

# **The Cold War**

## *Analyzing Visual Primary Sources*

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>Lecture Notes</b> .....	<b>S1</b>
<b>Student Handouts</b> .....	<b>H1</b>
<u>Culminating Activities</u>	
Image Analysis Worksheet .....	<b>1</b>
Contextual Analysis Worksheet .....	<b>3</b>

## **Introduction**

Primary sources are the building blocks of history. Using these sources to introduce students to historical periods offers students the opportunity to become historians themselves—to analyze the evidence, form hypotheses, and learn how to support arguments based on evidence. They learn what it means to interpret the past in ways that provide meaning for the present. Textual primary sources can often be difficult for students to engage with because they are often couched in unfamiliar language from a different historical era. Visual primary sources can prove more appealing and accessible to students, and they also involve different types of “reading” skills.

### **How to Use This Product**

This PowerPoint® presentation is designed to walk students through the process of primary source interpretation. Slides help to focus students’ attention and train them how to “read” visual primary sources. Targeted questions and enlarged insets from images help to train students to see deeper into the historical record, to uncover evidence that, though plainly before their eyes, is not always obvious at first glance.

The posters provide visual reinforcement for the images analyzed in the presentation. Use them before or after the PowerPoint® analysis for either pre- or post-reading activities. In addition, we have provided extra images on each disc so that once the students are trained in the skills of analyzing visual primary sources they can further hone their skills. You can print them out and distribute as handouts for in-class or independent study, or you can import the images into PowerPoint® for students to analyze individually or with the class as a whole.

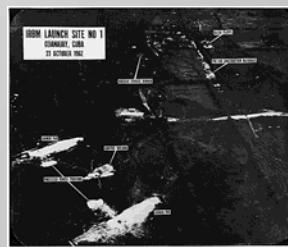
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We look forward to hearing from you.

Dr. Aaron Willis  
Chief Education Officer  
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## The Cold War Era



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In April of 1945, American and Soviet forces met at the Elbe River at the close of World War II in Europe. While the triumph of the Allies ended the threat of Nazi Germany, a new threat emerged between the two former allies—a “cold war” in which the two sides didn’t actually shoot at each other but instead sought to thwart each other’s goals and ambitions over the next half century.

Soon after World War II, the Soviets established a series of “satellite nations”—countries that had been “liberated” by the Soviet army as it marched towards Berlin and were now dominated by it. The U.S. responded with a policy of “containment” to prevent further expansion of Soviet influence in Europe, while former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill claimed that an “iron curtain” had descended across the continent of Europe. Not only did communism threaten Europe, but Asia as well. Mao Zedong’s communist forces took control of mainland China, and United Nations forces led by American troops fought to a stalemate in Korea. Later, U.S. forces would also fight a prolonged war against communist aggression in South Vietnam.

At home, Americans built fallout shelters in preparation for the nuclear attack they were certain was imminent. Western European nations and the U.S. formed NATO, while the Communist Bloc nations created the Warsaw Pact. The U.S. and U.S.S.R. also entered a “space race” to see who could build the biggest missiles and also put the first man on the moon. By the late 1980s, however, the Cold War had wound down. The selection of Mikhail Gorbachev as the head of the U.S.S.R. led to reforms, including *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring). Eventually, the Warsaw Pact fractured, communist regimes in Eastern Europe fell, the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, and by 1991 the U.S.S.R. had dissolved.

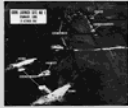
## Table of Contents



- The Berlin Airlift



- The Korean War



- Cuban Missile Crisis



- Cold War Culture



- Fall of Communism

## The Berlin Airlift

- West Berlin surrounded by Soviet-controlled East Germany
- Stalin closed road and rail access to West Berlin
- U.S. and British forces begin airlift to supply West Berlin with food and other staples
- Blockade lasted 327 days
- Germans no longer saw Allies as enemies, but as friends
- Soviets realize blockade ineffective

3

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At the end of World War II, the nations which fought to defeat Nazi Germany debated over whether to reunify the country. At the end of the war, the nation was divided into four zones of occupation, with the U.S., France, Great Britain, and Soviet Union each holding a zone. The city of Berlin was also divided into zones, with the entire city of Berlin contained within the Soviet zone of occupation.

Josef Stalin, the Soviet premier, thought he saw an opportunity to take control of the entire city by closing all road and rail access routes into West Berlin and starve the city into submission. However, one route into and out of the city that the Soviets could not control were the air corridors into Berlin. U.S. and British planes began flying food and other supplies into the city to keep it from falling into Soviet hands. For the next 327 days, planes flew in everything from food, to medicine, to coal, to Christmas presents for the beleaguered citizens of the German capital.

The outcome of the airlift was twofold. The Soviets saw that the blockade had failed and decided to end it, reopening the rail and road routes. In addition, attitudes between the Allies and their former enemies changed substantially. The Germans, Americans, and British became friends and allies against Soviet oppression.

**MILK...new weapon of Democracy!**

*Supplied by air transport alone, 2½ million Berliners sample a new way of life*

• In today's diplomatic Battle for Berlin, hope for democracy is being kept alive for millions in Western Europe by the U. S. Air Force.

Flying Douglas aircraft almost exclusively, Yankee crews have poured over half a million tons of supplies into Berlin since last June. This impressive feat has strained to the limit our resources in air transport. It has shown why cargo planes in sufficient numbers must be considered essential to any modern military defense program.

Needed—and desperately—are larger, faster types of aircraft designed exclusively for air transport. And to meet this need, Douglas is now building the giant Douglas DC-6A. Able to fly 30,000 lb. loads at 300 mph, the DC-6A will make available to the military services a cargo transport of rugged dependability, capable of supplying world-wide bases in any kind of national emergency.

**DOUGLAS**

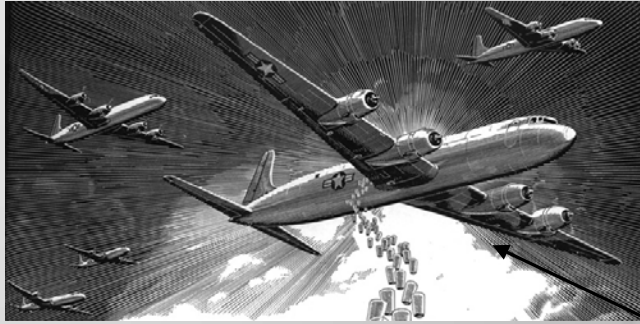
**>> SERVING MANKIND AROUND THE WORLD**

DOUGLAS AIRCRAFT COMPANY, INC.

Give students approximately one minute to view the picture, then proceed to the following slides.



## Analyzing Visual Primary Sources



What do you think the significance is of the planes and the formation of the planes?



5

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It is possible that the artist who created the graphics recalled what formations of bombers looked like over cities like Berlin during World War II. The artist might have wanted to force the reader to consider that planes similar to these bombed targets in Berlin at one point, but now the same planes were serving as an “army of democracy” to protect West Berlin from communist aggression.

## Analyzing Visual Primary Sources



Why might the artist have portrayed glasses of milk in the manner shown?



6

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The artist most likely wanted to use a more graphical representation of the cargo being dropped by the planes in the airlift. However, the artist also probably wanted to contrast the bombs dropped on Berlin by similar planes just a few years earlier with the supplies they now dropped to help the residents of Berlin, including milk for children.