

Lesson One

Cuban Missile Crisis Timeline

Teachers' Materials

Cuban Missile Crisis Timeline Lesson Plan
Further Information

Lesson Materials

Timeline Cards
Blank Timeline
Hiroshima/Nagasaki Timeline
The Cuban Missile Crisis Timeline

Download this resource
www.cnduk.org/lesson-1

Lesson One: **Timeline**

AIM

To gain an overview and perspective of key events of the Cuban missile crisis.

LESSON OUTCOMES

By the end of the lesson:

All students will be able to explain the main actors involved in the missile crisis, the period in which the crisis existed and some of the points of view involved.

Some students will be able to explain the different ideological motivations that existed during this time, and how they contributed to the missile crisis.

A few students will be able to highlight the relationship of the missile crisis to events in the present.

CONCEPTS TO EXAMINE

The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Cuban Missile Crisis.

OVERVIEW

This lesson enables students who have been studying the Cold War to reflect on important dates and events within the Cuban missile crisis and gives students who have not studied the Cold War a clear overview of significant events during the period of the Cuban missile crisis. The students will piece together key events into a timeline that they can share with the class. The lesson enables critical thinking by getting students to consider and discuss which events were significant and if any events were particularly significant.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

- Pens/paper, scissors, glue
- PowerPoint of Hiroshima/Nagasaki leading to the Cold War (online).
- Timeline cards
- Blank A3 timeline

SUGGESTED TIME

This is a one hour lesson, but can be differentiated to serve as a starter activity for a subsequent lesson.

ROOM LAYOUT

For pair/group work.

SKILLS

- Presentation skills
- Debating
- Drawing/Writing/Labelling
- Developing persuasive arguments and critical enquiry
- Planning

INSTRUCTIONS

Starter

- Show students the timeline of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Discuss with them what they thought the most critical aspects of the run up to the bombing were.
- Deliver a brief overview of the bombings and the arguments for/against them. Explain how this led to the beginning of the cold war – and how one of the most dangerous time in the Cold War was the Cuban missile crisis. (Powerpoint online).
- Students could work in pairs and write up a list of questions to do with the Cuban missile crisis, at the end of the lesson, revisit these.

Main activities

Teacher to give students an A4 blank timeline.

Students to sort through the cards and images of key events in the Cuban missile crisis

Students to pick 3 images and 7 written cards out of the 20 possibilities and create a collage timeline of events.

Students need to discuss the different cards to consider which ones are more important and why.

These then need to be glued on to their A4 timeline.

At the end, the timeline can be presented to the rest of the class, with particular attention being paid to why certain events were deemed of more significance than others.

Students can take part in external research to learn more about the Cuban missile crisis and its events – links to use can be found at the back of the resource.

PLENARY

- At the end of the lesson the teacher will demonstrate the complete timeline and highlight any particular differences with the students' own timelines, and the key events that occurred.
- Revisit the questions asked at the beginning of the lesson, for any unanswered questions refer students to homework, or continue to work through the resource.
- How are current events affected by the events of the Cuban missile crisis?

DIFFERENTIATION

- Use all the caption events and images on the A4 timeline
- Students to draw the events and make their own collage instead of using glue.
- Student present a chronological sequence of events.
- Underline and define key words in events and explain what they mean.
- Students to consider events in relation to each other. When did each event lead to another? When did confrontation become unavoidable?

EXTENSION

- Students explain why each event was significant in the Cuban missile crisis overall.
- Using the further information about the Cold War, add Cold War events to the timeline and link this back to the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
- Students to write the events down and make their own collage instead of using glue.

ENRICHMENT

- Take students to the National Cold War Museum in Cosford to learn more about the period of the Cuban missile crisis
- Use newspapers and images to make a creative art and design collage.
- Students can begin a scrapbook or piece of display work that they carry through the entire scheme of work in this resource and present it at the end.
- Students could role play each event on the timeline.
- Give students larger images/text and make a stand up timeline with students moving around the room depending on where they feel their event would be placed on a timeline.

Further information: The Cold War

As a result of the Manhattan project, the United States of America became the first country in the world to develop nuclear weapons. These weapons were used against the Japanese cities of Hiroshima & Nagasaki in August 1945 at the end of World War Two and just prior to the Japanese surrender. By August 1949, the Soviet Union had developed and tested their own nuclear weapons. Despite being allies during the Second World War the two superpowers, which had differing economic and political ideologies, began forming alliances with other nations. Their aim was to restrict each other's global influence, and champion their own. These developments changed the face of world politics. By 1986 the Soviet Union had 41,000 nuclear bombs and the USA had 23,000. This number has now been reduced to 7,500 for Russia and 7,260 for the USA.

The name Cold War was applied to the conflict as there was an absence of direct warfare between the two states. The conflict was characterised by several aspects; the mass stockpiling of nuclear weapons in an arms race between the Soviet Union and the USA; superpowers backing opposing sides in 'proxy wars' across the world; espionage; propaganda and psychological warfare. Both countries sought to build up their supplies of nuclear weapons so as to deter the other from using a nuclear weapon against them through their ability to launch a similar attack in retaliation. This became known as Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). The logic followed that one country would never attack the other with a nuclear weapon as that would mean they would suffer a similar attack in return, leading to the large scale destruction of both countries. It was said to be illogical for either country therefore to launch a nuclear attack. However, this did not stop the two countries from coming incredibly close to nuclear Armageddon. The Cold War ended in 1991, but the consequences shaped world politics, and continue to do so.

Further information: The Cuban missile crisis

During the Castro government of Cuba, a series of reforms that nationalised many industries and appropriated the property of many individuals took place. This prompted President Eisenhower in 1960 to freeze Cuban assets in the US, sever diplomatic ties and tighten the embargo on Cuba. The loss of trade with the US led the Cuban government to find a new ally in the Soviet Union to export sugar to in exchange for oil. Concerned at the direction the Cuban government was taking and the perceived dangers of having a communist state a mere 90 miles from the US border, President Eisenhower gave \$13.1 million to the CIA with the intention of overthrowing the Castro government. On the 17th of April 1961 a CIA sponsored paramilitary group launched an attempted invasion of Cuba, known as the Bay of Pigs invasion. The invasion was defeated by the Cuban army, much to the then US President Kennedy's embarrassment and prompted Cuba to strengthen its ties with the Soviet Union for economic, political and military security from its hostile neighbour the US.

Tensions between the Soviet Union and the US had been rising since the end of the Second World War, with both sides building up their stockpiles of nuclear weapons. The US had positioned nuclear missiles in Turkey, the UK and Italy with the capability of striking the Soviet Union and was in a militarily stronger position than the Soviet Union at that point. The Soviets believed that placing missiles on Cuba, capable of striking the US would not only defend their ally Cuba, but also give them leverage to attempt to win control over West Berlin from the West, through conceding the removal of the missiles from Cuba in return for West Berlin.

After the US attempted to overthrow the new Cuban government, the Cubans looked to the Soviet Union for protection. The installation of Soviet missiles on Cuba had begun by September 1962 and on October the 14th US reconnaissance planes captured footage of the construction of a missile base. Once reported to President Kennedy, he was left with a number of options, from ignoring the threat and appearing weak in the face of Soviet aggression, to launching an invasion of Cuba and risking a nuclear exchange. Many of his advisors thought that air strikes or an invasion of Cuba were the most appropriate reactions, but Kennedy worried that this could lead to retaliation from the Soviet Union. Kennedy eventually opted to form a naval blockade of Cuba to stop Soviet missiles reaching the island. The Soviet commander in Cuba was authorised to use tactical nuclear weapons against US forces should they invade, and as Soviet missiles were already installed, any attack on Cuba could have led to the outbreak of nuclear war. With the blockade in place there were questions of how the US would enforce the blockade and continue to surveil Soviet missile construction on Cuba, without Soviet retaliation.

On 26-27 October President Khrushchev sent a message to Kennedy, offering to remove the missiles from Cuba if the US promised not to invade or directly support the overthrow of the Castro government. Kennedy later received another message from Moscow, offering to remove Soviet missiles from Cuba if the US removed theirs from Turkey as well as promising not to invade Cuba. This possible resolution angered many of Kennedy's advisors as it would make the US seem weak and uninterested in supporting their Turkish allies. Kennedy sent his brother Robert to deliver a message to the Soviet ambassador, agreeing to pledge not to invade Cuba and also privately agreeing to remove US missiles from Turkey once the crisis had passed. The agreement was accepted by Khrushchev. Had it been rejected, a US invasion of Cuba, followed by a nuclear retaliation from the Soviet Union would have been likely. It is claimed that the Cuban missile crisis was the closest the world came to a nuclear armed World War Three, with governments and people across the world fearing a nuclear apocalypse.

Timeline images/event cards

Cut out and use these cards for the timeline activity – pick 3 images and 7 written cards for the timeline.

<p>19 December 1960 Cuba officially aligns itself with the Soviet Union and its policies</p>	<p>24 October 1962 Soviet ships en route to Cuba either slow down or reverse course – except for one.</p>	<p>26 October 1962 The US begins discussions about invading Cuba.</p>	<p>18 October 1962 The Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko meets with President Kennedy and assures him that Soviet weapons were given to Cuba only for the defence of Cuba.</p>
<p>28 October 1962 President Khrushchev announces over Radio Moscow that he has agreed to remove the missiles from Cuba.</p>	<p>10 August 1962 CIA director John McCone informs President Kennedy that Soviet medium-range ballistic missiles will soon be deployed in Cuba.</p>	<p>20 October 1962 President Kennedy announces in a televised address to the nation the presence of offensive missile sites in Cuba. At this point the world was its closest to a nuclear war.</p>	<p>27 October 1962 A US spy plane gets lost and enters Soviet air space.</p>
<p>27 July 1962 President Castro announces that any direct US attack on Cuba would result in the equivalent of a world war.</p>	<p>14 October 1962 The United States obtains photographic evidence of nuclear missiles stationed in western Cuba.</p>	<p>11 September 1962 In a speech to the United Nations, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko warns that a US attack on Cuba could mean war with his country.</p>	<p>3 January 1961 The United States ends diplomatic and consular relations with Cuba as a consequence.</p>
<p>26 October 1962 President Khrushchev sends a letter to President Kennedy proposing to remove his missiles on the condition that President Kennedy would never invade Cuba, and remove missiles threatening the Soviet Union from Turkey.</p>	<p>16 October 1962 President Kennedy and his national security advisors meet to discuss diplomatic and military courses of action.</p>	<p>27 October 1962 President Kennedy agrees to President Khrushchev's proposal and the secret condition that the United States would remove missiles stationed in Turkey.</p>	<p>23 October 1962 President Khrushchev refuses to remove missiles saying that the world will not be intimidated by the US, and puts the blame for the crisis on President Kennedy.</p>
			

Blank Timeline

Timeline of events – Hiroshima and Nagasaki

7 December 1941	Attack on Pearl Harbour
August 1942	The Manhattan Project was established
12 April 1945	President Roosevelt dies
13 April 1945	New President Truman learns about the atomic bomb project
27 April 1945	Target Committee meets to select cities for the atomic bombs. Hiroshima and Nagasaki are shortlisted.
8 May 1945	VE Day. End of the war in Europe.
1 June 1945	It is decided to drop the bombs without warning the civilian population. In early June the possibility of dropping the bombs on an unoccupied area as a demonstration of their power is also discussed.
20 June 1945	Meeting of the Supreme War Direction Council, called by the Japanese Emperor to discuss ending the war
11 July 1945	Japanese Foreign Minister contacts the Ambassador in Moscow to see if the USSR will mediate in peace negotiations
16 July 1945	Trinity atomic test successfully carried out.
17 July 1945	Potsdam Conference opens
24 July 1945	Truman tells Stalin that the USA has a new, powerful weapon, but doesn't say it is atomic. (However, Stalin already knew about the bomb due to information from spies.)
26 July 1945	Potsdam Declaration is issued. It requires unconditional surrender from Japan.
26 July 1945	Clement Atlee replaces Winston Churchill as UK Prime Minister
28 July 1945	Japan rejects the Potsdam Declaration. It is acknowledged with Mokusatsu – the Japanese for “treating with silent contempt”.
2 August 1945	Potsdam Conference closes
6 August 1945	Hiroshima bomb drops at 18:16am
8 August 1945	The Soviet Union announces that it is entering the war against Japan.
9 August 1945	Nagasaki bomb is dropped at 11:02am
10 August 1945	Japan offers to surrender to the allies if the Emperor is allowed to remain in place
11 August 1945	Allies agree to acknowledge the Emperor's place in society, but insist his movements will be under American control
15 August 1945	Japan surrenders
2 September 1945	Formal surrender from Japan signed aboard the USS Missouri
29 August 1949	First Soviet nuclear test
3 October 1952	First British nuclear test

Cuban Missile Crisis Timeline

- 1 January 1959 Cuban dictator Batista is overthrown by rebel forces led by Fidel Castro and Argentinian revolutionary Che Guevara.
- 19 December 1960 Cuba officially aligns itself with the Soviet Union and its policies
- 3 January 1961 The United States ends diplomatic and consular relations with Cuba as a consequence.
- 12 April 1961 US President John F. Kennedy pledges not to intervene to overthrow Cuban President Fidel Castro.
- 17 April 1961 CIA backed Cuban exiles are defeated at the Bay of Pigs, after launching an invasion to overthrow the new Castro government.
- 27 July 1962 President Castro announces that any direct US attack on Cuba would result in the equivalent of a world war.
- 10 August 1962 CIA director John McCone informs President Kennedy that Soviet medium-range ballistic missiles will soon be deployed in Cuba.
- 11 September 1962 In a speech to the United Nations, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko warns that a US attack on Cuba could mean war with his country.
- 14 October 1962 The United States obtains photographic evidence of nuclear missiles stationed in western Cuba.
- 16 October 1962 President Kennedy and his national security advisors meet to discuss diplomatic and military courses of action.
- 18 October 1962 Foreign Minister Gromyko meets with President Kennedy and assures him that Soviet weapons were given to Cuba only for the defence of Cuba.
- 20 October 1962 President Kennedy announces in a televised address to the nation the presence of offensive missile sites in Cuba. At this point the world was its closest to a nuclear war.
- 23 October 1962 President Kennedy orders US ships to take up position 800 miles from Cuba and form a 'quarantine line'.
- 23 October 1962 President Khrushchev refuses to remove missiles saying that the world will not be intimidated by the US, and puts the blame of the crisis on President Kennedy.
- 24 October 1962 Soviet ships en route to Cuba either slow down or reverse course – except for one.
- 25 October 1962 President Kennedy sends a letter to President Khrushchev laying the responsibility for the crisis on the Soviet Union.
- 26 October 1962 The US begins discussions about invading Cuba.
- 26 October 1962 President Khrushchev sends a letter to President Kennedy proposing to remove his missiles on the condition that President Kennedy would never invade Cuba, and remove missiles threatening the Soviet Union from Turkey.
- 27 October 1962 A US spy plane gets lost and enters Soviet air space.
- 27 October 1962 President Kennedy agrees to President Khrushchev's proposal and the secret condition that the United States would remove missiles stationed in Turkey.
- 28 October 1962 President Khrushchev announces over Radio Moscow that he has agreed to remove the missiles from Cuba.