



HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY

STUDENT BOOK

▶ **10th Grade** | Unit 9

HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY 1009

The Contemporary World

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Author:

Theresa K. Buskey, B.A., J.D.

Editor:

Alan Christopherson, M.S.

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The Contemporary World

Introduction

The contemporary world is the world in which we live. Presenting current events in historical terms is a challenge. It is a challenge because this history is still being made. This LIFE PAC® will present events from World War II until the present day. You will see how our world has been shaped by these events. You will be studying events through which your parents and grandparents lived.

In the first section, you will study the **Cold War** between the United States and the Soviet Union. You will see how the developing conflict shaped post-war Europe. You will learn how the vast power and nuclear arsenals of the two super-powers kept them from fighting a direct war. You will study the crises and local wars that marked the conflict between them. You will learn how the conflict ended with the fall of the Soviet Union.

In the second section, you will study the geography and current political status of the nations of the world. In a continent-by-continent survey, you will see how the world has changed during the Cold War and how it has remained the same.

Objectives

Read these objectives. The objectives tell you what you will be able to do when you have successfully completed this LIFE PAC. When you have finished this LIFE PAC, you should be able to:

1. Describe the nature of the Cold War.
2. Name the major events of the Cold War.
3. Understand the basic structure of the United Nations.
4. Describe the course of the Korean and Vietnam Wars.
5. Describe the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe and the collapse of the Soviet Union.
6. Describe the basic geography of the six inhabited continents.
7. Name the major mountains, rivers, lakes, and deserts of the six inhabited continents.
8. Recognize the names and locations of the countries of the world.
9. Have a basic understanding of the current status of the nations of the world.

1. THE COLD WAR

Introduction. The Cold War is the name given to the period that began at the end of World War II and ended with the collapse of Soviet power. During this time, the two **superpowers**, the United States and the Soviet Union, did not fight an actual “hot” war with each other. Instead this war was fought in a series of confrontations and local wars through out the world. The end of this period is so recent

that it is not yet clearly defined. This LIFEPAC dates the end of the Cold War in 1991 when Communism ended in the Soviet Union, and the country was divided into new countries. Another possible date would be 1989, when Communism collapsed in Eastern Europe, and the **Berlin Wall** was dismantled. In either case, the Cold War ended with a victory for the United States.

Section Objectives

Review these objectives. When you have completed this section, you should be able to:

1. Describe the nature of the Cold War.
2. Name the major events of the Cold War.
3. Understand the basic structure of the United Nations.
4. Describe the course of the Korean and Vietnam Wars.
5. Describe the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Vocabulary

Study these words and phrases to enhance your learning success in this section.

autonomy

containment

endemic

NATO

repatriation

thermonuclear

Berlin Wall

Demilitarized Zone

intercontinental ballistic missiles

nominally

satellites

Warsaw Pact

Cold War

draft

Iron Curtain

purge

superpowers

Note: All vocabulary words in this LIFEPAC appear in **boldface** print the first time they are used. If you are not sure of the meaning when you are reading, study the definitions given.

ORIGINS OF THE COLD WAR

Post-War Situation. The United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) were the most powerful nations in the world at the end of World War II. Europe was devastated. Germany and Japan were in ruins from Allied bombing. The Soviet Union had a huge, well-supplied army holding all of Eastern Europe and one-third of Germany. The United States expected a period of friendly relations with the Soviet Union at the end of the war. After all, the two peoples had fought and died opposing a common enemy for four years. The U.S. expected to be able to use its influence during this time to convince the Soviet Union to withdraw from Europe peacefully. In fact, Joseph Stalin, the Soviet dictator, had no intention of allowing Eastern Europe to be free and possibly allied with the West.

Stalin acted quickly to secure his position, ignoring the promises he had made during the war. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania (the Baltic Republics) were annexed again (they had been taken in 1940 under an agreement with Hitler). Some Polish land was also taken by the Soviet Union. Poland was then compensated with a part of Soviet-occupied Germany (this basically shifted the entire country west). The Allied leaders had actually *agreed* to this travesty at Yalta, an Allied conference during the war. Stalin had given “his word” that Poland and the other nations would be allowed to have

free elections. Instead, pro-Soviet Communist governments were set up in Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia. Yugoslavia and Albania set up Communist governments of their own. These nations became Soviet **satellites** and were completely cut off from their free neighbors. In 1946, England’s famous wartime leader, Winston Churchill, spoke of an “**iron curtain**” which now separated Europe into two opposing camps.

The United States immediately faced this new threat to the recently freed nations of Europe. When a Communist takeover was threatened in Greece in 1947, President Harry Truman chose to act. He realized that a return to the longstanding U.S. policy of isolation would leave the world unable to protect itself from Soviet aggression. Therefore, he formulated and announced the policy of **containment**, also known as the Truman Doctrine. This policy committed the United States to restrict Communism to the places it already existed. Any attempt to spread it to new countries would be opposed by the United States throughout the world. In the case of Greece, \$400 million in aid was sent to both Greece and Turkey, which successfully defeated the Communist rebels in their lands. Containment was to continue as the basic policy of the United States through all of the Cold War.

**Answer the following.**

1.1 What are the two historical events, including dates, that could be used to mark the end of the Cold War?

a. _____

b. _____

1.2 Describe the policy of containment.

1.3 Who were the primary antagonists during the Cold War?

a. _____

b. _____

1.4 The Soviet Union set up Communist governments in:

a. _____ b. _____

c. _____ d. _____

e. _____

1.5 How did the United States expect to get the Soviets out of Eastern Europe after the war?

1.6 What two nations set up their own Communist governments after World War II?

a. _____ b. _____

United Nations. One ray of hope in the early years of the Cold War was the United Nations (UN). This international body had been formed in 1945 while the war was still being fought. Unlike its predecessor, the post-World War I League of Nations, the United Nations had the backing of the United States. The Soviet Union also joined. However, the United States and the Soviet Union both had a veto over any resolution passed by the organization. The Soviets used this freely to prevent any interference in their interests. Moreover, the UN had no enforcement power to back its decisions. It provided a forum for discussion and occasional action that was used by both sides in the Cold War.

The United Nations was created at a conference in San Francisco. Fifty nations signed the original charter that went into effect on October 24, 1945. The UN then accepted an invitation to set up its headquarters in the United States in New York City. The United Nations has six main organizational structures:

The General Assembly. All member states are represented in the General Assembly. The General Assembly makes all of its decisions by a majority vote, occasionally a two-thirds majority. Each country has one vote. The Assembly takes part in the election of the members for the other UN organizations. Its resolutions are not binding on any member nation except as they relate to the United Nations budget.

The Security Council. The Security Council is the UN organization responsible for keeping peace in the world. It consists of fifteen members, five of which (France, Great Britain, the United States, China, and Russia) are permanent members. The permanent members have a veto over any decision made by the council; otherwise, decisions are made by majority vote.

The Council can investigate and make recommendations on any matter it feels threatens world peace.

The Secretariat. The Secretariat consists of the secretary-general of the United Nations and his staff. The secretary-general is appointed by the General Assembly after being nominated by the Security Council. He serves a five-year term. The Secretariat runs the day-to-day operations of the UN. The secretary-general is also able to use the prestige of his position to encourage solutions of international problems.

International Court of Justice. The Court of Justice is the judicial branch of the United Nations. Its fifteen judges are appointed to nine-year terms. The court sits at The Hague, Netherlands. It gives advisory opinions to other UN branches and decides disputes between any governments that agree to submit a problem to the court. Decisions are by a majority vote of the judges.

The Economic and Social Council. The Economic Council is responsible for implementing United Nations' projects to improve life on this planet. It works to improve health, change working conditions, assist refugees, and improve agriculture among other things. The Council has 54 members elected by the General Assembly for three-year terms. It meets semi-annually, and decisions are by majority vote.

The Trusteeship Council. The Trusteeship council is responsible for the oversight of territories that are under UN protection and not yet independent nations. Most of these were former colonies such as Cameroon and New Guinea. There were eleven of these trusteeships at the end of World War II. Most are now independent nations.

**Answer true or false.**

- 1.7 _____ The UN has its own army to enforce its decisions.
- 1.8 _____ The Soviets could veto any UN resolution.
- 1.9 _____ The General Assembly has oversight of territories under UN protection.
- 1.10 _____ The Secretary-General is a figurehead.
- 1.11 _____ The Security Council is responsible for keeping peace in the world.

Answer the following question.

- 1.12 What are the strengths and weaknesses of the United Nations?

Marshall Plan. Much of Europe was so devastated by World War II that people were willing to vote the Communists into power if they promised jobs and food. Faced with this threat, the United States began a massive program of aid in 1948 aimed at helping countries recover from the war. It was called the Marshall Plan after Secretary of State and former General George Marshall, who organized it. The countries of Eastern Europe were even invited to participate, but the Soviet Union would not allow that. Eventually, over 12 billion dollars provided the push Europe needed to return to prosperity, and none of the free countries which participated became Communist.

NATO. Forced to recognize the continuing threat the Soviet Union posed in Europe, the United States decided to join in a peacetime military alliance for the first time in its history. The alliance was called **NATO**, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. It was formed in 1949 by the United States, Canada, Iceland, Norway,

Britain, the Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, Luxembourg, Portugal, France, Italy, Greece, and Turkey. West Germany (created from the non-Soviet occupation zones) joined later. The pact basically warned the Soviets that any attack on one of these nations would be considered an attack on all of them. The allied nations contributed troops and supplies to maintain a combined army in Europe ready to defend themselves. The Soviets responded by forming the **Warsaw Pact**, which claimed to be an alliance between the Soviet Union and its satellites, eventually including East Germany (created from the Soviet zone).

China. World War II had temporarily interrupted a civil war in China. Fighting between the Communists, led by Mao Zedong, and the Nationalists, led by Chiang Kai-shek, resumed as soon as the departure of the Japanese occupation forces gave them elbow room. The Communists re-entered the conflict with a great advantage. The Soviet Union had declared

war on Japan two days before it surrendered. This was done at the request of the American government, which had expected to need help defeating the Japanese Empire. The success of the atomic bomb allowed the Soviets to capture north China without much effort. The Soviets gave Mao Zedong's forces this rich, industrial northern area. The Soviet Union also gave them the weapons and supplies captured from the Japanese. Moreover, the Nationalists suffered from the corruption and ineptitude so common in traditional Chinese government. The United States refused to give the Nationalists much assistance, believing there was little they could do to affect the outcome.

The Communists, with widespread popular support from the long-oppressed peasants,

quickly gained the upper hand. Late in 1949, the Nationalists and their supporters fled to the island of Formosa (Taiwan) and established themselves there. On the mainland, Mao announced the formation of the People's Republic of China.

This was a frightening development for the United States, which feared a Chinese-Soviet Communist alliance. Until 1978 the United States did not recognize Mao's government and considered the leaders of Taiwan to be the legitimate government of China. In fact, the Soviets and the Chinese did cooperate for a time, but dictators seldom cooperate well. The two countries eventually were publicly disagreeing with each other and even fought skirmishes along their mutual border.



Complete the following.

- 1.13 The U.S. feared that Communist China would ally itself with _____ .
- 1.14 The first defensive alliance the United States ever entered into was _____ .
- 1.15 The United States gave substantial aid to Europe after World War II under the _____ .
- 1.16 The two parties in China's civil war were _____ and _____ .
- 1.17 _____ was the victorious Chinese leader in 1949.

Answer the following question.

1.18 Why did China fall to the Communists?

THE COURSE OF THE COLD WAR

Berlin Blockade. The Cold War was defined by a series of crises and local wars much like a regular war is defined by battles. The first “battle” of the Cold War came over Berlin. Like Germany as a whole, Berlin had been divided into four separate zones, each occupied by a different Allied nation (United States, Britain, France, and the Soviet Union). This division, which was intended to be very temporary, was still officially in place when the Cold War ended. The difficulty was that Berlin was located deep inside the Soviet occupation zone. Therefore, the western nations had to send supplies to their parts of the city through the Soviet zone. In 1948 the Soviets refused to let the Allies cross their zone. They hoped to force the West to abandon Berlin to the Communists. The United States refused and instead organized a huge airlift to supply the city. At its height, “Operation Vittles” was landing one plane in Berlin every three minutes around the clock. The Soviets finally admitted the West was not going to give up Berlin and ended the blockade after almost a year.

Nuclear Arms Race. The year 1949 was a dark one for the United States. Not only did China fall to the Communists that year, but the Soviet Union also exploded its first atomic bomb. American experts had not expected that development for several more years. The Soviet Union presumably used spies to steal the information on several key parts of the bomb from the United States. This development set up one of the defining features of the Cold War, the nuclear arms race. Both of the superpowers were afraid of the other achieving nuclear superiority. The United States was particularly concerned because Communism placed no value on human life. Communists considered all methods acceptable to advance their goals. Therefore, both superpowers committed huge resources to developing newer, stronger bombs and faster ways to deliver them. The United States exploded its first **thermonuclear**

bomb in 1952. The Soviet Union did the same in 1953. Later in the 1950s, both sides developed **intercontinental ballistic missiles** (ICBMs) and equipped submarines with nuclear weapons.

Both sides eventually built enough weapons to destroy each other several times over. The sheer number and power of these weapons justifiably frightened planners in both nations. There was good reason to fear that a war between the superpowers might escalate to include nuclear weapons. If that happened, the two sides might destroy not only each other, but the rest of the world as well. This was one of the primary reasons that the Cold War stayed cold.

Korean War. The Soviet Union had occupied the nation of Korea north of the 38th parallel of north latitude in the closing days of World War II. In keeping with his actions in Eastern Europe, Stalin refused to allow Korea to be reunited under a free government. Instead, he set up a Communist government in North Korea, while the United States allowed free elections in South Korea. Both north and south claimed to be the lawful government for the entire nation. The United States ended its occupation of the south in 1949 and withdrew its troops.

On June 25, 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea. The United Nations immediately condemned the invasion and asked its members to aid South Korea. The Soviet Union would have vetoed this action, but it was boycotting to protest the fact that Communist China had not been given the Chinese seat on the UN Security Council. Without ever formally declaring war, the United States provided most of the men and weapons for the conflict that followed.

The North quickly drove the unprepared South Korean troops down the Korean Peninsula. American reinforcements did not arrive quickly enough to prevent the fall of the capital, Seoul.

In fact, the Allies (U.S., South Korea, and other UN members) were driven back until they held only a small area around the city of Pusan in the country's southeast corner. There they held their ground at what was known as the Pusan Perimeter.

General Douglas MacArthur was given command of the Allies. He decided not to fight his way back up the peninsula through the enemy lines. Instead, in a brilliant military maneuver, he sent troops to land halfway up the peninsula at Inchon, near Seoul. These forces cut off the army attacking the Pusan Perimeter and liberated the capital. Then, MacArthur began to drive up into North Korea. Allied forces had almost conquered the entire country when China sent hundreds of thousands of “volunteers” to the aid of the North Koreans. It was the Allies who were then driven back. They lost and then later retook Seoul in the fighting that followed. The conflict eventually reached a stalemate very near the 38th parallel, which had been the original border.

MacArthur wanted to attack China, and he became very public about his opinion. President Truman, however, was worried about starting World War III and insisted on keeping the war in Korea. This approach is known as a “limited war.” When MacArthur continued to publicly work against the policies of his commander-in-chief, Truman fired him. MacArthur had tremendous support at home. Truman's decision made him very unpopular. Many people still believe that MacArthur was correct in his opinions, but it was not his decision to make.

A cease-fire was proposed in June of 1951. Truce talks began in July. Both sides quickly agreed on a new dividing line between North and South Korea. However, the talks stalled over the issue of **repatriation** of prisoners of war. Many of the Chinese and North Korean prisoners did not want to be forced to return to their Communist homelands. The Communists insisted that all prisoners had to be



| MacArthur wanted to attack China

repatriated even if it was against their will. The Allies refused. The talks stalled until March of 1953. The impasse was broken when Joseph Stalin died, and the new Soviet leaders decided to support the truce.

An armistice was signed in July of 1953, ending the fighting but *not* officially ending the war. A two-and-a-half-mile wide **Demilitarized Zone** was set up along the border of the two nations. Prisoners who did not wish to return home could be visited by delegates from their nation, but would not be forced to return. Over 14,000 Chinese and over 7,000 North Koreans did not go home. A much smaller number of South Koreans and even a few Americans also refused. The war ended much as it had begun, with the Communists holding most of Korea north of the 38th parallel. They had not gained any new ground. In accordance with U.S. policy, Communism had been “contained.”

**Answer the following.**

1.19 Why was Douglas MacArthur fired as commander of the armed forces in Korea?

1.20 What two things happened in 1949 that were victories for Communism?

- a. _____
- b. _____

1.21 Why was there good reason to fear a war between the United States and the Soviet Union?

1.22 How did the United States respond to the Berlin Blockade?

1.23 What issue stalled the peace talks to end the Korean War? Explain.

1.24 What did the Korean War accomplish?

1.25 What was MacArthur's strategy to break out of the Pusan Perimeter, and how did it work?

SELF TEST 1

Choose the correct letter to identify the person (each answer, 2 points).

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1.01 _____ Joseph Stalin</p> <p>1.02 _____ Mao Zedong</p> <p>1.03 _____ Fidel Castro</p> <p>1.04 _____ Ho Chi Minh</p> <p>1.05 _____ Lech Walesa</p> <p>1.06 _____ Mikhail Gorbachev</p> <p>1.07 _____ Douglas MacArthur</p> <p>1.08 _____ Gamal Abdel Nasser</p> <p>1.09 _____ John F. Kennedy</p> <p>1.010 _____ Harry Truman</p> | <p>a. last president of the U.S.S.R.</p> <p>b. leader of Solidarity</p> <p>c. Egyptian president</p> <p>d. Soviet leader, began the Cold War</p> <p>e. American president during Cuban Missile Crisis</p> <p>f. Cuban Communist leader</p> <p>g. Chinese Communist leader</p> <p>h. Korean War military commander</p> <p>i. Vietnamese Communist leader</p> <p>j. American president who formulated containment policy</p> |
|--|--|

Complete the sentences using the answers below (each answer, 2 points).

- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Pusan Perimeter | Bay of Pigs | Sputnik |
| <i>Détente</i> | General Assembly | Warsaw Pact |
| SALT | Security Council | Solidarity |
| Gulf of Tonkin Resolution | | |

- 1.011** U.S.-trained Cuban exiles tried to invade Cuba at the _____.
- 1.012** The first satellite ever launched into earth's orbit was the Soviet _____.
- 1.013** All countries in the United Nations are represented in the _____.
- 1.014** The Cold War "thaw" of the 1970s was called _____.
- 1.015** The military alliance between the Soviet Union and its satellites was called _____.
- 1.016** The UN _____ is responsible for world peace and has five permanent members who have a veto over decisions.

- 1.017** The _____ gave the president extensive authority to increase American involvement in the Vietnam War.
- 1.018** The first free trade union in a Communist country was _____.
- 1.019** The initial invasion by the North Koreans in 1950 drove the Allied troops back to _____.
- 1.020** _____ was a series of agreements between the superpowers to reduce the number of nuclear weapons each held.

Complete the following sentences (each answer, 3 points).

- 1.021** The most infamous symbol of the Cold War was the _____ which divided the German capital.
- 1.022** The United States gave billions of dollars to rebuild post-World War II Europe under the _____ to prevent Communism from growing there.
- 1.023** The United States blockaded Cuba to prevent nuclear weapons from being installed there during the _____.
- 1.024** The Soviets cut off access to Berlin by land during the _____; so the city was supplied by air for almost a year.
- 1.025** The Western democracies formed a mutual defense alliance called _____ after World War II to face the growing Soviet threat.

Complete the following activity (5 points).

- 1.026** Describe the American policy of containment.

Choose the correct country from the list below (each answer, 3 points).

China
Afghanistan

Poland
Soviet Union

Czechoslovakia

- 1.027 _____ Communists drove out the Nationalists, who took refuge on the island of Taiwan.
- 1.028 _____ Prague Spring of 1968 was crushed by the Warsaw Pact.
- 1.029 _____ A U-2 spy plane from the United States was shot down in 1960.
- 1.030 _____ Communists were never able to take full control of the country due to American-backed Muslim rebels.
- 1.031 _____ The Catholic Church gave strength to the founders of Solidarity.

Choose one of the following topics and discuss it in a detailed paragraph (25 points).

- 1.032 Fall of Communism in Eastern Europe
- The Causes and Course of the Korean War
- The Causes and Conclusion of the Vietnam War

	SCORE _____	TEACHER _____	initials _____	date _____
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804 N. 2nd Ave. E.
Rock Rapids, IA 51246-1759

800-622-3070
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