

Grades 3 – 5, Cold War definitions (Teacher’s Guide)

Atomic Bomb – A high-powered bomb whose energy is provided by nuclear fission.

Arms race – The competition between the United States and the Soviet Union to achieve superiority in quantity and power of nuclear weapons.

Berlin Wall – The barrier, built in 1961, which divided East Berlin and West Berlin. The wall symbolized the split between communism and democracy.

Containment – The United States’ policy to prevent the spread of communism at home and abroad.

Domino Theory – A foreign policy principle that started in the 1950s that argued that if one country fell to communism, neighboring countries would also fall.

Duck and Cover – Duck and cover was a method of personal protection against the effects of a nuclear explosion where people were instructed to crouch down and cover their heads and neck. Duck and cover drills were practiced in schools from the 1940s until the 1960s.

Fallout shelter – An enclosed space specially designed to protect occupants from radioactive debris or fallout resulting from a nuclear explosion.

Iron Curtain – After WWII, Winston Churchill coined the phrase to describe the division between free and communist societies that was occurring in Europe.

Marshall Plan – An economic recovery plan proposed by U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall in 1947. The plan called for large amounts of aid to be sent from the U.S. to help rebuild Europe following the devastation of WWII, which would keep the countries provided with aid within the U.S. sphere of influence.

McCarthyism – A campaign against alleged communists in the U.S. government and other institutions carried out under Senator Joseph McCarthy from 1950–54. The accusations and trials were often made and decided with very little evidence.

Propaganda – Ideas, facts, or allegations spread deliberately to further one's cause or to damage an opposing cause.

Red Scare – The period of anti-communist hysteria in the United States that lasted from the 1940s until the 1950s.

Superpower – A country with great political and economic power around the globe.