the entire PowerPoint at once: it's broken up into several sections, each of which concludes with some discussion questions that echo parts of the essential questions and also help students to get closer to the "enduring understandings." Spend some time with the class going over and debating these questions—this will not only help students think critically about the material, but it will also allow you to incorporate different modes of instruction during a single class period, offering a better chance to engage students.

4. Have students complete one or more of the authentic-assessment activities. These activities are flexible: most can be completed either individually or in groups, and either as homework or as in-class assignments. Each activity includes a rubric; many also have graphic organizers. You can choose to have students complete the activities after you have shown them the entire PowerPoint presentation, or you can show them one section of the PowerPoint, go over the discussion questions, and then have students complete an activity.

5. End the unit with traditional assessment. The support materials include a 20-question multiple-choice quiz; you can combine this with an essay question (you can use one of the essential questions or come up with one of your own) to create a full-period test.

6. If desired, debrief with students by going over the essential questions with them again and remind them what the enduring understandings are.

We are dedicated to continually improving our products and working with teachers to develop exciting and effective tools for the classroom. We can offer advice on how to maximize the use of the product and share others' experiences. We would also be happy to work with you on ideas for customizing the presentation.

We value your feedback, so please let us know more about the ways in which you use this product to supplement your lessons; we're also eager to hear any recommendations you might have for ways in which we can expand the functionality of this product in future editions. You can e-mail us at access@socialstudies.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

Dr. Aaron Willis
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Cold War

The era known as the “Cold War” lasted roughly from the close of World War II until the end of the 1980s. Rather than military combat, rivalry and political tension between the United States and the Soviet Union defined the period. Though at various times it appeared that the Cold War might turn “hot,” the two sides never actually fought one another; to do so would have risked nuclear war. Each side instead sought to thwart the other using political methods or propaganda. For example, in various conflicts around the world (including Korea, Vietnam, and Afghanistan) both sides backed governments that had similar political aims to themselves. In addition, each side looked to best the other in the “space race.” Though the Cold War lasted less than 50 years, it cast a shadow over the second half of the 20th century and left a legacy that can still be felt today.

Essential Questions

- What conditions and issues led to mistrust between the U.S. and USSR, thereby leading to the Cold War?
- What methods did the U.S. use to attempt to stop the spread of communism in eastern Europe?
- Why did the U.S. turn to military action to stop communist aggression in Korea and Vietnam?
- Why did Americans respond in the manner they did to perceived internal threats, such as “blacklisting” and “McCarthyism”?
- How did the Cuban Missile Crisis change the scope of the Cold War?
- How did the Nixon and Ford Administrations approach the evolving nature of the Cold War in the late 1960s and 1970s?
- What role did the Reagan and Bush Administrations play in the eventual end of the Cold War in the late 1980s?

U.S. and USSR: Allies Become Enemies

- Different economic systems
- Ideological differences
- Growing mutual suspicions

A U.S. government poster from WWII portraying the Soviets as friendly

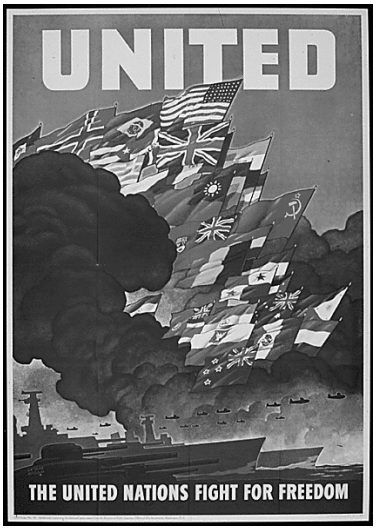
Although the U.S. and Soviet Union had worked in common cause during World War II, several issues eventually turned the onetime allies into bitter rivals. While the United States was built on free enterprise and had a capitalist economy, the Soviets favored communism, in which the central government controlled all property and economic policy. In addition, the Soviet Union was as much a totalitarian state as the nations the Allies had fought during the war. The Soviet government officially recognized only the Communist Party and routinely silenced opposition parties. Finally, ever since the 1917 Russian Revolution the basic clash between communism and capitalism had made both nations highly suspicious of one another. These tensions only increased after the defeat of Nazi Germany: without a common enemy to hold them together, the alliance between the U.S. and USSR quickly vanished.

The Yalta Conference

The “Big Three”: Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin meet at Yalta, February 1945

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Soviet Premier Josef Stalin conferred at the February 1945 Yalta Conference, which created the United Nations and also set the stage for Cold War. Yalta marked the final meeting of the World War II–era “Big Three.” Roosevelt, already in poor health, died two months after the conference. Later that summer, Churchill’s Conservative Party lost the British parliamentary elections, and Clement Attlee of the Labour Party replaced him as prime minister.

Yalta: Significant Events



A WWII-era poster celebrating the UN

- Creation of the United Nations
- Demand for Germany's unconditional surrender
- Postwar Germany split into four zones of occupation
- Stalin agreed to enter war against Japan
- Status of Poland
- Demilitarization of Germany

During the Yalta Conference, U.S., Soviet, and British delegates agreed on several significant points, including:

1. The creation of a new organization, the United Nations, to replace the ineffectual League of Nations. The first meeting of the United Nations was scheduled for April 25, 1945, in San Francisco. The UN would include a "Security Council" made up of the victorious Allied nations from World War II (the U.S., the USSR, Britain, France, and China).

2. Reaffirming the principles of the Atlantic Charter, the participants agreed on the necessity of self-determination for all peoples under Nazi domination and further called for the unconditional surrender of Germany.

3. The delegates also agreed that once Germany surrendered, the country should be partitioned into four zones of occupation: the U.S., the USSR, Britain, and France would each control one zone.

4. In a major victory for FDR, Stalin agreed that the USSR would enter the war against Japan within 90 days of the defeat of Germany. The USSR declared war on Japan on August 9, 1945—the same day the U.S. dropped the second atomic bomb on Japan, on the city of Nagasaki. The Soviet military seized some territory from Japan before the end of the war.

5. The Allies agreed to allow the USSR to keep some of the territory in eastern Poland that it had taken control of during the war. They also essentially allowed the communist Polish government set up by the Soviets to remain in place.

6. The delegates also decided that postwar Germany should be demilitarized and de-Nazified (that is, to get rid of all vestiges of the Nazi regime).

Cold War: Backwards Planning Activities

Enduring understandings:

The Cold War shaped much of American foreign policy in the post–World War II era
The Cold War was a period where the U.S. and USSR sought to stop or limit each other's ambitions through propaganda or political means
Cold War conflicts were generally diplomatic in nature; however, U.S. forces fought "hot" wars in Korea and Vietnam
American presidents modified policies and responses to Soviet actions throughout the Cold War
Civil Defense calmed Americans' jittery nerves with programs and policies that convinced many that a possible nuclear war was not only winnable, but survivable
The Cold War ended in the late 1980s and early 1990s as economic conditions forced political reforms in the Soviet Union and other Soviet Bloc nations

Essential questions:

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Learning experiences and instruction:

Students will need to know…	Students will need to be able to…
1. Causes of the Cold War 2. Major figures from the Cold War era, including political and military leaders 3. Basic philosophical and cultural differences between the U.S. and USSR 4. Major diplomatic conflicts of the Cold War 5. The impact of the Korean War and the Vietnam War on the Cold War 6. The impact of *realpolitik* and détente on the Cold War in the late 1960s through the mid 1970s 7. Factors and conditions that led to the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s	1. Read and interpret primary source documents from the Cold War 2. Make conclusions about various strategies and policies enacted to deal with the Cold War 3. Identify key persons associated with the Cold War, either in the area of diplomacy or the military 4. Recognize how the Cold War affected American life and culture 5. Recognize how American policies in regard to the Cold War were changed and modified during the second half of the 20th century 6. Understand how the Cold War affected the United States' position as a world leader

Teaching and learning activities that will equip students to demonstrate targeted understandings:

Overview of essential questions and basic understandings
Class discussion of subject matter questions in the Cold War presentation
Teacher introduction of common terms and ideas in the essential questions and related projects
Provide students with primary source materials from which they will complete the related projects in the unit
Students conduct research in groups to be used later in individual and group projects
Informal observation and coaching of students as they work in groups
Evaluation and delivered feedback on projects and research reports
Students create and present their unit projects
Posttest made of multiple-choice questions covering the presentation, with one or more essential questions as essay questions

Project #1: What if CNN had been at Yalta?

Overview:

In this lesson, students collect information about the Yalta Conference and write a newscast about the events of the conference.

Objectives:

As a result of completing the lesson, students will:

Understand the various viewpoints and concerns of the participants at Yalta
Collect information about the conference, and make conclusions as to the decisions reached at the conference
Speculate as to how the decisions at Yalta contributed to the start of the Cold War

Time required:

Four to five class periods

Materials:

Computers with Internet access, word-processing software, maps (optional), video camera (optional), a television for playback of news reports (optional)

Methodology:

Prior to starting the project, you may wish to discuss the Yalta Conference with the class, focusing on things such as the main participants, points of contention in discussions, chief concerns of each participant, and major decisions made during the conference. (You might have students view slides 4–5 of the PowerPoint.)

Ask students to speculate on the impact of live news coverage of national or international events, particularly as to how immediate coverage of news events shapes people's perception. Discuss with students specific instances in which they were "eyewitnesses to history" via live news coverage. (Many students may mention watching the events of September 11, 2001, on live television as they unfolded, or the coverage of the breakup of the space shuttle *Columbia* in 2003. In this discussion, teachers might relate their memories of the *Challenger* disaster, the attempted assassination of President Ronald Reagan, the resignation of President Richard Nixon, the first moon landing, or the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.)

Following the class discussion, begin to prepare students for the project. Some students will assume the roles of participants and aides attending the conference, while others will act as

reporters covering the conference. The reporters write news stories related to Yalta, as well as interview the "Big Three": President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Soviet Premier Josef Stalin, and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Using the suggested Web sites and other means of research, students record their information about the Big Three (or others) on the "Character Chart" in order to ask or answer interview questions.

Depending on the size of the class, you may wish to add additional roles to the project. Also attending the conference were Alexander Cadogan (British Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs), Frederick Leathers (British Minister for War Transport), Anthony Eden (British Foreign Secretary), Edward Stettinius, (U.S. Secretary of State), W. Averell Harriman (U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union), and V.M. Molotov (Soviet Foreign Minister). If these roles are used, students can do Web-based or traditional research in order to collect information on these participants.

Once students have completed the research phase of the project, have them begin writing the script for the newscast. Reporters and interviewees should collaborate as to what questions about the conference will be asked, as well as possible answers.

If suitable technology is available, you may elect to have students in the class act as videographers and technicians by actually filming and editing the newscast. If you don't have access to advanced video technology, you may simply wish to have the newscast air "live" during the class period, taking into account the length of any particular interview or of the entire newscast.

Evaluation:

At the end of the newscast, evaluate student work using a suitable rubric. A sample rubric is included with this lesson, which you may either use or adapt to meet your individual circumstances.

Suggested web resources:

On the conference itself:

Avalon Project at Yale Law School: "The Yalta Conference" (http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/wwii/yalta.htm)

U.S. State Department page (http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/wwii/93273.htm)

"Big Three Confer," a short film on the Big Three at Yalta (http://www.archive.org/details/1945-02-15_Big_Three_Confer)

President Franklin D. Roosevelt's report to Congress—audio and transcript (http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=16591)