

The Cold War: Solving the Mystery of History with Voices on Vinyl

Grade Level: Eighth grade

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Length of Unit: Twelve to Sixteen Days (4 lessons)

I. ABSTRACT

Allow the voices of the past to “speak” in your next unit. Invite your students to hear the “people’s” spin on the times as they navigate through the noteworthy events of the Cold War through music. Examining the highlights, crises, and showdowns between the United States and the Soviet Union during the tumultuous years of the Cold War can be made more meaningful by listening to popular music of the time.

In Sting’s “Russians” he says, “Russians are people, too.” Billy Joel’s “Leningrad” compares his life, an American child growing up in Levittown, to the life of Viktor, born in Leningrad, growing up in the Soviet Union. They meet during Billy Joel’s tour of the Soviet Union in 1989. The tensions of the Vietnam War become more understandable through Billy Joel’s “Goodnight Saigon,” a moving account of a young man’s disappointing experience as an American soldier in this era. He moves from the euphoric challenge of defending democracy to the realization of being “had.”

Billy Joel’s “We Didn’t Start the Fire” summarizes approximately 40 years of the Cold War. Students, using this as a model, will be stretched mentally as lyricists when they summarize their era of the nineties in verse.

The presentation will also include suggestions for enhancing additional units with the voices of other eras.

II. OVERVIEW

A. Concept Objectives

1. Students will be able to relate to both sides of the Cold War and have an understanding of the specific people and pivotal events that fueled this conflict.

B. Content from the *Core Knowledge Sequence* (Subtopics not listed here will be taught in subsequent lessons.)

1. The Decline of European Colonialism p. 186
 - Creation of People’s Republic of China
 - Communists take power
 - Mao Zedong: The Long March
 - Defeat of nationalists led by Chiang Kai-Shek
2. The Cold War p. 187
 - Origins of the Cold War
 - Truman Doctrine, policy of containment of communism, The “Iron Curtain” (Churchill)
 - The Korean War
 - Inchon, Chinese entry, removal of MacArthur
 - Partition of Korea, truce line near the 38th Parallel
 - America in the Cold War
 - McCarthyism, House Un-American Activities Committee, “witch hunts”, Spy cases: Alger Hiss, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg
 - The Eisenhower Years – Secret operation, CIA, FBI counterespionage, J. Edgar Hoover, U-2 incident, Eisenhower’s farewell speech

- The Kennedy Years, “Ask not what your country can do for you...,” attack on organized crime, Robert F. Kennedy, Cuban Missile Crisis, Fidel Castro, Bay of Pigs invasion, nuclear deterrence, Kennedy assassination in 1963, Lee Harvey Oswald
 - American culture in the 50’s and 60’s - Levittown and the rise of the suburban lifestyle, baby boom generation, rock and roll, Woodstock festival
3. The Civil Rights Movement p. 188
 - Post-war steps toward desegregation, Truman desegregates Armed Forces, Integration of public schools: Brown v. Board of Education (1954), Thurgood Marshall
 - Montgomery Bus Boycott, Rosa Parks
 - Southern “massive resistance,” Federal troops open schools in Little Rock, Arkansas, Alabama Governor George Wallace “stands in schoolhouse door”
 - Nonviolent challenges to segregation: “We shall overcome,” Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” Selma to Montgomery March
 - African American militance, Malcolm X
 4. The Vietnam War and the Rise of Social Activism p. 188
 - French Indochina War: Dien Bien Phu, How Chi Minh, Viet Cong
 - Tonkin Gulf Resolution
 - Tet Offensive, My Lai Massacre
 - American disengagement, Nixon’s “Vietnamization” policy, Kissinger, War Powers Act
 - Vietnam, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon)
- C. Skill Objectives
1. Students will understand historical chronology and perspective.
 2. Students will use cooperative learning strategies designed for enhancing individual comprehension.
 3. Students will compare and contrast information using a variety of techniques.

III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

- A. For Teachers
1. Appleby, J., Ph. D., Brinkley, A., Ph. D. & McPherson, J. M., Ph. D., *The American Journey*. New York: Glencoe McGraw-Hill, 1998. 0-02-823218-6.
 2. Hakim, J., *All the People*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995. 0-19-507764-4
 3. Joel, B. (1991). *A Matter of Trust* [Video] Sony Music Video. ASIN B00000I1J1.
- B. For Students:
1. The students will have a basic knowledge of the Russian Revolution of 1917 to understand the source of communism.
 2. The students will have a basic understanding of the division of Berlin at the end of World War II plus a basic knowledge of the rise of the “Iron Curtain.”

IV. RESOURCES

- A. Appleby, J., Ph. D., Brinkley, A., Ph. D., & McPherson, J. M., Ph. D., *The American Journey*.
- B. Hakim, J., *All the People*.
- C. Joel, B., *A Matter of Trust*. [Video]
- D. Joel, B., “Goodnight Saigon,” *Greatest Hits, Volume I and Volume II*. (Compact Disk)
- E. Joel, B., “Leningrad,” *Storm Front*. (Compact Disk)

- F. Joel, B., "We Didn't Start the Fire," *Storm Front*. (Compact Disk)
- G. Joel, B., "We Didn't Start the Fire," lyrics [On-line]
- H. Joel, B., *The Life and Times*. [On-line]
- I. Sting, "Russians," *Dream of Blue Turtles*. (Compact Disk)

V. LESSONS

Lesson One: America's and Soviet's silent deterrence.

A. Daily Objectives

1. Concept Objective:
 - Students will be able to relate to both sides of the Cold War and have an understanding of the specific people and pivotal events that fueled this conflict.
2. Lesson Content
 - America in the Cold War
 - The Kennedy Years
 - Nuclear deterrence
3. Skill Objective
 - Students will understand historical chronology and perspective.

B. Materials

1. Textbook, *American Journey*
2. Textbook, *All the People*
3. CD, "Russians," *Dream of Blue Turtles*, Sting
4. CD player
5. Writing topics on slips of paper for selection

C. Key Vocabulary

1. Berlin Wall – concrete wall built by Russians in middle of Berlin to keep people from running away to freedom
2. Fidel Castro – dictator who seized power in Cuba 1959 and aligned with Soviets
3. Bay of Pigs – the botched invasion of communist Cuba by CIA-trained Cuban refugees
4. Nuclear missile sites – built by Soviets in Cuba
5. Soviet missiles – dismantled to end the Cuban Missile crisis
6. Khrushchev – Soviet dictator who agreed to dismantle the missiles
7. Hotline (1963)– direct phone communication between Soviet and U.S. leaders

D. Procedures/Activities

DAYS ONE-TWO

1. Read and discuss "Cold War Confrontations" p. 848 and "Cuban Missile Crisis" p. 849-851 in *American Journey*.
2. Read and discuss *All the People*, chapters 9-11, 17-21.

DAYS THREE-FOUR

3. Listen to the CD selection "Russians," *Dream of Blue Turtles*, Sting.
4. Students select writing topic from key vocabulary by random drawing.
5. From the perspective of a 12 year old Russian, the students will write about their feelings and reactions related to the topic they have selected.

E. Assessment/Evaluation

1. Teacher will read completed writings and determine if students were able to relate to their issue from a different point of view and realize that "the Russians were people, too."

Lesson Two: Looking at Both Sides of the Cold War

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective
 - Students will be able to relate to both sides of the Cold War and have an understanding of the specific people and pivotal events that fueled this conflict.
2. Lesson Content
 - The Cold War
 - America in the Cold War
 - McCarthyism
 - The Eisenhower Years
 - The Kennedy Years - Cuban Missile Crisis
 - American culture in the 50's and 60's - Levittown and the rise of the suburban lifestyle
3. Skill Objective(s)
 - Students will understand historical chronology and perspective.
 - Students will use cooperative learning strategies designed for enhancing individual comprehension.

B. *Materials*

1. *American Journey* by Appleby, Brinkley, & McPherson
2. *All the People* by Hakim
3. Video: *A Matter of Trust*, Billy Joel
4. TV/VCR
5. Student paper and pencils

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. McCarthy – American Senator who led the “Red Scare”
2. 38th Parallel - the dividing parallel between North and South Korea
3. Vodka – popular Russian alcoholic beverage
4. Leningrad – German siege (1947) on the city Leningrad that lasted 900 days, *American Journey* p. 757
5. Yellow reds – Chinese communists
6. Air raid shelter – thick walled shelter built to provide protection from radiation in an air raid attack
7. Cuban missile crisis – standoff between U.S. and Soviet Union over Soviet missiles in Cuba
8. Cold War kids – children who grew up during Cold War
9. Air raid drill – students got under desks for protection
10. Levittown – William Levitt mass-produced housing (1947) which was the beginning of suburbia.

D. *Procedures*

DAYS ONE-TWO

1. Read and discuss “Korean War” pp. 785-788, “Red Scare” pp. 789-792, and “1950’s Prosperity” pp. 807-812 in *American Journey*.
2. Read and discuss chapters 7-10 in *All the People*

DAY THREE.

3. In cooperative pairs the students will research the previous readings to find information to write an explanation for each of the vocabulary terms.
4. View the video (the first 10 minutes), *A Matter of Trust*, Billy Joel.

5. Students will write to explain how the video portrays both sides of the conflict. They are to be specific with details telling what was pictured that helped them better understand a part of the conflict.
 6. Writings are shared orally.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Completed vocabulary will be graded for accuracy.
 2. Credit will be given for completed writing and oral participation.

Lesson Three: Vietnam War: Through the Eyes of a Soldier

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective
 - Students will be able to relate to both sides of the Cold War and have an understanding of the specific people and pivotal events that fueled this conflict.
2. Lesson Content
 - The Vietnam War
 - Tet Offensive, My Lai Massacre
3. Skill Objectives
 - Students will understand historical chronology and perspective.
 - Students will compare and contrast information using a variety of techniques.

B. *Materials*

1. *All the People* by Hakim
2. CD: “Goodnight Saigon,” *Greatest Hits, Volume I and Volume II*, Billy Joel
3. CD player
4. Roll of paper for displaying student work (optional)
5. Paper and pencils

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Rotors – Helicopters are called rotors because of the position of the propellers. Have students listen to the “beat of the rotors” in the rhythm of the song. Brainstorm with students about how the musicians affect this sound.
2. Parris Island – a boot camp where soldiers undergo vigorous physical training.
3. Ellis Island – the entry point in New York for immigrants
4. Tameless horses – horses who have spirit, used to “roughing” it, and are in great shape
5. “Bellies were tight” – The soldiers were in great shape because of the training at Parris Island.
6. Homefront – (a) no specific cause to be there; (b) fighting was everywhere in Vietnam
7. Bob Hope – an entertainer who took a USO show to the “front” (where the men were fighting) to entertain the troops and somehow show an appreciation for them being there; famous entertainers would volunteer their time to go with him
8. Hash pipe – Although illegal and certainly the cause of other problems later, many soldiers resorted to drugs to help them cope with the ambiguities of them being there fighting this war.
9. “Charlie” – nickname for North Vietnamese soldiers; also called “Viet Cong” and “VC”
10. “We held the day...” – The Americans could “see” what was happening during the day; they could “see” to bomb them from airplanes, shell them from the Navy ships, or shoot at them with rifles.

11. “They ruled the night...” – Because the North Vietnamese had hundred of miles of underground tunnel systems, they would attack at night, run and hide, etc. Very demoralizing to Americans!
12. “We held the coastline...” – Navy ship supported American troops.
13. “They held the highlands...” – Viet Cong knew the jungles and had the advantage of the tunnels.

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. Listen to “Goodnight Saigon” a few times to understand the message of the lyrics. Point out the rhythm of the helicopter blades, sound of weapon fire, the soldier’s euphoria changing to fright and despair, etc.
2. In **silence** and **semi-darkness**, students are to free write for 10 minutes. They are to take the role of the soldier (first person) or tell about the soldier in the song (third person). The free writing should express the feelings and strategies the soldier embraced.
3. At the end of 10 minutes, students are instructed to think of one word that best sums up the song, “Goodnight Saigon” and write that word **large** and **bold** across the space left at the bottom of their paper.
4. Papers are posted for all to see on a length of paper from roll. (This enables teacher to remove display before next class period)
5. Playing some upbeat music before students leave class will diffuse emotions.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. Completion of the free writing

Lesson Four: Title: Rappin’ to the Cold War with Billy Joel

A. Daily Objectives

1. Concept Objective
 - Students will be able to relate to both sides of the Cold War and have an understanding of the specific people and pivotal events that fueled this conflict.
2. Lesson Content
 - The Decline of European Colonialism p. 186
 - Creation of People’s Republic of China
 - Communists take power
 - Mao Zedong: The Long March
 - Defeat of nationalists led by Chiang Kai-Shek
 - “The Cold War” p. 187
 - Origins of the Cold War
 - Truman Doctrine, policy of containment of communism, The “Iron Curtain” (Churchill)
 - The Korean War
 - Inchon Chinese entry, removal of MacArthur
 - Partition of Korea, truce line near the 38th Parallel
 - America in the Cold War
 - McCarthyism, House Un-American Activities Committee, “witch hunts”, Spy cases: Alger Hiss, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg
 - The Eisenhower Years – Secret operation, CIS, FBI counterespionage, J. Edgar Hoover, U-2 incident, Eisenhower’s farewell speech
 - The Kennedy Years, “Ask not what your country can do for you...,” attack on organized crime, Robert F. Kennedy, Cuban Missile Crisis, Fidel Castro,

Bay of Pigs invasion, nuclear deterrence, Kennedy assassination in 1963, Lee Harvey Oswald

- American culture in the 50's and 60's - Levittown and the rise of the suburban lifestyle, baby boom generation, rock and roll, Woodstock festival
- The Civil Rights Movement p. 188
- Post-war steps toward desegregation, Truman desegregates Armed Forces, Integration of public schools: Brown v. Board of Education (1954), Thurgood Marshall
- Montgomery Bus Boycott, Rosa Parks
- Southern "massive resistance," Federal troops open schools in Little Rock, Arkansas, Alabama Governor George Wallace "stands in schoolhouse door"
- Nonviolent challenges to segregation: "We shall overcome," Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail," Selma to Montgomery March
- African American militance, Malcolm X
- The Vietnam War and the Rise of Social Activism p. 188
- French Indochina War: Dien Bien Phu, Ho Chi Minh, Viet Cong
- Tonkin Gulf Resolution
- Tet Offensive, My Lai Massacre
- American disengagement, Nixon's "Vietnamization" policy, Kissinger, War Powers act
- Vietnam, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon)

3. Skill Objective(s)

- Students will understand historical chronology and perspective.
- Students will use cooperative learning strategies designed for enhancing individual comprehension.
- Students will compare and contrast information using a variety of techniques.

B. *Materials*

1. Student notes from entire Cold War study kept in notebook portfolios
2. Computer network access (Optional)
3. CD "We Didn't Start the Fire" by Billy Joel
4. CD player
5. List of the names, places, and terms from song text. (On-line, see bibliography)
6. Collection of history books and encyclopedias for reference
7. Paper & pencils

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. The song, "We Didn't Start the Fire" gives an overview of people, places, and terms throughout the Cold War. (On-line, see bibliography)

D. *Procedures/Activities*

DAY ONE

1. Group students into pairs.
2. Explain to the students that they are going to listen to a song that will refer to the people, places, and terms of the Cold War that they studied.
3. Play "We Didn't Start the Fire."
4. As they listen have them tally how many terms they recognize. The purpose of this is to focus the listening.
5. By a show of hands determine which pairs recognized the most terms.
6. Students orally share what they recognized, explaining the significance. No one can repeat answers.

DAYS TWO - FOUR

7. Each pair is now assigned one of the five verses plus the chorus of the song, "We Didn't Start the Fire."
8. The student pairs now research to find each of the terms in their verse.
9. On paper they must clarify the significance of each of the terms in their verse plus interpret the meaning of the chorus. (Teacher discretion whether to include birth control, etc.)
10. Students produce a final copy for display that includes drawings, clip art, and/or pictures.

DAY FIVE

11. Students are given a sheet that contains all of the names, places, and terms from the song text, "We Didn't Start the Fire."
12. Using a round robin strategy, one member of the pair moves to the next pair. Students in the new grouping share all of the information that they've gathered filling in the explanation of each term as they proceed.
13. Rotations continue until all of the students have the information for all of the verses.

DAYS SIX - EIGHT

14. Students are assigned new pair groupings.
15. Keeping the integrity of rhyme and rhythm, the students will use "We Didn't Start the Fire" as a model and write their own verse for the 1990's.
16. To get the students started the teacher suggests that students be sure to include Soviet Union, Gulf War, and Bosnia.
17. A final copy is neatly presented complete with illustrations.
18. Students volunteer to rap/sing their original 1990's verse for the class.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

Teacher uses a rubric for grading with completed display verse from "We Didn't Start the Fire" (40 points), notes of all verses bound in notebook portfolio (20 points) and display verse from the 1990's (40 points).

VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- A. Appleby, J., Ph. D., Brinkley, A., Ph. D. & McPherson, J. M., Ph. D., *The American Journey*. New York: Glencoe McGraw-Hill, 1998. 0-02-823218-6.
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- E. Joel, B. (1998). "Leningrad," *Storm Front*, (Compact Disk ASIN B00000DCHL) New York: Sony/Columbia.
- F. Joel, B., "The Life and Times." [On-line]. Available URL: <http://www.billyjoel.com/thelifeandtimes/bio.html>
- G. Joel, B. (1998). "We Didn't Start the Fire," *Storm Front*, (Compact Disk ASIN B00000DCHL) New York: Sony/Columbia.
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- I. Sting, (1985). "Russians," *Dream of Blue Turtles*. (Compact Disk ASIN B000002GFA) New York: Uni/A&M.