

Lesson Plan

Contemporary History Post-1945: Introduction

Length

Two 45-min periods

Grade Level

High School

Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to explain how the Cold War shaped today's world.
- Students will be able to analyze the impact of decolonization on today's world by comparing and contrasting two former colonies using an infographic.

[Contemporary History Post-1945: Introduction](#)

[Presentation](#)

[Guided Reading Handout](#)

Class One

1. **(20 Minutes) Timeline of World Events:** On the board, draw a timeline ranging from 1945-present. Instruct students to fill in the timeline of major events they believe have left lasting impacts on today's world (e.g. Civil Rights movement, the invention of the computer, 9/11). Discuss a few popular events with the whole class and lead into the Cold War as the main topic of today's lesson. Ask students to consider what they know and what they would like to learn about the Cold War.
2. **(10 Minutes) Watch:** *How Did the Cold War Stay Cold?* (6:56) and fill out part 1 of the guided reading handout.
3. **(10 Minutes) Discussion:** Reflecting on the timeline and the video, ask students to share key events or conflicts that happened during the Cold War. What are the enduring effects seen today in the world? As the class discusses, use the blank world map (below) as a visual guide for students to annotate. Students should label specific countries where Cold War tensions flared. (Cuba, Vietnam, Korea, Etc). Note: This map can continue to be built upon with information related to the Cold War and decolonization.
4. **(5 Minutes) What's Next:** Review the impact of the Cold War and introduce decolonization as the next topic of discussion concerning major periods that have shaped today's world.

Homework

- Students will read *How Did Decolonization Reshape the World?* and fill out part 2 of the guided reading handout for the next class.

Class Two

1. **(10 Minutes) Homework Debrief:** Have students share key takeaways from the homework. In particular, discuss the variety of ways former colonies gained independence and the types of challenges new countries faced.
2. **(25 Minutes) Decolonization Infographics:** Divide the class into groups of two and have students choose two countries that decolonized after World War II. Choosing countries mentioned in the article will require less outside research. You will probably find it helpful to review some sample infographics together and discuss what makes them effective. Students can use physical arts materials or graphic software such as:

Google Drawings (or Slides/ Docs), [Canva](#), [Piktochart](#), or [Venngage](#). Instruct students to create an infographic comparing and contrasting their chosen examples in three areas:

- How the country gained independence
 - What major challenges it faced after independence
 - What ongoing challenges it faces from decolonization
3. **(10 Minutes) Decolonization Infographic Gallery Walk:** Have students share their work in a gallery walk. What conclusions about decolonization can the class reach?
 4. **(5 Minutes) What's Next:** Review the impact of decolonization on today's world. Assign *Essential Events Since 1945* timeline as homework and note the importance of major events and developments such as the Cold War and decolonization in their interconnected impact on today's world.

Homework

Students will browse *Essential Events Since 1945*. Ask them to identify two examples of how the Cold War has continued to shape world events and two examples of how decolonization has continued to shape world events.

Vocabulary

alliance

an official partnership between two or more parties based on cooperation in pursuit of a common goal, generally involving security or defense.

governance

the tasks and activities of governing, or running, a country.

industrialization

the process by which the balance of production shifts from agriculture toward manufacturing and industry.

repatriation

the return of a person, voluntarily or forcibly, to their home and especially to a country where they hold citizenship.