An overview of the Cold War

How can a war be ‘cold’?

What were the Hotspots of the Cold War?
After World War II the Cold War began and caused tension throughout the world.

- The USA and the USSR were the two world Superpowers.
- The USA was a capitalist society with a democracy.
- The USSR was a communist country with a dictatorship.
- Both wanted to be the most powerful nation in the world.
Cold War?

• The tension and rivalry between the USA and the USSR was described as the Cold War (1945-1990).

• There was never a real war between the two sides between 1945 and 1990, but they were often very close to war (Hotspots). Both sides got involved in other conflicts in the world to either stop the spread of communism (USA) or help the spread (USSR).

• “From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an Iron Curtain has descended across the continent.” – Winston Churchill
After World War II, the world changed!

- Many countries became communist after World War II including:
  - Czechoslovakia (1948)
  - Poland (1947)
  - Hungary (1947)
  - China (1949)
  - Cuba (1959)
  - North Korea (1945)
The domino effect

• The USSR had a lot of influence over many of the new communist countries (especially those in Europe).

• The USA was very worried that the USSR’s influence over these countries was making the USSR and communism more powerful.

• The USA did not want communism to spread any further – they were worried about the domino effect (one country becomes communist, then another, then another etc)
Nuclear tensions

• The USA had shown its atomic power when it exploded the A-bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War II.

• The USSR was also developing atomic weapons/bombs.

• The USA and the USSR were in competition with each other to have the best, most powerful weapons in the world – this was called the Arms Race.
What is Communism?

- Communism is a social and economic system in which all industries, land, and businesses are owned by a government.

http://www.brainpop.com/socialstudies/economics/communism/
Germany - divided

- Germany, which had been ruled by Hitler and the Nazi Party until their defeat in 1945 was split in two.
- The western side became West Germany and the eastern side became East Germany.
- East Germany became another communist country.
The Berlin Airlift
June 1948 – May 1949

After WWII, Germany and its capital Berlin, were divided into four parts controlled by Great Britain, the United States, France, and the Soviet Union. To gain total control of Berlin, the Soviet Union set up a blockade to the part it did not control, West Berlin. No supplies were allowed to enter that part of the city by land. The U.S., Great Britain, and France sent over 2 million tons of food and fuel by planes for the next year. The Soviet Union finally gave up and lifted the blockade.
The Berlin Wall
1961

To prevent people from leaving East Germany, the government constructed a concrete wall with barbed wire on top in 1961. The Berlin Wall became a symbol of the Cold War.
Berlin Wall

• Following World War II, Germany was divided, creating Soviet East Germany and West Germany. Berlin, located inside of East Germany, was also divided into East and West zones.

• Crossing from East Berlin to West Berlin in Germany became a popular way to escape Soviet communism.

• In order to stop the flight which drained the workforce of East Germany, East German police began to construct a wall, Berlin Wall, on August 13, 1961. The wall was made of concrete topped with barbed wire.

• The wall became a symbol of the Iron Curtain, the military, political, and ideological barrier that existed between the Soviet bloc and western Europe during the Cold War.
The Berlin Wall 1961
Joseph McCarthy

- A US senator from the state of Wisconsin.
- During the 1950’s, he became convinced that Communist were trying to gain control of the US government.
- He vowed to find these communists and drive them out.
- At first, many US citizens backed McCarthy even though he had very little evidence to support his claims.
- Eventually, McCarthy went too far.
- He accused high-ranking military officers of being Communists.
- When McCarthy tried to make his case on television during a series of congressional hearings, most people thought he came off looking cruel, paranoid, and perhaps crazy.
- The hearings ruined McCarthy’s political career.
N.A.T.O.
Brussels, Belgium
Ten western European countries along with the U.S. and Canada formed an alliance to resist the threat of Communism. They signed the North Atlantic Treaty and agreed to come to each other’s defense to prevent communist attacks. Since its formation, NATO has had more countries join. It takes action to support the values of democracy, individual liberty, rule of law, and peaceful resolution of conflicts.
The Korean War
1950-1953
Korean War

• At the end of WWII Korea was divided into North Korea and South Korea. In 1950 Kim Il Sung, the leader of North Korea, sent his powerful army into South Korea. The United Nations responded quickly offering help from several countries to South Korea.

In 1953, after 3 years of fighting, no one really won. The dividing line between North and South Korea remained the same.
Korean War

After WWII, Korea was divided. North Korea became a Communist country and South Korea was a Republic. In 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea to try to unify Korea as a Communist country. South Korea fought back with the help of the U.N. The dividing line between the two countries changed positions during the war, but eventually ended up back at the 38th parallel when the war ended.
Nikita Khrushchev

- He was the leader of the Soviet Union who had a deal with Castro.
- He took over as First Secretary of the USSR’s Communist Party after Stalin died in 1953.
- Although the Soviet Union was no longer a dictatorship under Khrushchev, the new leader was still a tough politician who distrusted the US. He was premier of the Soviet Union and head of the Soviet Communist Party.
- On one occasion while addressing representatives from capitalist nations he pounded his shoe on a table and vowed, “We will bury you”.
- He also tried to bully the US and its allies into leaving West Berlin.
- He eventually backed down when President Eisenhower strengthened NATO’s armed forces there.
- President Kennedy ordered Khrushchev to remove the nuclear missiles during the Cuban Missile Crisis.
The Cuban Missile Crisis
1962
Cuban Missile Crisis

- The Crisis was mainly started by two countries in 1962,
  - USSR, Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev
  - U.S. President John F. Kennedy

- Fidel Castro, a Cuban dictator
- America had more missiles than the Soviets. The USSR and Cuba felt endangered. Cuba asked the USSR for military help.
- The USSR sent nuclear missiles to Cuba, which is only 90 miles from the U.S. Kennedy put a blockade around Cuba and told the USSR to remove the missiles or the U.S. would invade Cuba.
- The USSR removed the missiles and the crisis ended Oct. 27, 1962.
Fidel Castro of Cuba wanted protection from a U.S. invasion and joined with Nikita Khrushchev of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union wanted to compete with the U.S. in building long range missiles. They built missile bases in Cuba. President J.F.K. set up a blockade of Cuba and told the Soviet Union to remove the missiles. After 13 tense days, the Soviet Union agreed to remove the missiles and the U.S. agreed not to invade Cuba.
Vietnam War

- President Eisenhower
- President Kennedy
- President Johnson
- President Nixon
- To stop the spread of communism, Aug. 2, 1964, U.S. destroyer attacked by North Vietnam; U.S. bombed North Vietnam
- 50,000 American troops died
- January 1973 cease fire agreement
What was different about Vietnam?

• The Vietnam War was different because it was the first war to occur during the age of *television*.
• In previous wars, citizens had to rely on *radio*, newspapers, or edited news reels to receive word of fighting.
• Vietnam was the first war where citizens could actually see much of the *death* and destruction from their own *living* rooms.
• This led many citizens to have strong *opinions* about the war and many questioned the way the *government* was fighting the war.
What was different about Vietnam?

- Vietnam also occurred during a time where more young people were attending colleges.
- During the 1960's many college students began to question traditional values and authority figures, including the government.
- A huge anti-war movement happened on many college campuses.
- It spread to other parts of society.
- Unlike WWII and Korea, the nation became divided over Vietnam.
What was different about Vietnam?

• The last reason Vietnam was different is because the US lost.

• Vietnam fell to Communism even though the US tried hard.

• Many US soldiers returned home feeling forgotten or hated rather than like heroes.

• Some suffered lasting health and mental problems caused by the war.

• A few had to face the fact they had committed horrible acts against civilians while in Vietnam.

• Even today, memories of Vietnam affect US politics and society.
The Vietnam War
1956-1975

Vietnam was divided after WWII. North Vietnam was Communist and South Vietnam was a Republic. North Vietnam wanted to unite the country as Communist. Vietnamese communists known as Vietcong tried to take over the South Vietnamese government. The U.S. sent troops to support South Vietnam. As the war dragged on, Americans began protesting the war. President Nixon withdrew troops in 1973 and South Vietnam fell in 1975 to North Vietnam.