



## ACTIVITY

# TARGET TEXAS: COLD WAR CIVIC PREPAREDNESS IN THE LONE STAR STATE

Social Studies, Grades 9–12

## OBJECTIVE

Through analysis of primary source archival footage, students will demonstrate their understanding of the concept of Cold War fears relating to the prospect of nuclear war.

## PROCESS

### Prior Knowledge

The following activity assumes students are familiar with ideological differences between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. following WWII.

Students should have an awareness of the growing destructive power of nuclear weapons, from the 1945 atomic bomb (measuring destructive force in kilotons) to the 1951 Hydrogen Bomb (measuring destructive force by the megaton or millions of tons of TNT).

### Hook

Austin was home to daily sonic booms in the 1960s as B-58s practiced bombing missions over the Texas Hill Country. Introduce students to the video Project 7 – Thunder Over Austin, [https://texasarchive.org/2010\\_00783](https://texasarchive.org/2010_00783).

Use the Educator Links in the box below the video player to view Segment 1 (1:14 to 3:28). Discuss the clip as a class. Questions: Has anyone experienced a sonic boom? How did the film characterize people's reactions to sonic booms? Would it be strange to experience this on a daily basis? In the context of the Cold War, how would you expect locals to react?

Follow the first clip with Segment 2 (8:43 – 11:22). This clip features Austinites' opinions about the causes of the sonic booms. Discuss the clip as a class focusing on the reactions of locals: What reasoning(s) did locals give for the sonic booms? How did they feel about their city being home to the booms? How would you feel if your community experienced this on a daily basis?

### Lesson

These actions were part of the nation's civic preparedness for the possibility of nuclear war with the U.S.S.R. Review the definition of civic with the class. Civic can mean of or pertaining to a city, of or pertaining to citizenship, or of citizens.

Discuss the concepts of emergency preparedness and civic preparedness as a class. Compare similarities and differences. Ask students to give examples of both types of activities (note: there may also be overlap) and write the examples on the board using a T-chart.



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Show students the video Target Austin, [https://texasarchive.org/2013\\_02699](https://texasarchive.org/2013_02699)

Use the Educator Links in the box below the video player to view Segment 1 (0:26 to 4:25).

After viewing, discuss the clip as a class. Discuss the following questions and concepts: Why was this film created? What is your response to the film and do you think the filmmakers intended that response? (Discuss the culture of fear propagated by the Cold War.) Why would Austin or Texas been considered a target of the U.S.S.R. during the Cold War? (Explore commerce, transportation, government, natural resources, population centers, and military installations in the Austin-area and state.)

Follow the first clip with Segment 2 (5:03 – 11:30). Ask students to take notes on the main characters' reactions to the events. Discuss the participants' actions: Which characters seem like the best citizens? What outcome do you predict for each character?

Continue with Segment 3 (11:30 – 15:03) followed by Segment 4 (17:02 – 18:30) and ask students to continue taking notes.

Discuss the film in full: Why was this film created? What is your response to the film and do you think the filmmakers intended that response? What roles do citizenship and fear play in "Target Austin"? What is civic responsibility according to this film? How is fear represented in the film or used to set the tone?

Share with the class: There are several reasons Austin could be considered a military target. In addition to being the state capitol, it was also home to Nike missiles and an air force base during the Cold War. In this activity, students will access potential targets in Texas. Students should consider centers of commerce, transportation, government, natural resources, population, and military installations. Have students select a potential targets in the state of Texas. Use sticky notes to affix the targets to a Texas map while having each student explain their selection.

Discussion Questions: What areas of the state seem most dangerous and safest? Would your community be a target? What fears exist in your community relating to public safety? Are these fears warranted? Is fear a good or bad motivator for civic preparedness?

In conclusion, assign students a response paper asking them to compare contemporary fears and civic preparedness relating to terrorist attacks to the fears and preparedness activities of the Cold War.

## Independent Practice

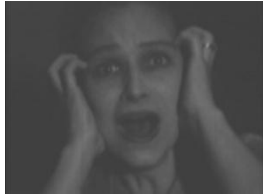
Have students watch a narrative film about the Cold War choosing from the Conelrad list of 100 Atomic Films (<http://www.conelrad.com/conelrad100/index.html>) or another resource. Films can be chosen by students or assigned.



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Have students write a short essay comparing the narrative films to the clips of “Target Austin” shown in class.

## Videos



**Target Austin**

[https://texasarchive.org/2013\\_02699](https://texasarchive.org/2013_02699)



**Project 7 – Thunder Over Austin**

[https://texasarchive.org/2010\\_00783](https://texasarchive.org/2010_00783)

## RESOURCES

**PBS American Experience “Race for the Superbomb”**

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/bomb/>

**The Cold War Museum**

<http://www.coldwar.org/>

**Conelrad**

<http://www.conelrad.com/index.php>

**The Cold War International History Project**

**at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars**

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/program/cold-war-international-history-project>

**Social Studies and History Teacher’s Blog**

<https://multimedialearningllc.wordpress.com/tag/cold-war-propaganda/>

## TEKS

### United States History Studies Since 1877

8A- Describe U.S. responses to Soviet aggression after World War II, including the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the Berlin airlift, and John F. Kennedy’s role in the Cuban Missile Crisis

8B- Describe how Cold War tensions were intensified by the arms race, the space race, McCarthyism, and the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), the findings of which were confirmed by the Venona Papers



## ACTIVITY

11A- Describe U.S. involvement in world affairs, including the end of the Cold War, the Persian Gulf War, the Balkans Crisis, 9/11, and the global War on Terror

29A- Use a variety of primary and secondary valid sources to acquire information and to analyze and answer historical questions

29B- Analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing and contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations, making predictions, drawing inferences, and drawing conclusions

29C- Understand how historians interpret the past (historiography) and how their interpretations of history may change over time

29D- Use the process of historical inquiry to research, interpret, and use multiple types of sources of evidence

29E- Evaluate the validity of a source based on language, corroboration with other sources, and information about the author, including points of view, frames of reference, and historical context

29F- Identify bias in written, oral, and visual material

29G- Identify and support with historical evidence a point of view on a social studies issue or event

20H- Use appropriate skills to analyze and interpret social studies information such as maps, graphs, presentations, speeches, lectures, and political cartoons

30A- Create written, oral, and visual presentations of social studies information

30B- Use correct social studies terminology to explain historical concepts

30C- use different forms of media to convey information, including written to visual and statistical to written or visual, using available computer software as appropriate

31A- Create thematic maps, graphs, and charts representing various aspects of the United States

31B- Pose and answer questions about geographic distributions and patterns shown on maps, graphs, charts, and available databases

32A- Use a problem-solving process to identify a problem, gather information, list and consider options, consider advantages and disadvantages, choose and implement a solution, and evaluate the effectiveness of the solution

32B- Use a decision-making process to identify a situation that requires a decision, gather information, identify options, predict consequences, and take action to implement a decision



## **ACTIVITY** **World History Studies**

1F-Identify major causes and describe the major effects of the following important turning points in world history from 1914 to the present: the world wars and their impact on political, economic, and social systems; communist revolutions and their impact on the Cold War; independence movements; and globalization

13A Summarize how the outcome of World War II contributed to the development of the Cold War

13C Identify the following major events of the Cold War, including the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the arms race

2D - Explain the significance of the following years as turning points: 1898 (Spanish-American War), 1914-1918 (World War I), 1929 (the Great Depression begins), 1939-1945 (World War II), 1957 (Sputnik launch ignites U.S.-Soviet space race), 1968-1969 (Martin Luther King Jr. assassination and U.S. lands on the moon), 1991 (Cold War ends), 2001 (terrorist attacks on World Trade Center and the Pentagon), and 2008 (election of first black president, Barack Obama)

7D - Analyze major issues of World War II, including the Holocaust; the internment of German, Italian, and Japanese Americans and Executive Order 9066; and the development of conventional and atomic weapons

19B - Explain constitutional issues raised by federal government policy changes during times of significant events, including World War I, the Great Depression, World War II, the 1960s, and 9/11

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## **U.S. History**

2C - Apply absolute and relative chronology through the sequencing of significant individuals, events, and time periods; and

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