

Teacher Introduction

These Common Core History Assessments are designed to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they learn about the Cold War. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

Similar sets of assessments are available (or planned) for each unit in a typical American history class.

★ *Historical Thinking and the Challenge of the Common Core*

This set includes nine assessments aligned with the first nine Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standards. We have left out the tenth Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard, which does not lend itself to assessments of the sort provided here. The set also includes two writing tasks aligned with two key Common Core History/Social Studies Writing Standards.

These Common Core standards challenge history teachers to develop in students the complex literacy skills they need in today's world and the ability to master the unique demands of working with historical primary and secondary source texts. The Common Core standards are supportive of the best practices in teaching historical thinking. Such practices include close reading, attending to a source's point of view and purpose, corroborating sources, and placing sources in their historical context. These are the skills needed to make history less about rote learning and more about an active effort to investigate and interpret the past.

These assessments are also useful in many ways for ELA teachers. They assess many of the skills specified in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards, which put a good deal of emphasis on the reading of informational texts. The Anchor Standards form the basis for all of the various Common Core standards for English Language Arts.

★ *What Are These Assessments Like?*

- *A group of nine reading skills assessments and two writing tasks for each major era of American History*

Each reading skills assessment is based on one of the key Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standards. Two writing tasks are based on the first two College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing, which are the basis for the Common Core History/Social Studies Writing Standards. The two writing standards focus on writing arguments to support claims and writing informative/explanatory texts.

- *Based on primary or secondary sources*

In most cases, one primary source is used. In some cases, an assessment is based on more than one primary source or on a primary and a secondary source. The sources are brief. In most cases, texts have been slightly altered to improve readability, but without changing meaning or tone.

- *Brief tasks promoting historical literacy*

For each assessment, students write brief answers to one or two questions. The questions are not tests of simple factual recall. They assess the students' mastery of the skills addressed by that assessment's Common Core History/Social Studies Standard.

- *Two versions of each of the nine reading standards assessments*

A BASIC and an ADVANCED version of each assessment are provided. The BASIC Assessment addresses the Common Core Standard for grades 6–8. The ADVANCED Assessment is based on the Common Core Standard for grades 9–10 and grades 11–12 combined. Each version uses the same source or sources. In some cases, sources have been somewhat shortened for the BASIC version.

- *Easy to use both as learning and assessment tools*

These assessments do not take valuable time away from instruction. The primary sources and background information on each source make them useful mini-lessons as well as tools to assess student historical thinking skills. The sources all deal with themes and trends normally covered when teaching the relevant historical era.

- *Evaluating student responses*

Brief but specific suggestions are provided defining acceptable and best responses to each question asked in the assessment. The suggestions are meant to aid in evaluating students, but even more importantly they are a way for teachers to help students better understand and master the skills on which the assessment is focused.

The Cold War Assessment 1

Basic Level

Teacher Instructions

Based on Common Core Reading Standard 1 for grades 6–8

★ Key Ideas and Details

1. **(6–8)** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

★ Using this Assessment

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The Cold War: Assessment 1 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 1 for grades 6–8. It asks students to cite specific textual evidence from two documents. It also challenges students to adapt that reading skill to the unique demands of thinking historically as they carefully interpret textual evidence in a primary source from a time in the past and a secondary source account of that same time in the past.

★ Evaluating Student Responses to this Assessment

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The Cold War: Assessment 1

Directions: This exercise asks you to read a secondary source document and a primary source document carefully and answer questions about specific details in the documents. In order to better understand the documents, read and make use of the source information located just below each document. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the two assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

Document 1: A Secondary Source

World War II began in Europe in 1939 with Hitler's invasion of Poland. Near the end of the war, Poland was still a key issue. It was on the agenda at Yalta in February 1945. Yalta, in Russia's Crimea, was where the three leaders of the Allies in the war against Hitler met to plan for the postwar world. At Yalta, one of those three leaders, Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin, argued about Poland with the other two, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt. Stalin insisted on border changes to make his nation more secure against any future attack from the west. Those changes came at the expense of Finland, Poland, and Romania, but Churchill and Roosevelt could do little about them. After all, the Red Army was already in control of most of Eastern Europe. The British and Americans feared Stalin would use intimidation and force to impose pro-Soviet regimes throughout that region. In Poland, two groups were claiming to be the legitimate government—the "Lublin" government controlled by the Soviets and a Polish government in exile in London. At Yalta, Churchill and Roosevelt tried to convince Soviet leader Joseph Stalin to allow free elections to decide who should rule in Poland. Stalin promised to do this but never did. His refusal helped provoke a shift in the thinking of U.S. policy makers. The war had drastically weakened France and other nations along the western rim of Europe. They, too, faced the threat of Soviet domination. A Russian-controlled empire from the Sea of Japan to the Atlantic Ocean was not out of the question. Did Stalin intend only to secure Russia's western frontier? Or was that only a first step in a plan to dominate the entire continent and, ultimately, the world? U.S. leaders in time decided it might well be the latter.

Source Information: This document is a secondary source account of the Yalta Conference near the end of World War II. A secondary source is an account of past events written later by someone who did not experience or take part in those events. As a secondary source, this document is not evidence from the Yalta Conference itself. It is a later account by someone writing about that event. This particular historical account was written in 2013 specifically for use as part of this activity.

Document 2: A Primary Source

Mr. Churchill eloquently painted the danger which arose from the continuing existence of two Polish governments. He urged that provision be made for a free election and that, in the meantime, effective guarantees could be made to secure the lines of communication of the Soviet army.

Stalin displayed great earnestness in replying.

“For the Russian people, the question of Poland is not only a question of honor but also a question of security. Throughout history, Poland has been the corridor through which the enemy has passed into Russia. Twice in the last thirty years our enemies, the Germans, have passed through this corridor. It is in Russia’s interest that Poland should be strong and powerful, in a position to shut the door of this corridor by her own force. It is necessary that Poland should be free, independent in power. Therefore, it is not only a question of honor but of life and death for the Soviet state.”

In every subsequent discussion the Soviet Government has used this argument to justify what it has done in Poland. Their idea of a friendly government is a government completely dominated by them. The Lublin government fitted this description and Stalin did not want to take any chances with representatives of other political parties. Later I discussed the subject with Mr. Molotov. I could not impress him with my views that Soviet security would be better assured by having in Poland a people who were friendly, rather than a government that was friendly only because it was dictated to by the Soviet Union. Unsuccessfully, I argued that governments would come and go, but that if the Soviet Government’s conduct in Poland won the friendship of the people, the friendship of the government would be assured.

Source Information: In February 1945, Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt met at Yalta to plan the postwar world. James F. Byrnes, a future Secretary of State, was at that Yalta Conference. This document is a small excerpt from a book he published two years later. From Chapter Two, “Yalta—High Tide of Big Three Unity,” in James Byrnes’s *Speaking Frankly* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947). This chapter is available on the site maintained by the International Relations Program at Mount Holyoke College and can be accessed online at <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/coldwar/byrnes.htm>.

Assessment Questions

1. Arguments over Poland were a major cause of tension at the start of the Cold War. How does Document 1 help you understand why this was so? Cite at least two specific details in the document to support your answer.

2. What, if anything, of importance does Byrnes (Document 2) add to what Document 1 says about the disagreements at Yalta over Poland? Cite one or two details from the document to support your answer.

The Cold War Assessment 7

Advanced Level

Teacher Instructions

Based on Common Core Reading Standard 7 for grades 9–12

★ *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas*

- 7. (9–10) Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.
- 7. (11–12) Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

★ *Using this Assessment*

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The Cold War: Assessment 7 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 7 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to do something historians must do all the time—integrate evidence found in a wide variety of primary sources presented in many visual and textual formats. It also asks them to judge the relative strengths and weaknesses of visual as compared with written sources.

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to this Assessment*

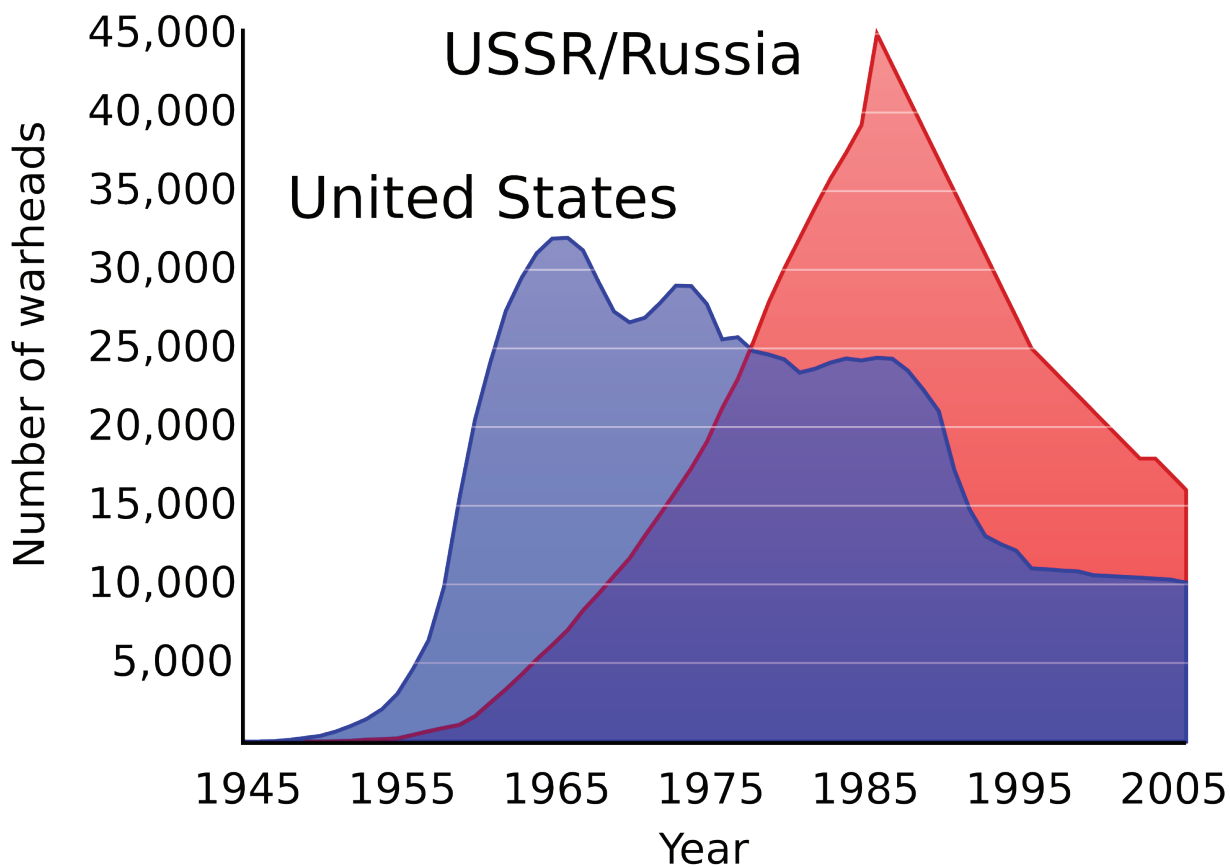
LEYZl dVTeZ _ Zl _ eRgRZRSJ WcdVgZ/h ` _ dR^ aJ aRXVd N

The Civil War: Assessment 7

Directions: This exercise asks you to study three documents carefully and answer two questions focused on what these sources have in common. In order to better understand the documents and their importance as historical evidence, read and make use of the source information located just below or next to each document itself. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

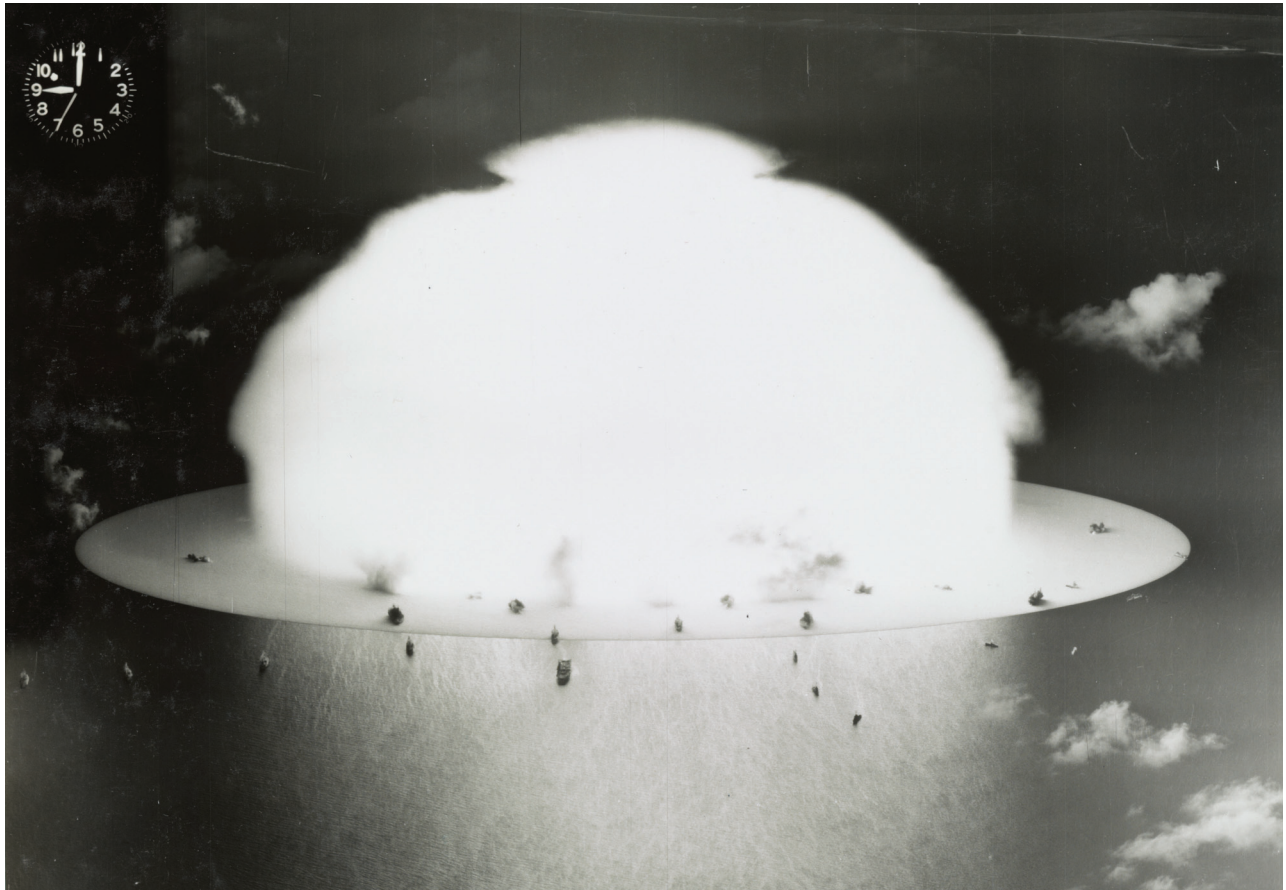
CCS Standard 7: Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Document 1: A Comparative Primary Source



Source Information: The Cold War remained “cold” because neither side ever dared use any or all of the nuclear weapons it had to threaten or deter the other side. Of course, the Cold War also was “hot” in many smaller conflicts, such as the Korean War and the Vietnam War. However, the Soviet Union and the United States never went to war directly with each other. This graphic of their total stockpiles of nuclear weapons (“warheads”) illustrates the pattern of the Cold War arms race. The graph is provided courtesy of Wikimedia Commons and can be accessed online at http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:US_and_USSR_nuclear_stockpiles.svg.

Document 2: A Visual Primary Source



Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Reproduction Number: LC-DIG-ds-02944.

Source Information: A nuclear explosion during the “Operation Crossroads” nuclear weapons tests on Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands in the Pacific Ocean in July 1946. The tests were investigating the effect of nuclear weapons on naval ships. A fleet of ninety-five target ships was arrayed around the bomb site. Some of these ships appear here as the tiny objects near the edge of the explosion’s spreading mushroom cloud.

Student Handout

Document 3: A Written Primary Source

As a result of our study, the committee is now unanimous in its view that preventing the further spread of nuclear weapons is clearly in the national interest despite the difficult decisions that will be required. . . .

Specifically, we have concluded that:

1. The spread of nuclear weapons poses an increasingly grave threat to the security of the United States. New nuclear capabilities, however primitive and regardless of whether they are held by nations currently friendly to the United States, will add complexity and instability to the deterrent balance between the United States and the Soviet Union, aggravate suspicions and hostility among states neighboring new nuclear powers, place a wasteful economic burden on the aspirations of developing nations, impede the vital task of controlling and reducing weapons around the world, and eventually constitute direct military threats to the United States.

As additional nations obtained nuclear weapons, our diplomatic and military influence would wane, and strong pressures would arise to retreat to isolation to avoid the risk of involvement in nuclear war. Nevertheless, even then, we could not escape the problem. There would be additional nuclear powers—perhaps some in this hemisphere—individually possessing the capability of destroying millions of American lives. Major defensive efforts might help substantially to diminish such limited threats, but millions of American lives would always be at risk.

2. The world is fast approaching a point of no return in the prospects of controlling the spread of nuclear weapons. Nuclear power programs are placing within the hands of many nations much of the knowledge, equipment and materials for making nuclear weapons. The recent Chinese Communist nuclear explosion has reinforced the belief, increasingly prevalent throughout the world, that nuclear weapons are a distinguishing mark of a world leader, are essential to national security, and are feasible even with modest industrial resources. The Chinese Communist nuclear weapons program has brought particular pressure on India and Japan, which may both be approaching decisions to undertake nuclear weapons programs.

Although one might be tempted to accept Indian or Japanese nuclear weapons to counterbalance China, we do not believe the spread of nuclear weapons would or could be stopped there. An Indian or Japanese decision to build nuclear weapons would probably produce a chain reaction of similar decision by other countries, such as Pakistan, Israel and the UAR. In these circumstances, it is unrealistic to hope that Germany and other European countries would not decide to develop their own nuclear weapons.

Source Information: These passages are from a secret “Report to the President by the Committee on Nuclear Proliferation,” January 21, 1965. This was a report by a ten-member committee of top military and civilian officials delivered to President Lyndon Johnson. The entire report can be accessed online at http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB1/nhch7_1.htm.

