

MindSparks
KYLE WARD

U.S. HISTORY / 1914-1991

HISTORY

VS.

HISTORY

Understanding Historical Thinking and Historiography



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Kyle Ward

MindSparks®

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TO THE TEACHER

For centuries, in nations around the world, one thing that has seemed to be constant in history classrooms has been the textbook. Typically thick books that lay out national history in a strict chronological way, textbooks have also been a major educational tool to help generations learn what it means to be a citizen of their country. Often, history textbooks demonstrate to students what it means to be a good citizen by highlighting all the positive things that their country's citizens have accomplished and by showing how past struggles have made their country a better nation in their own day. With that in mind, this workbook series was created with the hope that students in a history class would be able to learn, understand, and interpret history and historical events by looking at examples of history textbooks from various nations and throughout U.S. history.

The excerpts from history textbooks in this book demonstrate historiography and historical thinking. These history textbooks come from two different categories. Some are from nations around the world and represent what middle school or high school students in their respective countries would typically use in their history classrooms. Most of these books were found at the Georg Eckert Institute in Braunschweig, Germany. The others are old American history textbooks dating from the 1790s through the 1970s. Many of these American history textbooks come from the Cunningham Library at Indiana State University.

Not every nation will be represented in this book, nor will every historical story about the United States be told. The logistics of finding, reading, editing, and translating textbooks from every nation over time would be impossible. Therefore, this workbook is a small snippet of old textbooks with a glimpse of how students learn about the United States in history classes around the world.

These lessons should make it clear to students that history is not about names, dates, and places, but rather about understanding perspective, interpretation, and bias, and being able to make an informed argument about various events in the past. Studying history this way might be new to some of your students, but taking the time to learn how to interpret how society impacted what was written in the past will help your students get more involved with the topic—and hopefully gain a better appreciation of this field of study.

Each section has a brief introduction, followed by one or more textbook excerpts from different nations or periods. The excerpts are followed by a section titled “Items for Analysis,” which will ask students to consider various questions related to the textbook excerpts. Questions will ask students to compare and contrast, organize events or concepts into different times, put stories into specific context, develop arguments through specific evidence, interpret information, and synthesize it all to show that they understand the material.

While many of the questions will relate to the specific textbook selections in that section, at times students are asked to go above and beyond. For those questions, students will probably have to use the internet, the library, or other research materials to help prepare their answers.

The main goal of this series is for students to learn about historiography and historical thinking by looking at textbook excerpts from different nations or periods. This will lead to a lot of discussion, debate, and extra research, and students will need to formulate and defend theories. At the end of the day, these exercises will lead students to become more informed citizens, and will help students develop their self-confidence, allow them to develop their own “voice,” while giving them a more in-depth understanding of the field of history.

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS HISTORIOGRAPHY?

Historiography is the study of how history has been written, studied, researched, and analyzed over time. When historians look at specific historical documents, they want not only to learn what it says about an event or person, but also to understand who wrote it, where they wrote it, and when. Historians want to know this information because they are trying to figure out what may have influenced the author(s) perspective, biases, and interpretation of the specific person or event detailed in the source.

Every historian knows that when authors write something they are not doing so in a perfect vacuum or even being completely objective about their topic. Rather, each document (or source) was produced at a time when certain cultural, political, religious, geographic, economic, and/or social events were swirling around them. Therefore, historians would argue that the time period in which the source was written affected how its author(s) saw the world around them.

It is also important to note that very few historical figures lived their lives with the thought they were living “in history.” Rather, most people live day-to-day without considering that in the future their daily actions might be analyzed, researched, written about, and debated. For example, the immigrants who came to the United States in the late 1800s did not sit around saying to one another, “Isn’t it great living in this historical time period known as the Gilded Age?” They were much more concerned about surviving and getting set up in their new home and were probably not considering how people in the future would view them either individually or as a larger group. Therefore, when they wrote letters home, kept journals, or communicated with people in their own community, they wrote what they felt and knew at that moment. Now, because of historical research, we know that there were certain political, economic, geographic, religious, social, and cultural things going on at that time, all of which may have had a direct impact on how these new immigrants viewed the world.

What does all this mean for the study of history today? Consider the following scenario. Today, two historians end up researching the same historical event. For arguments sake, let’s say they are interested in why the Berlin Wall fell in 1989 and which world leader should get credit for this event. They are researching the same topic and reading many of the same documents, but when they write up their final report they have two very different perspectives on this same event. One discussed how it was U.S. President Ronald Reagan who was the key player in ending the Cold War by forcing Germany to tear down the Berlin Wall, while the other argues that it was obviously Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and his policies in the former Soviet Union that ended the Cold War.

These two historians came to completely different interpretations of what caused this major historical event probably because their sources emphasized different perspectives. These historians then based their arguments on what individuals from the past had

written about the event at the time the event occurred. Some of the sources could have been an East German who had just left his country to get into West Germany, a Soviet soldier who was stationed in East Berlin at the end of the 1980s, or even an American diplomat working in the U.S. Embassy in East Berlin at this time. Each participated in the exact same event but may have seen and remembered it differently from the others.

After considering all of this, think about one more thing. You have been assigned to read articles about who should get credit for the Berlin Wall coming down in your history class. And, as any good history student does, you check out the sources and footnotes for the articles in front of you and you notice that one has been written by an American historian, and the other by a Russian historian. This forces you to ask another historiographical question: “Does their nationality impact how they researched and perceived this event?”

This is historiography. It allows the reader to think about history from a larger perspective by forcing them to consider not only what was happening at the time of the historical event, but also what is happening in our own time which might affect how we learn about this event.

This perspective is what makes history so interesting, useful, and significant. Studying history is not just about names, dates, and places; applying historiography forces students and teachers to engage with the material, to consider why sources were written the way they were and when they were, and to ask how they relate to our world today. Because, in the end, students must remember that they too will become a part of history, and that current geography, economics, politics, society, culture, and religion may all affect how they view historical events as well.

This workbook will use eight historiographical time periods from American history to examine the external societal impacts that may have influenced how each textbook was written. Use this handout as a reference to help you understand how historians have categorized the different historiographical periods of American history. This will help you get a better sense of some of the major social, political, economic, religious, and cultural issues that may have influenced how these history textbooks were written. It can also help shed some light on the author(s) own interpretation, bias, and perspectives concerning the historical events they were writing about at these specific times in American history.

Schools of Thought in Historiography

- **Providential (1600s–1700s)**

Commonly seen during the pre-Revolutionary period, this type of history explained historical events in biblical terms. One can easily see God's hand in American affairs, with justification for things happening due to God's will. Nearly everything was connected to God's master plan. A classic example of this type of history tells the story of how the first Pilgrims came to the New World for religious freedom and established a new colony based on religious ideals. One only has to look at the pictures depicting the Pilgrims in history textbooks of this period to see the religious images typically related to this group.

- **Rationalists (1700s–1800s)**

Rationalists believed that one should understand history because understanding what had happened in the past would mean a brighter future for people moving forward. They took their main concepts from the Enlightenment era and followed ideas coming from that period, such as the scientific method. In contrast to the Providential period, they felt that the source of progress was natural law. In short, they believed that history should be interpreted through secular and naturalistic interpretations. These historians typically had classical educations, access to personal libraries, and the free time to research and write about history, which was uncommon for most Americans at this time. To explain the world, they typically described men like themselves: free, educated, and ambitious. For them, self-interest, not God's master plan, motivated people. Therefore, it was reason, not faith, that affected history and allowed people to follow their own destiny.

- **Nationalist (late 1800s–early 1900s)**

Historians during this time promoted concepts such as Anglo-Saxon superiority. Considering much of the historical writing during this time was coming from men who were from wealthier families, college educated, and Anglo-Saxon, it is not hard to see why they felt this group was superior to others. They pushed the idea of spreading American democratic principles both in the U.S., and around the world. They believed that America was actually a triumph of the Anglo-Saxon people over the inferior races, who represented the stoppage of progress. Examples of this would be Manifest Destiny as well as the Spanish-American War (1898) and the Philippine-American War (1899–1913). Each of these events demonstrated America's desire to conquer new territories and to bring American politics, economics, religion, and culture to other groups of people.

- **Progressive (early 1900s–1940s)**

Progressive historians actively wanted to reform their government and they believed that knowledge of the past would empower people to do this. History was viewed as the story of struggle and conflict. It was this constant struggle and conflict that helped shape America. They also believed that conflict was a consistent part of America's past and could be seen in a polarized history, such as labor vs. business, liberals vs. conservatives, rural vs. city, rich vs. poor, North vs. South, etc. But, while Progressive historians often tried to improve society by highlighting discrepancies between groups, they rarely tackled issues such as race, gender, and ethnicity.

- **Consensus (late 1940s–1980s)**

By the mid-twentieth century, Consensus historians tried to move the pendulum away from the Progressives and more toward a “middle-of-the-road” philosophy. These historians believed it was the shared ideas that Americans held that was of most importance, and not conflict in historical events. These historians pointed out that Americans tended to find general agreement on most topics and that much of America's struggle had actually happened in the center rather than the extremes of the left and/or right. They typically avoided ideological discord and they often, as a group, found general agreement in terms of how historical events transpired in the past. These historians also focused on traditional American values and often had a strong nationalistic sense. Not surprisingly, following World War II, they believed that America's democratic society should be celebrated and held up as a model to the rest of the world. They did not shy away from celebrating America's accomplishments and achievements, especially when they highlighted America's democratic institutions. This group spread the idea of American exceptionalism (or uniqueness) that many felt carried with it the implications of the U.S. being superior to others.

- **New Left (1960s–1980s)**

In the wake of the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War protests, and a variety of other organized movements trying to bring about equality for women and minority groups, many historians began to look at U.S. history from the “bottom up.” This meant that rather than focusing solely on the history of white men, who often held positions of power throughout American history, these historians wanted to understand history from the perspective of the underrepresented. This included women, minorities, and ethnic groups that had typically been forgotten in historical research. Their argument was that America was not a melting pot, but rather a stew in which one could still see distinct differences that all had to work together for the U.S. to be a great country. The New Left also helped give rise to a social history movement that focused on common people, which again was an underrepresented group in most historical research. This led to some new forms of research using diaries, letters, and other everyday documents to get a better sense of what life was like in the past. Finally,

this group of historians pushed to put American history within the context of a more global perspective by showing how interconnected the world was.

- **Neoconservative (1960s–present)**

Sometimes seen as a response to the New Left, Neoconservative historians began to focus their attention on American progress and based much of their research on traditional values and the shared ideas of Americans rather than on conflicts that might force groups of people away from each other. History is seen as a moral guide that should help Americans see the more traditional characteristics of society. History's main job then is to help promote patriotism and build better citizens by understanding the historical events that have made America great. Unity is valued over a multicultural state. Neoconservative historians believe that society needs order and classes, and would argue against any classless society. Furthermore, the idea of leveling the economic playing field should not be considered progress, but as moving America away from its capitalist origins.

WORLD WAR I



AMERICA ENTERS THE WAR

World War I started in 1914, but the United States did not enter until 1917. The textbook below discusses the reasons why the U.S. might have entered this war and explains the impact this decision may have had on the war.

Italy

Giuliano Alberton and Luisa Benucci, *Incontro con la storia: L'età contemporanea il novecento*

1917–18: The Outcome of War

The year 1917 is when all of the countries involved in the war entered in one way or another into this profound crisis.

“The useless struggle,” as it was called by Pope Benedict XV, had gone on for too long, and the suffering that was spread equally between the military and civilians seemed like it would continue indefinitely. . . .

A Decisive Turn: The U.S. Enters the War

The event destined to cause a decisive turn of events on the conflict was the decision of the U.S. to enter the war. Until then the Americans were limited to helping the Allies with material and financial support, but the terroristic strategy put into action by the German commanders at the beginning of 1917 forced them to abandon their neutrality.

The Germans had begun an underwater battle, attacking with their submarines all mercantile ships—even of neutral nations like the U.S.—who brought reinforcements to England. The German offensive, which put the Allies in grave danger, also hurt the interests of the Americans.

President Woodrow Wilson therefore decided to send the U.S. to war against the Axis powers, because their victory would have made it impossible for the Americans to recuperate the money they had loaned to their European friends; the decision was supported by industrialists and businessmen.

On April 6, 1917, the U.S. entered the war, and with the enormous potential of its men and machines at its disposal, it tipped the balance of power between the opposing sides, and contributed in a substantial way to helping change the fate of the Allies.

Source: Giuliano Alberton and Luisa Benucci, *Incontro con la storia: L'età contemporanea il novecento* (Milan, Italy: Principato, 2010), 112, 120. Paraphrased and trans. from the Italian by Sarah Bevelli.

Items for Analysis

1. Research how current U.S. history textbooks discuss why America entered World War I and compare it to this Italian textbook. Explain where they agree and disagree.
2. Imagine you are a student in a history class in Italy and you have just read this passage. Explain what your thoughts are about Germans and Americans after reading this.

PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE

Treaties are supposed to end wars and bring peace to the warring nations. The textbook selections below question how successful the Treaty of Versailles was at ending fighting in Europe after World War I.

France

Michaela Braun, et al., *Historie/Geschichte: L'Europe et le monde du congrès de Vienne à 1945*

The Armistice: The end of the war?

Signed on November 11, 1918, the Armistice of Rethondes suspends combat on the western front. The German retreat has to be completed in 15 days. The left bank of the Rhine is evacuated and on the right bank, Mainz, Koblenz, and Cologne are occupied and a 10k zone is demilitarized. The German army must deliver some of its material (submarines, artillery...), but it does not accept defeat and spreads the legend of the “stab in the back.”

The Great War is over; peace does not, however, return to Europe. Russia is in the throes of civil war. The Germans and the Poles confront each other in Posen; in April 1919 a Russo-Polish conflict breaks out and in the Baltic states, German troops combat Bolshevik forces. In January 1919, the German government uses Freikorps (*corps francs*) to repress insurrections and strengthen the defense of the eastern borders of Germany. Altogether almost 400,000 volunteers. . . form secret organizations or join extreme rightwing paramilitary groups.

The Peace Conference

In January 1919, the Peace Conference opens in Paris. Russia and the defeated are excluded. Twenty-seven nations participate in negotiations, which are essentially conducted by the Council of Four (The Big Four). While Wilson refers to the “Fourteen Points,” [French Prime Minister] Clemenceau expects to obtain indispensable reparations for reconstruction and demands a guarantee for France’s security. Italy wants the territories promised by the Allies in return for its entry into the war. In order to stabilize Europe in the face of the Bolshevik threat, England is anxious not to weaken Germany too much.

The Treaty of Versailles is signed on June 28, 1919. Blaming Germany and its allies for the conflict, it imposes very harsh conditions. German politicians and public opinion denounce it as a diktat. After the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the treaties of the Parisian suburbs redesign the map of Europe.

A missed peace?

These treaties intended to inaugurate a new international order based on the rights of people to self-determination and on democratic international politics. The League of Nations guarantees collective security, thanks to the development of arbitration and the promotion of disarmament. It does not have, however, a mechanism of restraint in case of a threat to peace, and does not have an international force.

The refusal of the American Senate to ratify the Versailles treaty weakens the League of Nations. In the central and eastern countries of Europe, there are many minorities aspiring for recognition. Revision claims multiply in Germany and elsewhere. In Italy the theme of “mutilated victory” takes hold.

The League of Nations, nevertheless, plays a significant role in developing a humanitarian sphere and promoting human rights. It guarantees the application of laws for ethnic minorities and, in 1922, it confers on the Norwegian, Fridtjof Nansen, the functions of High Commissioner for refugees: millions of Europeans are in effect condemned to exile and statelessness by the war, the Russian revolution and the peace treaties. The International Labor Organization favors economic and social cooperation between countries.

Austria

Manfred Schindlbauer, *Thema: Geschichte Kl. 7*

On November 11th, 1918 one could hear the sound of Victory Bell in Paris and London. Germany signed the conditions of cease-fire and, after 51 months, the sound of weapons finally faded away. However, the end of the war doesn't instantly bring freedom. Inflation and unemployment prevented the hoped for “Return to Normalcy.” Revolts and disputes causing civil war activity made it clear that as far as the redesign of the countries the last word has not yet been spoken. In parts of Eastern and South-eastern Europe fighting continued. The borders of the new countries were especially controversial. And last but not least, there was a threat that the spreading of the Soviet population and Lenin's nightmare would lead to world revolution.

Despite the variety of problems of the time immediately after the war, which in order to be resolved, required effort from all of the countries and their people, it took a long time to reach the settlement between the winner and the defeated countries. The actions of those who, during the war, sparked nationalistic fervors were still powerful and destructive. They led to permanent political and economic crises. For many European societies, the only way out of the crises seemed to be through dictatorship and bondage.

Source: Michaela Braun, et al., *Historie/Geschichte: L'Europe et le monde du congrès de Vienne à 1945* (Paris, France: Nathan/Klett, 2008), 220–222. Paraphrased and trans. from the French by Katherine Younker.

The Treaty of Versailles

The breakdown of the Great Powers in World War I—Russia, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman empire—the seminal catastrophe of the twentieth century, significantly changed the political map of Europe. Since all the countries which participated in the war, including the winner, were weakened, the “Old World” order was disturbed and new central powers emerged. In particular, the USA and Japan were making it clear that the political, economic, and cultural dominance in the world of the Great Powers had come to an end.

After the defeat of the Central Powers in 1918, a new order was necessary in Europe. The Paris Peace Conference (1919–1920) was the last offshoot of conference diplomacy of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, the exclusion of the defeated countries from the council—Russia was not invited either—was the first sign that the totality of the war and the immeasurable sacrifices deepened the differences between the people and their governments and the return to solidarity between the Powers was not possible. Unlike 100 years earlier, when during the Congress of Vienna the leading statesmen—French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau, American President Woodrow Wilson, and English Prime Minister David Lloyd George—did not even consider the restoration of the inner and outer order of the pre-wartime for the European countries. Instead, their goal was to ensure security and stability by limiting the defeated countries—especially Germany which carried the sole blame for the start of the war and for its realization. The means to doing so were quite harsh.

The peace contracts were dictated by the victorious. Clemenceau’s “peace settlement” meant for the defeated: territory losses, demilitarization and, in the case of Germany, economic constraints on a massive scale. The principles on which the new order was established differed radically from those of the Vienna Congress. In place of legitimacy and solidarity of the rulers there was democracy and self-determination. In place of old multinational state ruled by monarchy came the ideal of ethnically established and closed off Unitarian states. In order to prevent a new war, a new collective peace order would be established. The foundation pillars defining the new order would be more important than those that initiated Wilson’s League of Nations.

Peace of Versailles . . . created in Eastern and Southern Europe—on the territory previously occupied by the Habsburg monarchy and that belonging to the Tsar—a series of independent nation-states (Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia). In the new European order, these states had the task of keeping the Soviet Union behind the cordon sanitaire, known as the “Safety Belt.” For France, what mattered most was the containment of seemingly still superior German Reich. For the purpose of consolidation of the new states and bracketing Germany, an operation was run that led to the expansion of the internal alliance system in middle and eastern Europe. The conclusion of the Alliance with Poland was followed by the launch of the Small Entente that was led by France. The goal of the Small Entente was to preserve

status quo and defend against the Habsburg restoration order that consisted of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Romania.

Because the U.S. Congress did not ratify the peace treaties and refused the accession of the United States to the League of Nations, the Treaty of Versailles remained to be just a torso especially that the Anglo-American security guarantee provided for France was also frail. The structural weaknesses of the new European order also stemmed from the fact that, from the beginning, all the involved countries, the winner and the defeated, deferred the demands for revisions.

Germany

Anton Egner, et al., *Zeit für Geschichte: Herausforderungen der Moderne* 11

In the dreamland of the period of the armistice

Great was the shock of the German public which believed itself in the dreamland of the armistice when the German minister of the exterior Graf Brockendorff-Rantzau was handed the complete version of the treaty of Versailles on May 7, 1919. All parties rejected this treaty. Minister President Scheidemann (SPD), who during the war as a member of parliament had argued for a peace of understanding and without annexations, said emphatically and indignantly in front of the peace committee of the national assembly under the frenetic applause of its members: “what hand would not wither when putting us and themselves in bonds like these.”

The fight in the Cabinet/Ministry

No German politician was particularly eager to acknowledge the sole responsibility of Germany for the war by signing the Treaty of Versailles in front of the whole world. But because demands for changes to article 231 were categorically and vehemently rejected, and because a possible military intervention of the Allies in case of non-ratification of the treaty, the discussion in the ministry and the national assembly came down to one question: should Germany accept the peace treaty in its given form under the existing power relations or should it reject it and thus risk the resumption of fighting in a militarily difficult situation? In the deciding meeting in the ministry of the interior on June 18/19, 1919, seven ministers voted for and seven ministers voted against the treaty. The two generals [Paul von] Hindenburg and [Karl] Groener, who had been invited for consultation, however, explained that military resistance against an allied advance was futile. Groener added: “Only if we keep the German Reich fairly intact, is a rebirth of Germany possible.” The government of Scheidemann (SPD) resigned therefore on June 20. A new government under the leadership of Gustav Bauer (SPD), which was willing to sign the treaty, took over. The politically most important figure became Matthias

Source: Manfred Schindlbauer, *Thema: Geschichte Kl. 7* (Wien: Verlag Neues Schulbuch, 2007), 46–53. Paraphrased and trans. from the Austrian by Dr. Isolde Mueller.

Erzberger, the minister of finance and a member of the Zentrum party. He advocated for a conditional acceptance of the treaty.

The fight in the National Assembly

In the deciding vote in the national assembly on June 23, 1919, a majority of 237 votes as opposed to 138 votes with 5 abstentions voted for the acceptance of the treaty. The following parties voted against the treaty: the Deutschnationalen, the Deutsche Volkspartei, the largest part of the Demokraten, and several members of the Zentrum. The parties who voted against the treaty however expressed their respect for the members of the National Assembly who wanted to ratify the treaty thus expressing their trust in the respectability of the motives of those who had agreed to sign. The will to maintain the national unity at all cost was the deciding reason for many of the members of parliament to ratify the treaty. On June 28, 1919, Hermann Müller (SPD) as the minister of the exterior and Johannes Bell (Zentrum) as transportation minister signed the treaty in the hall of mirrors in Versailles. The following questions pose themselves after signing:

- Which content in the treaty of Versailles caused especially strong reactions in the German public?
- Why did the population in east Germany and the militia groups stationed on the eastern border in particular feel betrayed by the politicians in Berlin?
- What effects did the treaty have on the young republic?

The paragraph about the guilt of war

The article giving Germany the responsibility for starting the war (Paragraph 231) in the peace treaty, which in nationalistic press in Germany was referred to as the paragraph of shame, elicited the strongest response in Germany. It stood at the beginning of the reparations claims and its intent was to hold Germany as the initiator of the world war solely responsible for all losses and damages. The question of the shares of responsibility for the war was in the past controversial. For a long time historians in general propagated the opinion that the European powers slid into World War I. Today's research agrees in general with the historian Fritz Fischer. He assigned the German Reich the "decisive piece of the historical responsibility" for the outbreak of the war. However he did not talk about the sole responsibility of Germany for the war, as stated in paragraph 231.

Source: Anton Egner, et al., *Zeit für Geschichte: Herausforderungen der Moderne 11* (Braunschweig, Germany: Schroedel, 2010), 282. Paraphrased and trans. from the German by Ania Cramer.

Items for Analysis

1. Most historians today would agree that the Treaty of Versailles did not help keep the peace in Europe and may have actually helped lead the world into the Second World War. After reading each of the textbook selections above, explain who you think each nation represented is blaming for the failure of this treaty.

France:

Austria:

Germany:

2. The Austrian textbook is interesting because it was the assassination of the then archduke of Austria, Franz Ferdinand that actually started World War I. Imagine you are an Austrian student today reading this passage. Explain if this textbook selection places any blame for the start of the war on the Austrian-Hungarian Empire or not. Explain why you think this textbook is written this way.

3. For most historians, Germany became the focus after the Treaty of Versailles. Many claim that Germany's reaction to this treaty helped lead to the rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party. After reading the German textbook selection, explain what issues and concerns these authors found with the Treaty of Versailles. Do you think they also feel that this treaty helped bring about the Second World War?
4. Evaluate the Treaty of Versailles on its ability to promote peace in Europe. Do you think this treaty was a major cause for the rise of Adolph Hitler and the Nazis in Germany?

THE GREAT DEPRESSION



INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE GREAT DEPRESSION

The Great Depression had a significant impact around the world. From 1929 to 1939, many industrialized nations around the world found themselves struggling not only economically, but also politically, socially, and culturally. The textbook selections below discuss how this economic crisis caused problems in their own country, and who might be to blame for this event.

Poland

Anna Landau-Czajka, *Historia i wiedza o społeczeństwie*

One of the characteristics of capitalism is that business becomes more global. Companies are hardly ever owned by an individual. The building and maintaining of factories is extremely expensive and the cost of the venture, in general, exceeds the financial capabilities of an individual. This leads to creating joint-stock ventures.

These partnerships (joint-stock ventures) are often internationally owned and it is not always easy to determine who the owner is. As well, the partnerships' investments are not limited to its home country. Oftentimes, it is very profitable to do business abroad for several reasons. Some of the benefits may be: cheaper labor (this means that the pay is lower than in the home country) or lower taxes for investors.

International trade has become more prevalent and so has the economic cooperation between countries.

Although these trends appear to be positive, the capitalistic economy has its disadvantages. The main one is that it is very cyclical. This means that for a period of time, the economy grows, there is steady increase in pay, and there are more jobs. This, however, is normally followed by years of crisis when unemployment rate goes up, pay drops, and the international investors retreat. Then the situation gets better and the cycle begins again.

While globalization of economy leads to economic growth and carries financial gains for many ventures, it has one important drawback. Namely, when one country, especially a well-developed one, experiences crisis, the crisis is bound to affect other countries leading to a world crisis.

That's exactly what happened in 1929. The crisis began when Wall Street crashed, bringing down the value of shares. The day was named Black Tuesday. The panic in the USA caused by Black Tuesday led to further, drastic reductions in share prices. The effects were tragic. Factories shut down, unemployment increased. The unemployed had no money to spend which decreased the demand for products and more factories

had to shut down. The cycle continued. Numerous banks were also affected as the investors did not have the revenue needed to continue to pay down their debt. With the banks closing down, many people lost their savings which further contributed to the severity of the crisis.

The crisis was rapidly spreading to other countries. It affected not only Europe and the USA, but also Japan. In Europe, the countries most affected were: Germany and Poland.

While most countries were able to overcome the crisis by 1932, in Poland it lasted until 1935. The reason why Poland remained affected after 1932 was because the country's economy was very dependent on the economies of the USA, France, England, and Sweden. When the crisis began, the foreign investors withdrew their investments from the Polish market in order to support and save the ventures in their home countries. The production in Poland continuously declined until 1932 and, though, it stabilized in 1932, it remained very minimal until 1935. The unemployment reached staggering numbers. A third of workers were jobless and only a small percentage (a dozen or so) of them qualified for unemployment benefits. The ones who were lucky to be employed, worked only several days a week and earned very little. Even intelligentsia had a difficult time finding employment.

The farmers' situation was as difficult. Imagine that the farming product which used to cost 100 zloty in 1929, in 1935, cost only 33 zloty. If it was a manufactured item that used to cost 100 zloty, the cost during crisis would only be 57 zloty. This drop in prices meant that farmers and others had to sell a lot more of basic products like salt and lamp oil in order to create enough revenue to be able to pay obligatory taxes and insurance. Many of them sold everything they had, even if it meant their families would go hungry.

The farmers gradually bought less and less manufactured products which caused further decline in production. This meant that there were no jobs for the farmers in the city.

The unemployed from the city would normally go back to their family farms in order to survive. The influx of additional work force into the suburbs and farms caused quasi-unemployment there. Many times there were 10 or more inhabitants on a farm that would normally be able to sustain 5 people.

The crisis influenced not only the economy but also the overall mood of the entire society. People who were unemployed were unhappy and unsure of the future. Those who had jobs were worried they might lose them any day. Everyone was trying to figure out who and what was the cause of the crisis and why their situation was getting harder instead of improving. The discontent was evident among many groups of people—the unemployed, the clients of bankrupt banks, clerks, farmers, and teachers whose salaries were reduced.

When many people show dissatisfaction, the government normally looks for solutions to the issues causing it. The first reform aiming to end Great Depression was initiated in the USA. In 1933, the American president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt created an economic and social reform which came to be called the New Deal. The reform brought about changes that provided relief to all. It started public works, farmers received debt relief and the unemployed received help from the government. A government policy or practice of doing things to influence the country's economy or the social affairs is called interventionism. Interventionism was practiced in many countries after the Great Depression, e.g. Germany.

The most dangerous effect of any crisis is the fact that discontented people expect a solution that can provide a quick and radical change to their situation. The society also wanted the politicians to name the party (a group or a person) guilty of causing the crisis. The dream of a strong leader who can direct the country out of the crisis was becoming more and more prevalent. That is why, it was not surprising that the extremist parties, like fascists and communists, won many of the elections. It was in 1933 that Adolf Hitler came to power.

The Great Depression finally ended just as any other crisis. The factories started back up, the unemployment was down again, the standard of living increased rapidly. However, the people in power were those elected by the dissatisfied society that, at the time, was desperate for a change. It was only a few years before another world war would begin.

Austria

Manfred Schindlbauer, *Thema: Geschichte Kl. 7*

During the so called "Golden Twenties" the European economy experienced a recovery. Numerous states started the economic expansion: France and Belgium, Sweden and the Netherlands, some Eastern European and Baltic countries and especially Germany, whose industry once again became internationally competitive through reorganization and rationalization of production. However, the lasting unemployment showed how unstable was the foundation of this upswing. Besides, not all countries experienced similar prosperity and accelerating wealth. Austria underwent a permanent, "chronic" crisis which was caused by the interfacing challenges of their economy contributing to the break-up of the largest unified economic region, the Habsburg Monarchy. Also, in Great Britain, the economic recovery was progressing quite slowly.

The historians speak of—in particular regarding Germany—"the borrowed prosperity"; that is to say that the boom, also in France and England, was built mainly on loans from America. A total of 20.6 billion Reichmarks flowed from U.S. banks and private lenders to Germany. About half of it was in short-term loans. However, from the German banks this capital had long-term effects to the state and especially the

Source: Anna Landau-Czajka, *Historia i wiedza o społeczeństwie* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Szkolne PWN, 2006), 117–119.
Paraphrased and trans. from the Polish by Ania Cramer.

economy; it served to expand the infrastructure and to pay Reparations. This created monetary flow without the corresponding supply of goods or services meant that from the beginning the system was bound to collapse.

On October 25, 1929 occurred something that hardly anyone thought possible in the era of economic boom and mass consumerism known in the U.S. as the “Roaring Twenties”: The New York stock exchange experienced “Black Thursday” which, due to time difference, came to be known in history as “Black Friday,” the never before seen price drop. In the years of prosperity, there was a huge investment boom. Through frantic speculations and the ability to buy stock using loans, the prices quickly rose and reached the level that could no longer correspond with the realistic economic growth.

For no apparent reasons panic spread on October 25 among the investors and the price drop went from 50% on average to, in some cases, 90%. The New York Exchange crash was not a cause or a reason for the Great Depression of the thirties, but simply a signal that made people aware of the already existing negative developments.

Already before 1929 the overproduction in the agricultural sector contributed to the decline in prices for the agricultural goods and a massive loss of income for the farmers. The associated decline in the purchasing power—the rural population made up at least more than a quarter of the total population—spread the crisis to the industry: the production had to be restricted/reduced, the workforce had to be laid off, the collapse of firms, bankruptcy (inability to pay) were on a rise as much as the unemployment.

Banking was also affected because many investors withdrew their funds from the banks and the banks were unable to pay out funds and had to reduce granting of credit. This, in turn, meant that there were no financial means available which was necessary to stimulate the economy. In order to recover from the shortage of money or to at least reduce it, two thirds of the American foreign loans were temporarily at short notice recalled/reclaimed at the start of the depression. This magnified the problems that already existed in some of the European countries.

One could say that the American crisis was “exported” and expanded to a “world-wide economic crisis.”

The symptoms and effects of the crisis were similar everywhere: unemployment, social distress. From 1929 to 1932 there was a decrease in the volume of the world trade by 25 percent, the industrial production by 37 percent. Of course, not all countries were affected to the same degree and at the same time; the U.S. and Germany were touched the most by crisis, the Soviet Union, on the other hand, proved to be, for the most part, immune. In the context of industrialization of the first five-year plan, the industrial production tripled in the Soviet Union and the unemployment which, in other countries, reached record highs (according to estimations, towards the end of 1932 it was 15 million in Europe and 12 million in the U.S.), in the Soviet Union was practically unknown.

Already before the onset of the crisis, the English economist John Maynard Keynes, considered the end of the economic liberalism and called for state action to fight the

inflation and secure/protect the employed. Indeed, during the peak of his popularity, many countries, especially the U.S., took the steps to revive the economy through government intervention. Legendary were the actions of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the man who put together the notion called the “New Deal.” Europe lacked such a big concept. Instead, European countries relied on autarky aimed at national efforts (protective tariffs, depreciation of national currency) which only prolonged the crisis. Though, gradually the state actions took hold of investing and employment promotion, the unemployment figures lagged behind the economic recovery and so, the climate of crisis did not change.

The middle and working class were especially concerned with the economic problems of the period between the wars. The inflation of the post-war period impoverished the entire class: craftsmen, merchants, free professions, clerks, staffers. These people wanted nothing more to do with democracy as they felt cheated and robbed by it. The economic crisis gave rise to the potential of discontent because of the army of unemployed. This led to radicalization of political life in many European countries. In Germany it gave rise to a pronounced anti-state and anti-democratic forces, in particular communism and Nazism.

Source: Manfred Schindlbauer, Thema: Geschichte Kl. 7 (Vienna, Austria: Verlag Neues Schulbuch, 2007), 61–63. Paraphrased and trans. from the Austrian by Dr. Isolde Mueller.

Items for Analysis

1. Compare and contrast the story of the Great Depression presented in these two excerpts.

Similarities between the Polish and Austrian perspectives:

Differences between the Polish and Austrian perspectives:

2. A U.S. history textbook publisher has asked you to write a section titled “The Global Impact of the Great Depression.” You have decided to use these two textbooks to help you do your research. In the space below, write your textbook excerpt.

The Global Impact of the Great Depression

DOMESTIC PERSPECTIVES ON THE GREAT DEPRESSION

Many nations blamed the United States for causing the Great Depression, so it is interesting to see how U.S. history textbooks have taught students about this topic over the years. In the passages below, you will find both some scapegoats and some heroes in how the U.S. dealt with this crisis.

1933

Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker and Donald E. Smith, *The United States of America: A History*

World-Wide Business Depression Causes “Hard Times.” This statement is by no means belied by the fact that in 1930 millions were thrown out of work. The business depression of that year was world-wide, and cannot be blamed upon conditions peculiar to the United States. It was in part a reaction from too rapid business expansion, and in part the result of a general decline in commodity prices following the return of many countries to the gold standard. With the increased demand for gold the value of that metal rose, and so each dollar purchased more in wheat, or iron, or leather. Falling prices have a depressing effect on business, however, bringing reduced production, unemployment, and the other accompaniments of “hard times.” When there has been a general adjustment to the new price level, the American industrial machine will get under way with full steam once more, the idle will be drawn back to work, and a new era of prosperity will open.

1944

Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard, *A Basic History of the United States*

In the autumn of 1929, just as the country seemed safe and sound on the “high plateau of permanent prosperity,” except for farmers, the business boom attributed to Republican statecraft burst with a resounding crash. The prime stocks of the leading corporations fell nearly forty points on the average in a single day, October 29, when more than 16,000,000 shares were dumped on the market at the New York Stock Exchange. This panic was followed by the explosion of banks, railway companies, and private concerns, by increasing woes among farmers already in straits, by the closing of factories, shops, and offices, and by a steep decline in the opportunities of employment for artists, writers, musicians, architects, engineers, playwrights, and teachers—indeed

Source: Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker and Donald E. Smith, *The United States of America: A History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933), 611-612.

the whole white-collar class—from New York to California. In the opening months of 1933, it was estimated, 12,000,000 men and women were out of work. Ruin and hunger, if not starvation, haunted not only the shacks of tenants and sharecroppers on the land, not only the back streets inhabited by industrial and professional classes, but also the grand avenues of great cities.

For a moment leaders in business and politics thought that this was “just another panic.” President Hoover said: “We have passed through no less than fifteen major depressions in the last century. . . . We have come out of each . . . into a period of prosperity greater than ever before. We shall do so this time.” But as the depression dragged through tedious months and into years, belief in “prosperity just around the corner” turned into doubt or despair. As this revulsion of feeling intensified, trust in the “natural” and “normal” processes of “recovery” declined, and leaders in the economic, intellectual, and moral life of the nation vehemently declared their unwillingness to endure the crisis with pious resignation as a visitation of God or of natural forces beyond human control. Long years of research, debate, agitation, and legislative gains in respect of social improvement had prepared multitudes of Americans for a different attitude toward poverty, unemployment, and misery in “God’s own country.”

1974

Richard N. Current, Alexander DeConde, and Harris L. Dante,
United States History: Search for Freedom

The depression in the United States was touched off by distress in the New York Stock Exchange. For several years the prices of stocks had been rising. People bought stocks because they thought they could get rich easily. They gambled on the stock market by buying on *margin*, that is, buying on credit from brokers. This kind of speculation was all right only so long as stock prices continued to climb, as nearly everybody expected they would.

Outside the market there were signs that prosperity was weakening. Much of the prosperity had been founded on the construction and automobile industries. In 1925, the construction of homes had reached a value of 5 billion dollars; in 1929, the value fell to 3 billion. By 1929, too, sales of automobiles and related products had declined. Some stock operators began to quietly dispose of their holdings. In September 1929, the stock market broke and then recovered. On October 24, called “Black Thursday,” prices broke sharply, and many investors lost money. On the following day, President Hoover assured the people that what had happened was not very serious.

Then, on Tuesday, October 29, the big crash came. In a day of wild trading, a day that turned out to be the most devastating in the history of the Stock Exchange, nearly 16.5 million shares of stock exchanged hands. The frenzied selling went on for two weeks, until the value of the stocks on the Wall Street exchange had declined about 40 percent.

Source: Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard, *A Basic History of the United States* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1944), 452–453.

Leaders in government and business tried to bolster sagging spirits. When men and women everywhere were being wiped out financially, John D. Rockefeller, for example, came out with an optimistic statement. He said that the country was sound and added that “my son and I have for some days been purchasing sound common stocks.” Many people applauded Rockefeller, but Eddie Cantor, a popular comedian, commented later, “Sure, who else had any money left?”

The mighty crash on Wall Street brought the prosperity of the twenties to a disastrous end. Although the crash was not the only cause of the Great Depression that followed, it was a contributing factor.

Source: Richard N. Current, Alexander DeConde, and Harris L. Dante, *United States History: Search for Freedom* (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1974), 470.

Items for Analysis

1. Using the graphic organizer below, give examples from the selections above and your current U.S. history textbook as to what the authors think caused the Stock Market Crash in 1929.

Stock Market Crash	Causes
1933	
1944	
1974	
Current U.S. Textbook	

2. The first textbook in this section comes from the year 1933, which was just a few years after the start of the Great Depression. Compare the tone of this textbook to the others.

3. The 1944 textbook authors, Mary and Charles Beard, are often used as examples of Progressive Era historians. After reading this section, explain if you think this selection demonstrates their Progressive perspective or not.
4. What school of historiography would the other two excerpts belong to?

THE NEW DEAL



INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE NEW DEAL

A series of government programs in the 1930s were meant to help the nation deal with the Great Depression. When they were first introduced, and even today, these programs have had their supporters and detractors. What makes these two international perspectives so interesting is not only their take on the historical story, but also knowing what style of government each has today.

Germany

Hartmann Wunderer, *Geschichte in Modulen*

In the USA, President Herbert Hoover (1874–1964) reacted to the economic crisis exactly like Chancellor Brüning—with a Deflation policy. The national loss of revenue due to the sinking tax base he confronted with massive cuts to the social services and with tax increases. He raised the import tariffs, in order to protect domestic businesses from foreign wares. These measures exported the crisis and sharpened the impact in other countries because all of the world trade was so strongly restricted.

Not until 1933, when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected by an overwhelming majority, did he carry out a change in policy. He promised the American people a “New Deal,” a “New Act.” His government abandoned the, until then, iron liberal economic principle of “free interplay of the market” and allowed the state specific influence in the economy. Work creation programs accomplished numerous paid jobs. With large amounts of money, modernization was advanced in all areas of society, for example in housing and street construction, the energy infrastructure, education and health services. Even unemployed artists secured a living with government assistance. Today the legacy of the Roosevelt policy is visible still in the USA.

The New Deal politics of the American President Roosevelt are officially overrated. They largely consisted of many unconnected individual measures, which had together only a small effect on employment market politics. Essentially, Roosevelt gave the impoverished masses new hope. He advanced a new guideline in the economic politics, which stood in opposition to the previous American traditions. The State was entitled for the first time to intervene in working life and must assume responsibility for social problems. Roosevelt sought a minimum wage, workday limits and the just protection of workers. The investment programs and public works projects of the New Deal alleviated the economic crisis. Meanwhile an enduring recovery was built initially through the rearmament politics during the Second World War.

In 1936 the economics professor John Maynard Keynes (1883–1946) provided a scientific rationale for the new economic direction of the United States. Keynes criticized the then popular conception, that in an economic crisis, through the lowering of wages, labor would become cheaper and so more employment could be enabled again, because the corporation could then produce cost effectively. Keynes took not only the cost for the individual company into account, but also considered the entire economic situation: In a crisis the demand for goods sink, when the corporation conduct wage reductions. Therefor the production must also sink, and the companies would not add any additional workers, even with the wage decrease. At that point, the state must often intervene, if necessary through debt. The state must increase aggregate demand, for example through job creation programs. This would lead also to higher tax revenue, so that the state could again liquidate the debt.

This approach was contradicted by the economist Milton Friedman (1912–2006) in the 1960s: The state should not interfere as a direct participant in the economic events. What is essential is to relieve the corporations from cost and to better the basic conditions for private business investment, for instance through reducing taxes on corporations, improved possibilities for write-offs, encouraging their research and development. The workers should exercise, especially in a crisis, wage restraint. Thereby investment and new products would be stimulated and employment would raise itself.

These both fundamentally different positions about state handling of economic crises stand diametrically opposed. The absolute accuracy of one or the other theory could not to this day be proven.

China

Hanguo Zhu and Shili Ma, *History: Ninth Grade*

President Roosevelt took the office in 1933 when the economic crisis was most severe. In order to boost the economy, he adopted a series of economic interventions that were named the “New Deal.” Among these anti-crises new policies there was the creation of the federal relief system, which aimed at solving the severe unemployment issue by initiating large-scale public works.

In Roosevelt’s government, Harry Hopkins was in charge of the relief project. Hopkins claimed when he took office that “When I come to Washington DC, no one should be starving.” But providing food doesn’t mean the food is free, Hopkins thought, only providing relief instead of jobs will cause the loss of self-esteem. He organized the unemployed to work on public works, making them feel that they were earning their own living. Their wives would also be able to say that “We are not relying on government relief, my husband is working for the government.”

The Works Progress Administration took charge of all public works that private enterprises were not willing to take. During that time, 10% of newly paved roads, 35%

Source: Hartmann Wunderer, *Geschichte in Modulen* (Bamberg, Germany: Buchner, 2011), 43–44. Paraphrased and trans. from the German by Ania Cramer.

of newly built hospitals, new city halls, 65% of new courthouses, and 70% of new education buildings were constructed within several years by Works Progress Administration. Hopkins and his engineering team also helped construct zoos, boulevards, and federal government buildings. The San Francisco Exhibition Hall and the Boulder Dam were built by Hopkins' engineering team too. The dam later became Hoover Dam in memory of the preceding president Hoover. There were almost 200 people who died because of occupational injury when building the dam.

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) built by the engineering team gained a good profit. It not only provided electricity to nearby residents, but also protected 3 million acres of farm land from floods. The electricity to support the Manhattan Project of making the atomic bomb was provided by TVA too. TVA promoted local economy, and increased the average income of valley residents four times. The money invested in the project was returned to the government in the form of taxes.

There was another project related to the "job instead of relief" policy, which is the establishment of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). This organization called for unemployed young men to participate in works to protect the environment. People in the organization... were engaged in jobs such as forest planting, forest conservation, prevention and flood control, conservation of soil and water, and road construction. The monthly salary was 30 dollars, in which 25 dollars were used to support the family. A total of 1,400 camps were established. The camps adopted a semi-military management policy, and took in 1.5 million young men to participate in the job. These young people opened millions of acres of national forest areas and parks, fulfilled Roosevelt's idea of planting forest, and planted 200 million trees nationwide.

Source: Hanguo Zhu and Shili Ma, *History: Ninth Grade*, vol. 2 (Beijing, China: Beijing Normal University Press, 2002), 291. Paraphrased and trans. from the Chinese by Michelle Yu & Mengmei Ying.

Items for Analysis

1. In a typical Chinese history textbook the U.S. often is portrayed as the “bad guy.” But in this particular selection the Chinese authors seem to be more positive toward the United States. Research what type of government and economic system China has today. After giving a brief summary of their economic system and government, explain why this selection about the U.S. trying to get out of the Great Depression might be viewed this way by the Chinese.
2. Explain if the German textbook has a positive or negative view of the New Deal and its policies. Compare this textbook to an American history textbook. Do they agree or disagree with each other over the success of the New Deal?

WORLD WAR II



THE GLOBAL IMPACT

The Second World War is truly a global historical event that had an impact on just about every part of the world. The selection below tries to prove this point by showing how Venezuela, a nation usually not mentioned in U.S. history textbooks when discussing World War II, was affected by this war. It is interesting to note that although officially neutral, Venezuela did help the Allies, especially when it came to becoming a leading exporter of oil.

Venezuela

Antonio Gómez Espinoza, *Historia de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela*

Venezuelan economy in bankruptcy

Due to the Second World War, Venezuela had to confront a difficult and sudden economic crisis; 1941 was a very good prospect for the country, as the oil produced reached the incredible quantity of 228 million barrels, which mean an astonishing inflow of money. But it was a dream, as with the fall of Pearl Harbor, an important North American bastion in the Pacific that fed on Venezuelan oil, everything went downhill.

This resulted in revisions in the oil politics. Due to the decrease in production, the government asked for a basic revision of the oil legislation. After much study and discussion, [President] Medina summoned the Congress to a special session and, on May 13th, 1943, Venezuela had a new oil law, the most notable aspects of which were:

1. Unification of all the measures regarding oil from all previous governments.
2. Obligations of the companies to expand in Venezuela and, at their own expense, construct refinement systems.
3. Renewal, by the government, of all titles granted; extension of the terms of concession for 41 years and renouncing all legal trials against the crude industry.

The benefits of the new law went into effect immediately, and Venezuela received immense amounts of money in its Treasury. This gave the Medinist government incentive to deliver new concessions.

This situation, openly favorable to the industry, increased the oil production in the range of 300 million barrels annually above the established record. Thus the national economy was able to make a comeback, with improved, expanded, and secure prospects.

Source: Antonio Gómez Espinoza, *Historia de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela* (Caracas, Venezuela: Editorial Salesiana, 2004), 109–110. Paraphrased and trans. from the Spanish by Amanda DeBoer.

ITEMS FOR ANALYSIS

- ITEMS FOR ANALYSIS

ITEMS FOR ANALYSIS

PERCEPTIONS OF AMERICANS DURING THE WAR

When Americans discuss World War II they often use phrases such as “the Greatest Generation” or “the Good War.” These terms are used because the story of World War II that most people in the U.S. are familiar with is that of the Americans coming together to defeat the forces of evil. Therefore, the U.S. and its military were always on the side of right. The textbook selections below challenge this notion by either pointing out flaws in the American soldiers who fought overseas or in the way the U.S. conducted its foreign policy during the war.

Britain

Chris Rowe, *AQA History: USA, 1890–1945*

During the war years, wartime propaganda promoted an enduring myth about the ‘special relationship’ between Britain and the USA, and specifically about the personal link between Churchill and Roosevelt. According to this myth, the two leaders became close almost instantly. However, the reality was different from the myth.

Roosevelt was unsure of Churchill’s motives and abilities. Roosevelt was also a tough political realist: he needed to make a judgement of how American interests might be affected by British collapse and by the total domination of Europe by Nazi Germany. Before responding to Britain’s request for aid, he hesitated for several weeks while considering alternative views of the likelihood of Britain’s survival.

The American ambassador in London, Joseph P. Kennedy, was hostile to Britain and reported that it would certainly have to surrender. If this turned out to be the case, any aid sent to Britain would be wasted and doing so would antagonise public opinion, which remained strongly opposed to American involvement in war overseas. . . .

Even after the success of the Normandy landings, it took almost a year for Allied forces to reach Berlin. Recapturing the Pacific islands was also a long and costly process, requiring one amphibious invasion after another. Even in the spring of 1945, American military planners estimated that the final invasion of Japan would take months and cost 1.4 million American lives.

To achieve these victories, the USA developed a vast war machine. The US army mobilised 5 million soldiers. The munitions industry became the biggest the world had ever seen. American air power was reaching a peak, enabling the mass bombing of Germany and Japan as well as keeping vital supply lines open by air. Shipbuilding, for both the navy and the merchant fleets, produced ships faster than U-boats could sink them.

As the western Allies went on to the offensive, American influence became more and more dominant. The decline in British influence was hidden to some extent by the great

personal prestige of Churchill, but there was no question about who called the shots. In late 1943, the appointment of Dwight D. Eisenhower as Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) reflected American leadership of the Allied war effort. (It was a close decision as to whether Eisenhower got the job or another American, George Marshall.)

Australia

Sarah Mirams, Maryellen Davidson, and Sue Gordon, *Imagining Australia: Australian History VCE*

Americans were blamed by some for corrupting Australian womanhood, according to critics. Luxuries such as chocolates, silk stockings and flowers were blamed for seducing Australian women. The United States, with its movie stars, fast cars and sophistication, represented all that was glamorous. Resentment of the Americans by the more poorly paid Australian military, who found 'their women' so accommodating, turned to violence, with minor riots breaking out in both Melbourne and Brisbane between Americans and Australian troops. Lurid tales of teenage school girls performing stripteases for soldiers in city alleyways hidden by the blackout, or girls as young as 12 and 14 sitting until one or two in the morning on the St. Kilda beachfront with the Americans, or married women having affairs with 'Yanks' filled the newspapers. The rate of venereal disease grew, threatening military efficiency, and from 1942 civilians could be arrested and forcibly examined for a sexual disease and jailed for treatment. . . .

The Americans, working women, absent fathers, poor mothering, greed and access to contraceptives were all blamed for the perceived collapse of moral standards cited by organisations such as the Catholic church. There is no doubt that in the intense atmosphere of war, where men were going off to fight and possibly die, young people especially lived for the moment. Wartime society was relatively affluent and single women had a degree of freedom to play, travel and work as never before. This was seen to threaten the established order. [Australian historian] Marilyn Lake's examination of diaries from the period suggests that most women were looking for romance and glamour rather than casual sexual encounters during the war. Kissing was a major activity discussed in these diaries. The suspected amateur prostitutes rounded up in wartime Sydney in the company of American servicemen and arrested for vagrancy proved to be largely employed workers from stable homes having a good time.

[Australian historian] Michael McKernan suggests that Australians were sexually naïve and straight-laced during the 1930s. Sex was not talked about even within the family or between married couples. A girl who had sex before marriage lost her reputation and the options if she became pregnant were marriage, adoption or abortion, which was both illegal and dangerous. Parents were terrified their girls would 'get in trouble' and often kept them under strict supervision.

Source: Chris Rowe, *AQA History: USA, 1890–1945*, (Cheltenham, England: Nelson Thornes, 2008), 121, 133.

In public, kissing or even holding hands was frowned upon. There were no private places for romantic meetings alone. The family home was usually overcrowded and out of bounds and cars were off the road and beyond the financial reach of most. Public spaces were the only place people could meet. In these circumstances some of the supposed immorality could have been fairly innocent. . . .

Measures to counter this moral collapse included the venereal disease legislation . . . , the employment of more policewomen, midnight patrols to round up teenagers and counseling services for women contemplating divorce. Postwar planning was seen as vital for ensuring that Australia returned to those traditional family values threatened by the disruption and dislocation of war.

Ireland

Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, *Modern Ireland*

The American representative in Dublin during World War II was David Gray, a relative of President Roosevelt. From the outset, he was strongly pro-British and was unsympathetic to Irish neutrality. Even before the USA entered the war, Gray believed that Irish ports should be made available to the British navy. After the entry of America to the war in December 1941, Gray urged President Roosevelt to put pressure on de Valera [the Taoiseach (prime minister, chief executive, and head of government) of Ireland at the time] to enter the war on the Allied side. Relations worsened after the arrival of American forces in Northern Ireland. The Americans reacted angrily when de Valera claimed that he should have been consulted. In the spring of 1944 the US Government placed strong pressure on the Irish Free State to expel the representatives of Germany and Japan from Ireland, claiming that their embassies were engaged in spying. De Valera refused and pointed out that he had already insisted on the removal of radio transmitters from the German legation. De Valera's defence of Irish neutrality in the face of American pressure enhanced his popular support.

In addition to preserving Irish neutrality by diplomatic means, the de Valera Government faced the formidable task of coping with the social and economic challenges of life in Ireland during the war years.

Source: Sarah Mirams, Maryellen Davidson, and Sue Gordon, *Imagining Australia: Australian History VCE* (Units 3 & 4), (South Melbourne, Australia: Nelson Cengage Learning, 2006), 146.

Source: Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, *Modern Ireland*, 2nd Edition (Dublin, Ireland: Gill & MacMillan, 2008), 234.

Items for Analysis

1. Typically, in U.S. history textbooks, students do not read about the issues mentioned in the textbook selections above. Why do you think this is?
2. The first British textbook discusses the U.S. and Britain's "special relationship." Looking at a current U.S. history textbook, or doing additional research, try to see what the U.S. says about this relationship. How do the nations feel about this relationship today?

3. Research U.S.–British relations and other major international news stories during the time period of 2005–2008, when this textbook was being written. Then, explain how the relations between these two countries and major world events at that time might have influenced why this particular excerpt makes the claims that it does.
4. Looking at each nation represented in this section, explain if you think that where each author is from influenced their interpretation of these events. Cite examples from these textbooks to prove your argument.

Britain:

Australia:

Ireland:

INCARCERATION OF JAPANESE AMERICANS

From 1942 to 1946 the U.S. rounded up approximately 110,000 to 120,000 American citizens of Japanese descent without giving them any sort of legal reason for doing so. The forced relocation and incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II was an official government policy that has been a hotly debated topic over the years. The focus of the legal debate over this topic is whether the U.S. government had the right to take away Japanese Americans' civil liberties.

1949

Robert E. Riegel and Helen Haugh, *The United States of America: A History*

Civil Liberties. World War II found less suppression of divergent views than had World War I. The one great restriction of personal liberties was the movement of people of Japanese ancestry from the Pacific Coast to the interior. The great majority of Americans were but little limited in expressing their views. The Supreme Court was liberal. The Office of War Information (OWI) was concerned most largely with foreign propaganda. A Director of Censorship prepared a code that was accepted voluntarily by the newspapers, although they could hardly refuse as long as the government controlled most of the sources of news. Reports from the war fronts were censored by the Army and Navy.

1974

Richard N. Current, Alexander DeConde, and Harris L. Dante, *United States History: Search for Freedom*

Violations of free speech and personal liberty were relatively few. Organized hate campaigns against Germans and Italians were rare. But an important exception to the government's good record on civil liberties was its treatment of Japanese Americans on the West Coast. In February 1942, Roosevelt authorized the army to exclude all persons of Japanese ancestry from "military areas" on the West Coast. Of the 112,000 persons affected by the order, 70,000 were American citizens born in the United States.

Later, the commanding general on the West Coast ordered the Japanese Americans to special camps surrounded by barbed wire and guarded by soldiers. Beginning in July 1942 some of the *Nisei*, citizens born in the United States of Japanese parents, were allowed to leave the camps to attend college, harvest crops, resettle in the Middle West, or volunteer for duty with the army. All first had to be cleared as loyal by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Source: Robert Riegel and Helen Haugh, *The United States of America: A History* (New York: Scribner's, 1949), 784.

In December 1944, the Supreme Court ruled on two cases questioning the constitutionality of the evacuation. In one case, the Court said that the government's action was constitutional because it was prompted by "military necessity." In the other case, announced the same day, the Court said that the government could not keep a loyal citizen from returning to his or her home.

Source: Richard N. Current, Alexander DeConde, and Harris L. Dante, *United States History: Search for Freedom* (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1974), 542.

Item for Analysis

1. What school or schools of historiography seem most prominent in the 1974 excerpt?
2. Comparing the two textbook selections in this section, explain how this story has changed over time. Using a current U.S. history textbook discuss how this story is told to students today.

3. Pretend you have been asked by a state government to create a new historical marker, which will be placed outside one of the former Japanese American internment camps. You need to address the issue of civil liberties and research the story of the young men who served in the military during the war while their families were in the camps. Use the two selections above, your own U.S. history textbook, and outside research to write the text for this marker. And remember, it has to be under 250 words.

During World War II, on this spot . . .

ENDING THE WAR

Much like how the Treaty of Versailles ended the First World War, the end of the Second World War had a huge impact on the world. With the requirement of complete surrender for all of the Axis Powers, many nations were affected by the collapse of Germany and Japan.

Poland

Anna Landau-Czajka, *Historia i wiedza o społeczeństwie*

In 1941, Germany declared war on USSR. From that moment the Soviet Union became an ally to Great Britain, France, and soon to the United States of America (which joined the war in 1941). Despite the difference in political systems and ideologies of the countries, they had one common goal of defeating Axis powers (Germany, Italy, and Japan). The main burden of fighting Germany was left up to the USSR. That's why the other allies wanted to keep the USSR strongly engaged in the war even when it meant making far reaching concessions.

When it became obvious that Hitler would be defeated, it was urgent to decide how the countries should proceed after the war. The debate included the issue of what Germany, as a defeated country, would look like.

The leaders of the great powers, the so called Big Three—American President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Generalissimo Joseph Stalin of the USSR—met at three different conferences: in Tehran in December 1943, in Yalta in February 1945, and Potsdam in July and August 1945.

The leaders made the decision to divide Germany into four occupational zones. Three zones occupied by the Big Three and fourth by France if France agreed to it. The country was to pay damages and be demilitarized, denazified (meaning that all activities of the Hitler party were forbidden and its leaders were going to be prosecuted), democratized, and de-monopolized.

The decision was also made to create an international organization called the United Nations.

Out of the three conferences, the most significant one was the conference in Yalta, because that is where the Big Three agreed on how the post-war Europe would be divided. Eastern and Central Europe (including Poland) would continue to be under the influence of USSR. Although Stalin promised that the countries in these regions would be able to have autonomy in deciding about their future and that they would have free elections, he did not keep the promise. The Western Powers did not oppose to Stalin in return for his participation in the war against Japan.

The Polish borders were rearranged and the eastern end of the country was no longer a part of Poland. In return, Poland was supposed to regain the territory that belonged to Germany before the war. Majority of that territory was part of Poland during the Piast dynasty [c. 930–992 CE].

No one negotiated these decisions with the interested countries or any of their emigration government. The Big Three made decisions about the future of European countries without taking into consideration anyone's wishes. Therefore, there was a new arrangement created which lasted until 1989, and it was called the Yalta agreement.

After the war, the cooperation among the Powers did not last very long. They did not even manage to maintain the cooperation long enough to sign the treaty with Germany and Japan. This started the period called the Cold War. The Powers did not fight directly among one another but they constantly contributed to the conflict by pursuing expansion of their sphere of influence. The first conflict arose in Korea in 1950-1953.

In 1961 one night the Berlin wall was built which separated the eastern sector of the city belonging to NRD from the western. In Middle and Far East there were constant conflicts leading to confrontations. A dramatic ending to the Cuban conflict in 1962 almost caused the outbreak of World War III.

The United States fought to decrease the influence of communism. USSR wanted to add as many countries as it was possible to their sphere of influence.

The countries that were dominated by USSR, lost the ability to make independent decisions regarding their future. Some of them, for example, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and the eastern territories of pre-war Poland, were simply included in the USSR. The remainder of the countries were formally (theoretically) independent. They had their own governments, armies, UN seats. However, their international affairs, internal affairs, the economy, and even the cultural aspect were all controlled by USSR.

Germany

Anton Egner, *et al.*, *Zeit für Geschichte: Herausforderungen der Moderne* 11

Unconditional surrender

Despite the declaration of Britain and the U.S. from January 25, 1943 to continue the war together with the Soviet Union until the unconditional surrender of Germany, Hitler still expected a reversal of the war because of the break-up of the “unnatural” war coalition of the liberal western powers and the communist Soviet Union. For years, the Soviets had demanded a second front in the West, which started with the landing of the western powers in Normandy on June 6, 1944. Goebbels responded to the demand of unconditional surrender on February 18, 1943 with a speech in the Sportpalast in Berlin. In it, he called for the total war. With this, the war had reached a self-destructive

Source: Anna Landau-Czajka, *Historia i wiedza o społeczeństwie* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Szkolne PWN, 2006), 117–119. Paraphrased and trans. from the Polish by Ania Cramer.

final stage for the Reich. In the warfare of the National Socialists, one can distinguish several steps and goals:

- The military violence was used as a means of a politic threat; the strategy of self-disparagement and assurance of peace which lasted from 1933 to 1936, changed to open expansion in 1938. Since 1939, the war served as a means to achieve a continental imperium, which was the pilot study for a future German world dominance.
- The Blitzkrieg of the beginning and the war in the west changed with the attack on the Soviet Union to a war of ideology and extermination.
- At the latest since 1943 the war only served the German military leadership to prolong the national socialist rule and with it, at the same time, the continued extermination of the European Jews, which replaced actual war goals. In case of defeat, Hitler repeatedly threatened the German people that he would take care “that it would not survive this shame.” He denied the people in this case even the right to exist.

On April 30, 1945, Hitler committed suicide in the bunker of the chancellery. In the last months of the war, he had given orders like Nero in which he had ordered the army to leave behind only “burned earth” in case of a retreat. The use of the immense amount of chemical weapons, which the leadership possessed still in April 1945, could really have affected the destruction of Germany.

The end of the German Reich

On May 8, 1945 the war ended with the unconditional surrender of the Wehrmacht. British, American, French and Soviet troops had occupied the whole area of the Reich before the leadership decided to capitulate. In contrast to the defeat of November 1918, the military defeat was clear and could be experienced by everyone. Germany’s power position was lost and National Socialism was disproved.

With the advancing Allies, the remaining prisoners in concentration camps were liberated. About 60% of the German population was now migrating homelessly. Forty percent of the men fit for military service were prisoners of war outside the territory of the Reich. A stream of refugees and displaced persons, about 2 million people, were moving towards the West like a wave, over two million lost their lives in transit. An immense population shift took place and led to a redistribution of German society. In 1950, every fifth inhabitant of Germany was a refugee or a displaced person. The national socialist dictatorship and in its wake the Second World War have radically changed German society. Large parts of the leading elite which had been influential since the time of the Empire in administration, justice, diplomacy and the military, died in the war and also in the resistance. In the eastern part of the Reich, this class lost the basis

of its earlier position and fortune because of the capture, flight, displacement and later dispossession.

For the 40th anniversary of the end of the war, President Richard von Weizsäcker gave a commemorative address in front of parliament. In it he admonished: “We cannot see the end of the war as the reason for flight, displacement and the lack of freedom. They were instead caused by the beginning of the war and the start of the tyranny, which led to war. We may not separate May 8, 1945 from January 30, 1933.”

Britain

Chris Rowe, *AQA History: USA, 1890–1945*

Roosevelt was already a dying man when he got to Yalta. Before flying to the Crimea, he had met Churchill in Malta. The British delegation was alarmed to see Roosevelt’s visible physical deterioration. The Malta Conference also revealed a lot of the disagreements between the American and British negotiating positions. Roosevelt was sure he could ‘make a trade’ with Stalin; Churchill wanted to adopt a tough approach.

Historians disagree about the Yalta Conference. Throughout the Cold War, right-wing commentators have criticized Roosevelt as the ‘man who lost the peace’ – accusing him of failing to stand up to Stalin and therefore sacrificing eastern Europe to future Soviet domination. According to the British historian Norman Davies, ‘Poland was handed to Stalin on a plate.’ Defenders of Roosevelt saw his policy as a realistic one in the circumstances of February 1945. By then, Soviet troops already controlled most of Poland and eastern Europe anyway. Roosevelt wanted to keep the alliance with Stalin intact because he believed Soviet help was needed to finish off Japan.

One reason why Yalta remains so controversial is that Roosevelt died so soon afterwards, in April 1945. Nobody knows whether he would have been able to make a success of the post-war peace if he had lived long enough. Some historians argue that his successor Harry S. Truman, ‘tried to implement Yalta by changing it’, and that the Cold War was caused as much by American policy failures as by any deliberate master plan of Stalin.

China

Hanguo Zhu and Shili Ma, *History: Ninth Grade*

When the Second World War was approaching its end, and Germany was going to be defeated, the leaders of the Soviet Union, America, and Britain (Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill) held a meeting at Yalta in the Crimean Peninsula in February 1945, for the final victory of the anti-Fascist war and to solve post-war issues. The conference endorsed a series of important decisions: the partition occupation of Germany, destroying militarism and Nazism, establishing the United Nations, and the Soviet Union

Source: Anton Enger, et al., *Zeit für Geschichte: Herausforderungen der Moderne 11* (Braunschweig, Germany: Schroedel, 2010), 389–390. Paraphrased and trans. from the German by Ania Cramer.

Source: Chris Rowe, *AQA History: USA, 1890–1945* (Cheltenham, England: Nelson Thornes, 2008), 140.

participation in the war against Japan within three months after the European war. The Yalta Conference had a positive effect on coordinating the peace among the Allies to fight against the Fascist and establishing the United Nations.

After the Yalta Conference, the anti-Fascist alliance started the final battles in all battlefields. In April 1945, the Soviet Union started the final battle against Berlin. The battle was fierce, there were fights on the ground, in the air, and underground. Under the attack of the Soviet Union, Hitler committed suicide. On the 8th of May, the German delegation signed the surrender. The European battlefield ended with the victory of the anti-Fascist alliance. In August 1945, the Soviet Union declared war against Japan, and started the all-out attack on the Japanese army in Northeast China. The Chinese anti-Japanese forces also started the war against the Japanese army and the puppet army. America used two atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. On August 15th, the Emperor of Japan declared the unconditional surrender. September 2nd, a Japanese delegation signed the surrender on the USS *Missouri*. Second World War ended with a total failure of the Axis alliance.

Second World War is an unprecedented anti-Fascist war. According to statistics, 80% of the world population got involved in the war, the death toll reached 50 million, and the material damage accounted for 4 trillion dollars. However, in this matter of human destiny, people finally won the victory, Fascist had been destroyed, and the idea of peace and progress have been around ever since. At the same time, the Second World War has promoted science and technological progress. The scientific and technological achievements achieved during the war have been applied to the cause of peace after the war, and have contributed tremendously to the progress of human civilization.

Source: Hanguo Zhu and Shili Ma, *History: Ninth Grade*, vol. 2 (Beijing, China: Beijing Normal University Press, 2002), 291. Paraphrased and trans. from the Chinese by Michelle Yu & Mengmei Ying.

Items for Analysis

1. Using your current U.S. history textbook and the selections above, fill in the graphic organizer below by writing down phrases and/or sentences that show how each nation views the end of the war in a positive or negative way for their own nation and the world.

Ending World War II	Positive	Negative
Poland		
Germany		
Britain		
China		

2. Research each nation’s current political views and predict how that country might perceive this event today.
- a. Poland
 - b. Germany
 - c. Britain
 - d. China

3. Research what a current U.S. history textbook says about the Yalta Conference and the end of World War II. Compare and contrast it to the textbooks used in this section and explain if it is the same view or different than the views represented here.

THE ATOMIC BOMB

Soon after dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, World War II came to a complete end. This war was immediately followed by the Cold War, which was between the United States and the Soviet Union. While never turning into a military war specifically, it led to a huge arms race between the two nations. This may have been on the minds of the authors when they wrote the textbook selections below.

1947

Robert E. Riegel and Helen Haugh, *The United States of America: A History*

The Japanese war came to a climax early in 1945. The bloody conquests of Iwo Jima and Okinawa gave bases either for the direct invasion of Japan or for landings in China. The Chinese were having better success on the mainland. The end of the European war released large British and American naval units, and also large and experienced armies. Russia finally declared war on Japan and invaded Manchuria. The United States unveiled its newest weapon, the atomic bomb, demonstrating twice—first at Hiroshima and then at Nagasaki—that a good-sized city could almost be erased from the map in one blinding flash. Confronted by this combination of forces Japan surrendered August 14—the formal surrender being accepted by General MacArthur on September 2, 1945.

1954

Everett Augspurger and Robert A. McLemore, *Our Nation's Story*

The atomic bomb. The real meaning of the ultimatum was made clear on August 6, 1945, when an American superfortress dropped a new kind of bomb over the Japanese city of Hiroshima. The possibility of the development of an atomic bomb had been clearly established by scientific discoveries made in 1939. Shortly after the United States became involved in the war, the development of the bomb was undertaken as a top-secret military project. Leading atomic scientists of the world, including some who had come to this country as refugees from Axis oppression, were engaged in the project. In July, 1945, a test bomb was successfully exploded at Los Alamos, New Mexico. President Truman fully recognized the fearful potentialities of such a weapon. He considered its use justifiable as a means of bringing about a rapid conclusion of the war.

The single bomb dropped over Hiroshima, a city of 375,000, had an explosive power equal to that of twenty thousand tons of TNT. At one blow, the heart of the city

Source: Robert Riegel and Helen Haugh, *The United States of America: A History* (New York: Scribner's, 1947), 794.

was destroyed and three fifths of its population wiped out. Two days later a second and more powerful bomb was dropped on the city of Nagasaki. One third of the city was destroyed.

1966

Lewis Paul Todd and Merle Curti, *Rise of the American Nation*

On August 6, 1945, the first atomic bomb used in warfare was dropped from an American airplane onto the city of Hiroshima in Japan. Three days later, a second bomb fell on Nagasaki, another Japanese city. More than 150,000 Japanese died in the resulting holocausts. Thousands of others suffered dreadful aftereffects.

In February 1947, in *Harper's Magazine*, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson wrote about the decision to use the bombs:

“The face of war is the face of death; death is an inevitable part of any order that a wartime leader gives. . . . War in the twentieth century has grown steadily more barbarous, more destructive, more debased in all its aspects. Now, with the release of atomic energy, man's ability to destroy himself is very nearly complete. The bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki ended a war. They also made it wholly clear that we must never have another war. This is the lesson men and leaders everywhere must learn, and I believe that when they learn it they will find a way to lasting peace. There is no other choice.”

Source: Everett Augspurger and Robert A. McLemore, *Our Nation's Story* (Laidlaw Brothers, 1954), 736–737.

Source: Lewis Paul Todd and Merle Curti, *Rise of the American Nation*, 2nd Edition (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1966), 739.

Items for Analysis

1. How did the era during which these textbooks were written influence their authors' interpretations of this historical event?
2. What school or schools of historiography seem most prominent in each of these textbook selections?
3. Read what a current U.S. history textbook says about the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Then, compare and contrast it to these excerpts by explaining how the story has changed or stayed the same.

THE HOLOCAUST

German history textbook authors, publishers, and educators have a unique situation to deal with when discussing not only the military aspect of World War II but also the topic of the Holocaust. In this selection from a German textbook, the historical aspect of World War II is dealt with along with the Holocaust. Of particular interest is the role that the United States seems to play in how German students learn about the Holocaust.

Germany

Hartmann Wunderer, *Geschichte in Modulen*

An official act of state in Berlin showed this new constellation even more clearly. At this event, the highest representatives of Germany, Russia, Great Britain, the USA, and France spoke. The end of the war was celebrated by the defeated and liberated together with the victors and liberators. This national symbolism was continued with the participation of the chancellor in allied victory celebrations, for example in 2005 or 2010 in Moscow.

A similar pattern can be seen in the engagement with the Holocaust, the systematic murder of millions of Jews and other people who were persecuted because of their race during World War II. Various commemoration days are intended to commemorate these unparalleled crimes. They have their own history, which is connected to the scientific research into the Holocaust, but even more so with political intentions and ideological goals.

The American historian Peter Novick (1934) explores in his book *The Holocaust and Collective Memory* (Stuttgart 2001), why in the U.S. the Holocaust was hardly discussed for a long time and why it is so much more talked about in the last decades. What had motivated the American Jews to minimize the meaning of the Holocaust in the first decades after the war and then to move it later into the center of their own self-perception and self-representation?

Novick thinks that there existed no distinctive Holocaust-consciousness in the first two decades after World War II in the U.S. neither with the victims nor in public discourse. The people who had been personally affected by racist persecution were rather more interested in silence than in speaking and had avoided the identification with the victims.

The Jewish minority rather played down the Holocaust and consciously avoided the role of a victim, because that would have meant showing the American public that the USA had done little during the war for the persecuted Jews in Europe. Throughout the 1950s it was considered almost a disruption of public life to speak of the Holocaust.

The evaluation of the national socialist atrocities however changed very quickly: they were not so much German crimes, as they were the product of totalitarianism. One had to draw the right conclusions from this, which was anti-Soviet. The theory of totalitarianism furthermore suggested an understanding opinion towards the Germans because resistance in a totalitarian system was impossible. This also made it possible to justify the lenient attitude of the Americans towards the Germans after the War.

A further hurdle for a public Jewish discourse in the USA was the widely held association of Jews with communism. The communist Jew was a popular stereotype of the American anti-Semitic propaganda. Actually, many American communists, about 50 to 60 percent, were Jews. In the first years after the war, the opinion was widely held that the victim role would only have deepened anti-Semitism instead of reducing it. One of the “useless traits” which the Jews should overcome was the well-known prejudice of the whiny Jew full of self-pity. Memorials for the victims would have been seen as signs of weakness and defenselessness, and to emphasize those characteristics could not be in the interest of the Jews.

Only the trial of Adolf Eichmann (1906–1963), the organizer of the “final solution,” who had been found in Argentina, the controversies about Hannah Arendt’s (1906–1975) book *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report of the Banality of Evil* dealing with him, and Rolf Hochhuth’s play *The Representative* (1963) shattered an almost complete silence concerning the Holocaust. Of special effect was the Six-Day War in 1967 and the Yom-Kippur War in 1973. In 1967, Israel could quickly defeat its hostile neighboring states and capture the West Bank, the Golan Heights as well as the Gaza strip. In 1973 the Arabic states did not succeed in winning back these areas. The picture of victorious Israeli war heroes contributed to erasing the picture of weak and passive victims. The trickle of American help now became a torrential river. The American Jews saw a frightening parallel to the situation of the European Jews 30 years earlier. Now the opinion gained ground in the U.S. that the government of Roosevelt had intentionally neglected several opportunities to save the European Jews.

The Holocaust metaphorically reached, in the course of the Six-Day War, a first boom, in Israel as well as in the U.S. Israeli president Menachim Begin (1913–1992) described the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as a “Neo-Nazi Organization,” and the PLO leader Yassir Arafat (1929–2004) as “Hitler in the bunker.” Especially in the U.S. grew an—irrational—fear of a new anti-Semitism at a time when it was hardly alive anymore.

In the U.S., a decline of Jewish consciousness and a drop of inner Jewish engagement could be noted. At the same time the willingness to assimilate grew, as seen for example in interreligious marriages. Through these factors, the American Jews were threatened by a steady loss of engaged members, some already saw a demographic catastrophe on the horizon.

In this situation, the “singularity” of the Holocaust now became the core of Jewish identity, the remembrance of the Holocaust for all Jews binding. It covered the demand for a shared, across all inner-Jewish differences unifying symbol. With it, other and more important foundations of a Jewish identity were displaced (for example the religious roots, the ethical practice or also the solidarity with the state of Israel). The TV series *Holocaust* (1978), which was watched by 100 million people, contributed to this shift. Now many schools legally introduced curriculum about the Holocaust, many Holocaust museums and academic chairs for Holocaust research sprang up.

The Holocaust became more and more sacred, it was even likened to the revelation on Mount Sinai. A critique or demystification of the Holocaust was considered a “sacrilege,” as a subtle form of anti-Semitism. The scientifically very hotly debated singularity of the Holocaust was lively and vehemently defended.

The following press release from 2009 documents the interdependence of memory and current politics: with a celebratory ceremony began in Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial site in Jerusalem, the commemoration of the murder of six million Jews by the Nazis in the World War II. In his speech, President Schimon Peres (1923), who together with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanjahu (1949) attended the event, compared the president of Iran, Mahmud Ahmadinejad (1956) to Hitler and Stalin. Only hours earlier had Ahmadinejad at the Antiracisms conference in Geneva called Israel a “regime of racists.”

Survivors of the Holocaust lighted six torches to commemorate the victims. The commemoration this year is especially dedicated to the one and half million children who died in the Holocaust.

Items for Analysis

1. This passage from a German textbook spends more time discussing how the Holocaust has been historically treated since 1945, rather than analyzing the actual events during the 1930s and 1940s. This selection also discusses the United States and its relationship to the Holocaust, Jewish immigrants, and Israel in much detail. After reading this passage, conduct some research on this topic and try to explain why you think this textbook focuses so much on the United States and what impact this would have in terms of influencing future citizens in Germany.
2. Imagine you are a history teacher in Israel and have just read this textbook selection. Explain how you feel about using this textbook excerpt in your history class.

THE COLD WAR



THE MARSHALL PLAN

Out of arguably one of the world's greatest conflicts came an economic relief program from the United States, set up to help Europeans recover from the great catastrophe of World War II. The U.S. would end up sending billions of dollars to mostly Western European nations to help them get back on their feet following the destruction the war brought to many of their nations. While some history textbooks today view this as a humanitarian program, others view it as being a bit more sinister in nature.

Austria

Manfred Schindlbauer, *Thema: Geschichte Kl. 7*

In June 1947, the newly announced American help program, from the US Secretary of State, George C. Marshall, aided with the healing of the European economy, which included Germany and Austria. It was called the European Recovery Program (ERP; also known as the Marshall Plan). Europe without hunger, poverty and distress and once again believing in its own economic future, was not only the best guarantee for freedom and safety, but also it helped America to retrieve an important trade partner and a stronger ally against communism. Although the Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries were also invited to partake in the program, Stalin saw—rightfully so—the plan as a danger to the Soviet dominance in Eastern Europe and forced Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary, who actually showed interests, to abandon the idea.

Norway

Ole Kristian Grimnes, et al., *Tidslinjer 2: Verdon og Norge: Historie Vg3*

Many people feared that Norway could be exposed to the same threat of communism, and expressed that a Nordic union of defense was not reassuring enough. Others felt that a defense cooperation which did not include the United States, was doomed to failure. In this situation the majority felt that Norway had to seek the necessary safety from the Western camp, with a country such as Great Britain or Denmark.

Norway had accepted the Marshall Plan in 1947, and therefore took an important step towards cooperation with the western countries. Countries who received loans and economical support through the Marshall plan had to agree to a market economy and a tighter economic cooperation between themselves.

Source: Manfred Schindlbauer, *Thema: Geschichte Kl. 7* (Wien: Verlag Neues Schulbuch, 2007), 228–229. Paraphrased and trans. from the Austrian by Dr. Isolde Mueller.

NATO was founded in 1949, and Norway became a member with Denmark and Iceland. Sweden kept its neutral status, while Finland during this time was so dependent on the Soviet Union that they did not have the opportunity to join the western alliance.

Source: Ole Kristian Grimnes, et al., *Tidslinjer 2: Verdon og Norge: Historie Vg3* (Oslo, Norway: H. Aschehoug & Co., W. Nygaard, 2008), 406–407. Paraphrased and trans. from the Norwegian by Ellen-Marie Pedersen.

Items for Analysis

1. Using the graphic organizer below give examples of whether or not each country sees the Marshall Plan as a positive or negative event in history. Try to find a current U.S. history textbook and ask the same question.

	Positive	Negative
Austria		
Norway		
Current U.S. Textbook		

CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE

In most U.S. history textbooks, one can usually find a political map of the world in the section dealing with the Cold War. Typically, this map will show communist countries in red and democracies in blue. What these maps fail to show is the gray areas that developed during the Cold War, in which many of the smaller nations did not always see eye-to-eye with the two main superpowers.

Britain

Chris Rowe, et al., *The Making of Modern Britain, 1951–2007*

In 1951 Britain was already deeply embroiled in the Cold War. British troops were fighting in the Korean War as part of the United Nations force opposing North Korea. Britain had become a founder member of NATO in 1949 and substantial contingents of British troops were stationed in West Germany. There was close cooperation between Britain and the United States on nuclear weapons development and the sharing of intelligence secrets.

There were numerous occasions, such as the Burgess and Maclean affair [an infamous spy ring that was captured in England in the 1950s, in which the British government arrested four spies who had passed information on to the U.S.S.R. during World War II], when the ‘special relationship’ was placed under strain. Britain sometimes resented American pressure pushing Britain to join the EEC [European Economic Community]. The 1956 Suez crisis adversely affected Anglo-American relations for a considerable time.

Overall, however, Britain and the United States remained close allies in the Cold War. Harold Macmillan was involved in plans for a summit conference with Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev in 1960, and he established a particularly good relationship with President Eisenhower’s successor, John F. Kennedy. Their partnership had a lot to do with the success of the negotiations for the Test Ban Treaty of 1964, limiting the testing of nuclear weapons. In many respects, Britain had kept its place at the international ‘top table.’

On the other hand, Britain was still militarily overstretched and very dependent on American power. This was demonstrated by the costs of Britain’s independent nuclear deterrent. In 1960, Britain’s own rocket project, Blue Streak, had to be abandoned. It was replaced by dependence on the American Polaris submarine weapons system.

Source: Chris Rowe, et al., *The Making of Modern Britain, 1951–2007* (Cheltenham, England: Nelson Thornes, 2009), 47. Paraphrased and trans. from the Austrian by Dr. Isolde Mueller.

Canada

Nick Brune, et al., *Defining Canada: History, Identity, and Culture*

Note: In 1958 the Canadian government had agreed to allow the U.S. to deploy two squadrons of the “Bomarc” antiaircraft missiles in Canada. When the missiles arrived, it was discovered that they had nuclear warheads as part of the missile. This led to large anti-nuclear protests, and the Canadian government refused to accept these missiles.

The Bomarc dispute had made the United States so mistrustful of Canada that the Canadian government was given just one-and-a-half hours’ notice of President Kennedy’s crucial speech on October 22, 1962, announcing that the Soviets were installing offensive missiles in Cuba and that the United States was blockading Cuba. The American and the Soviets seemed poised for nuclear war. The American government asked Canada to put its NORAD forces on high alert and send its Navy to sea on anti-submarine patrol. The Canadian Cabinet responded by debating the issue for two days, because the ministers were concerned that U.S. policy and behaviour provoked the Soviet Union unnecessarily and heightened the danger. In reality, the Canadian forces had already been quietly put on high alert while the Cabinet debated. On October 24, the alert was made official. After a few days, the Soviet Union backed down and removed the missiles, and the crisis subsided.

Many Canadians blamed [John Deifenbaker, the thirteenth prime minister of Canada] for antagonizing the Americans by his delay over the Cuban missiles, which probably contributed to his 1963 election loss to [Lester] Pearson. Diefenbaker himself blamed his loss on American interference in the election. However, if the Americans had hoped that Pearson would be easier to deal with on Cold War issues, they were probably disappointed. In 1965, Canada did not give the United States the support it demanded for the Vietnam War, and by 1967, the Canadian government was openly expressing disagreement with American policy in Southeast Asia. Canadian cooperation with the United States for nuclear defence against the Soviet Union during the postwar period did not mean support for American policy and initiatives around the globe.

South Africa

Jean Bottaro, Pippa Visser, and Nigel Worden, *In Search of History: Grade 12 Learner’s Book*

The USA and other Western powers became involved in Africa to protect trade links and to support pro-Western governments, such as Chad and Zaire. However, after its defeat in Vietnam in 1975, the USA became reluctant to be drawn into any direct military involvement. Many African states were suspicious of the motives of Western

Source: Nick Brune, et al., *Defining Canada: History, Identity, and Culture* (Whitby, Canada: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 2003), 477–478.

countries, such as the USA, because they maintained economic links with apartheid South Africa.

In many other cases, the United States and the Soviet Union supported rival movements within African countries by supplying them with arms rather than directly sending troops. In this way they carried out their international rivalry by using other countries. For example, from the 1950s to 1974, the US sent military supplies to Ethiopia, but this was stopped after the revolution which toppled the pro-Western Emperor [of Ethiopia] Haile Selassie. Instead, the Soviet Union supplied arms, aeroplanes and military advisors to the Marxist Revolutionary government of Mengistu [Communist leader who ran Ethiopia in the 1970s]. When Ethiopia declared war on neighbouring Somalia it, in turn, obtained weapons from the Americans.

India

Our Pasts – III, Part 2 (*Textbooks in History for Class VIII*)

India gained freedom soon after the devastations of the Second World War. At that time a new international body – the United Nations – formed in 1945 was in its infancy. The 1950s and 1960s saw the emergence of the Cold War, that is, power rivalries and ideological conflicts between the USA and the USSR, with both countries creating military alliances. This was also the period when colonial empires were collapsing and many countries were attaining independence. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, who was also the foreign minister of newly independent India, developed free India's foreign policy in this context. Non-alignment formed the bedrock of this foreign policy.

Led by statesmen from Egypt, Yugoslavia, Indonesia, Ghana and India, the non-aligned movement urged countries not to join either of the two major alliances. But this policy of staying away from alliances was not a matter of remaining “isolated” or “neutral”. The former means remaining aloof from world affairs whereas non-aligned countries such as India played an active role in mediating between the American and Soviet alliances. They tried to prevent war – often taking a humanitarian and moral stand against war. However, for one reason or another, many non-aligned countries including India got involved in wars.

By the 1970s, a large number of countries had joined the non-aligned movement.

Source: Jean Bottaro, Pippa Visser, and Nigel Worden, *In Search of History: Grade 12 Learner's Book* (Cape Town, South Africa: Oxford University Press, 2011), 109.

Source: Our Pasts – III, Part 2 (*Textbooks in History for Class VIII*), (New Delhi, India: National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2008), 170.

Items for Analysis

1. After reading these textbook selections dealing with the Cold War, cite examples of whether each of the nations represented here did or did not support the U.S. during this time period.

	For the U.S.	Against the U.S.
Britain		
Canada		
South Africa		
India		

2. Research the non-alignment movement during the Cold War. After you have done that, re-read the sections above from the nations that were members of this group. Explain if you believe that being a part of that organization had an impact on how students in that particular country read about the Cold War today.

THE KOREAN WAR, 1950–1953

One of the times when the Cold War turned “hot” was during the Korean War, which put democracies on the side of South Korea, while Communist countries backed North Korea. Typically referred to as the “Forgotten War,” the Korean War usually does not get much attention in U.S. history textbooks (especially compared to World War II or the Vietnam War).

China

Hanguo Zhu and Shili Ma, *History: Ninth Grade*

Resistance to U.S. Aggression and Aid to Korea **Protect families and guard our country**

In August 1945, the United States and the Soviet Union accepted Japanese surrender. Both countries decided the 38th parallel on the Korea Peninsula as the border to divide into two temporary zones of occupation. The 38th Parallel to the North belonged to the Soviet Union Red army's zone; the 38th parallel to the south was the United States army's zone of occupation. After occupying Korea, the U.S. and the Soviet Union set up their own different polices which resulted in the North and the South Korea's developed differently. The 38th parallel to the north is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and the 38th parallel to the south is the Republic of Korea. Tensions between the two sides had increased and they fought along the 38th parallel area.

In June 1950, the Korean War broke out. The United States, with the support of the United Nations, commanded UN forces to invade North Korea. Meanwhile, the United States also sent the United States Seventh Fleet to invade the Taiwan Strait which means that they publicly intervened in China's internal affairs. Having ignored China's multiple warnings, the United States army crossed the 38th parallel border in order to occupy the whole Korean Peninsula. Also, the U.S. commanded air bombs on China's northeastern cities and countries that brought the war to China. China's safety was facing serious threats.

At this critical moment, with boldness, China's government decided to support and to rescue the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. China's government stated that they would “resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea” as a main theme to start the war. In Oct. 1950, the Chinese People's Volunteer Army, led by Dehuai Peng, the Chinese Defense Minister, deployed to aid North Korea to resist the U.S.'s invasion.

Having survived indiscriminate bombing, the Chinese People's Volunteer Army retained the spirit of patriotism and the revolutionary heroism to fight against the enemy. The Chinese People's Volunteer Army was so brave and fearless that the enemy had no chance to cross the 38th parallel.

Source: Hanguo Zhu and Shili Ma, *History: Ninth Grade*, vol. 2 (Beijing, China: Beijing Normal University Press, 2002), 95. Paraphrased and trans. from the Chinese by Michelle Yu & Mengmei Ying.

Canada

Nick Brune, et al., *Defining Canada: History, Identity, and Culture*

Most Canadians feared communist expansion. Even so, Lester Pearson, then Canada's secretary of state, was concerned that the Americans were getting both themselves and their allies too deeply embroiled in foreign conflicts. Canada's first response was to send only three destroyers and an air-transport squadron to South Korea. The Americans thought that contribution wholly inadequate and pressed for more assistance. In August, the Canadian government agreed to send ground troops. Though the United States was clearly in command of the war, Canada was careful to maintain the formal understanding that it was fighting under the direction of the United Nations.

By February 1951, Canadian troops were in Korea. In April, they fought valiantly at Kapyong, reinforcing once again the fierce reputation of the Canadian soldier. For the next two-and-a-half years, infantry, air, and naval forces from Canada played a key role. The war ended on July 27, 1953, when an armistice was signed. In all, 21 940 Canadians had served in the army, and 321 were killed.

The main effect of the Korean War on Canada was that it forced the Cabinet to reflect carefully on the “increasingly troubling” character of American leadership. General MacArthur, for example, had talked about expanding the war into China. Although MacArthur was dismissed by President Truman in 1951, concern persisted that American foreign policy was overly aggressive and that the Americans risked nuclear confrontation over situations that neither Americans nor Canadians fully understood.

Source: Nick Brune, et al., *Defining Canada: History, Identity, and Culture* (Whitby, Canada: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 2003), 473.

Items for Analysis

1. The selections above both discuss the Korean War, but it is interesting to point out how much they discuss the United States and its role in this war. Imagine you are a student from China and then from Canada. Explain what your image of the United States might be after reading these excerpts.
 - a. China
 - b. Canada

2. In the Canadian selection, the authors write about the “increasingly troubling character of American leadership.” Using a current U.S. history textbook and doing your own research, try to find events in the last 30 years which may have caused nations to question American leadership. Using the graphic organizer below cite the event and explain how this might have caused other nations to question America’s character and/or leadership.

Event	Impact

THE VIETNAM WAR, 1955–1975

While the U.S. and Britain were allies throughout most of the twentieth century, the textbook selection below informs British students that even allies can disagree from time to time.

Britain

Chris Rowe, et al., *The Making of Modern Britain, 1951–2007*

By 1975, Britain seemed to be in decline. Part of this was the retreat from empire abroad; part of it was the impact on economic crisis at home. Britain's major ally, the United States, was perceived as having been gravely weakened by the Vietnam War. The special relationship was under strain because the Americans felt Britain had failed to provide enough active support when it was needed both in Vietnam and in the Middle East crisis of 1973 when [Prime Minister Heath's] government was reluctant to help American support of Israel in the Yom Kippur War. . . .

From the time the escalation of the Vietnam War began in 1964, President Lyndon Johnson wanted to gain support and approval – what forty years later might have been termed a 'coalition of the willing'. Australia sent troops to Vietnam and Johnson wanted Britain to do the same. LBJ (Johnson) had a good relationship with [Prime Minister] Harold Wilson, who was generally pro-American and a keen supporter of the Atlantic alliance, but Wilson resisted any suggestions about direct military involvement – not even a small token force that would have satisfied Johnson as a symbol.

The Vietnam War became hugely unpopular in Britain from 1966. There was a massive anti-war demonstration outside the American Embassy in London in 1968. When Edward Heath came to power in 1970, his approach was oriented towards Europe. Heath rejected attempts by the American Secretary, Henry Kissinger, to use Britain as a link with Europe. Heath insisted that the US should negotiate with all nine states, not use Britain as a go-between. Kissinger was furious. Relations became worse in October 1973 during the Yom Kippur War, when Israel seemed in danger of defeat. The US wanted to use NATO bases in Europe for an airlift of supplies to Israel. Most European states, including Britain refused permission. Anglo-American relations were badly strained, though they did recover later.

Source: Chris Rowe, et al., *The Making of Modern Britain, 1951–2007* (Cheltenham, England: Nelson Thornes, 2009), 80.

Items for Analysis

1. Pretend you are the U.S. ambassador to Britain and have been asked to give a few remarks at a public lunch in which a number of British officials will be in attendance. You have been asked to speak to the crowd about America's "special relationship" in the twentieth century (see other British textbook excerpts in this workbook), in which you have to make both your boss, the president of the United States, and the British officials happy. Using the selection above and your own U.S. history textbook, come up with a brief speech welcoming everyone to this event.

DRAFT DODGERS

The topic of the Vietnam War “draft dodgers” is one that most U.S. history textbooks tend to avoid or cover very lightly. But, since many of these young men headed for Canada to escape the draft during the Vietnam War, it is a story that is usually given some attention in most Canadian history textbooks.

Canada

Nick Brune, et al., *Defining Canada: History, Identity, and Culture*

Thousands of young Americans who did not want to fight in the Vietnam War had significant influence on Canadian campuses in the late 1960s. At least twenty thousand draft dodgers and twelve thousand deserters from the U.S. army came to Canada for refuge. Many attended university here and encouraged other students to consider radical or anti-establishment ideas that were popular in the United States.

Canada's relationship to the Vietnam War was complex; although Canada was not at war with Vietnam, it helped the Americans in many covert ways. Approximately ten thousand young Canadians did fight in the war with the U.S. forces. The herbicide Agent Orange was tested at CFB Galetown in New Brunswick and American bombers practised carpet-bombing over Suffield, Alberta, and North Battleford, Saskatchewan. After U.S. President Jimmy Carter pardoned the draft dodgers in 1977 (the war had ended in 1973), many went home, but others stayed in Canada permanently.

Source: Nick Brune, et al., *Defining Canada: History, Identity, and Culture* (Whitby, Canada: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 2003), 557.

Close Reading

1. In what year was this Canadian textbook published?
2. How many years had passed between the ending of the Vietnam War (April 30, 1975) and when this Canadian textbook was published? Do you think this amount of time has had an impact on how Canadians and Americans view this group?
3. Does this textbook have a positive or negative view of these Americans? How do you know this? Cite evidence from the excerpt to prove your point.
4. Do you think this selection has a positive or negative view of the Vietnam War? Cite specific phrases from the text to support your explanation.

ENDING THE COLD WAR

By 1991, the Cold War had ended and many of the former communist nations ceased to exist. This important turning point in world history is covered by history textbooks in nearly every nation around the world. While they all seem to share the same facts over the specific names, dates, and places, one area where they tend to disagree is who should actually get the credit for bringing the Cold War to a conclusion.

Britain

Chris Rowe, et al., *The Making of Modern Britain, 1951–2007*

There was a strong bond between Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, both personal and ideological. Both were from the generation whose lives had been shaped by the Second World War. Mrs Thatcher was particularly influenced by her wartime memories. Her special hero was Winston Churchill. Her view of twentieth century history revolved around the idea that American armies had twice ridden to the rescue after ‘those Europeans’ had made a mess of things.

Through the 1980s, on issues like the Falklands War, deploying Cruise missiles and being tough with the USSR, the Thatcher–Reagan link was a powerful factor in how the West won the Cold War. The Thatcher–Reagan bond (the ‘Ronnie and Maggie show’) lasted long after they were out of politics. At Ronald Reagan’s funeral in 2004, Lady Thatcher’s eulogy was played on videotape: *‘We have lost a great president, a great American and a great man. And I have lost a dear friend. We here still move in twilight. But we have one beacon to guide us that Ronald Reagan never had – his example.’*

The New Cold War was marked by tough rhetoric and many confrontations. In 1983, there was a major war scare over NATO military exercises in the North Atlantic. Then Soviet jets shot down a Korean passenger airliner, KAL 007, when it strayed off course into Soviet airspace; everyone on board was killed. Cruise missiles were stationed in Europe. The Reagan administration stepped up plans for its ‘Star Wars’ anti-missile shield. All this caused serious tensions between the Soviet Bloc and the West. It has been suggested that the outcome of the Cold War was ultimately decided by this Western firmness, especially by the high levels of defence spending that the USSR simply could not match. In so, Margaret Thatcher must be credited with an important contribution.

Another view is that it was not military pressure from the West that ended the Cold War but Mikhail Gorbachev. Margaret Thatcher can claim some of the credit for this, too. Gorbachev established his authority between 1985 and 1987. He was thirty years younger than the elderly relics who had led the USSR until 1985. He was a realist who

knew things could not go on as they were. His favourite saying as he promoted reform of the USSR was: *'If not us, how? If not now, when?'*

Gorbachev made a remarkable impression on the hard-line conservatives Thatcher and Reagan. Mrs Thatcher met Gorbachev for the first time in 1984 and declared herself to be impressed.

South Africa

Jean Bottaro, et al., *In Search of Social Sciences: Grade 9 Learner's Book*

After the start of the Cold War in 1945, there were over 40 years of tension between the communist Soviet Union and the capitalist West. Both sides spent huge amounts of money on weapons. The threat of a nuclear war hung over the whole world. But suddenly, in 1989, the communist governments in eastern Europe collapsed, and the Cold War came to an end. What caused these dramatic changes?

How did the changes start?

In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev became leader of the Soviet Union. At that time, the Soviet Union had many problems. Gorbachev realized that change was necessary.

What changes did Gorbachev make?

Gorbachev supported communism but thought that it should be reformed. He introduced two new policies:

- *Perestroika meaning 'restructuring'. The aim was to rebuild the Soviet economy which was facing many problems.*
- *Glasnost meaning 'openness'. This meant that people would be allowed to speak freely and criticize the government.*

By perestroika Gorbachev meant reforming the communist system, not replacing it with capitalism. But these two policies led to the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the end of the Cold War. . . .

1989 was a year of dramatic events in Eastern Europe. There were revolutions in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Bulgaria and Romania. One after the other, the communist governments collapsed and elections for new democratic governments were held. . . .

How did these changes affect the Cold War?

Gorbachev's new policies had an immediate effect on the Cold War. He held a number of meetings with the American president, Ronald Reagan. As a result, the

Source: Chris Rowe, et al., *The Making of Modern Britain, 1951–2007* (Cheltenham, England: Nelson Thornes, 2009), 124.
Source: Jean Bottaro, et al., *In Search of Social Services: Grade 9 Learner's Book* (Cape Town, South Africa: Oxford University Press, 2007), 168–170.

tensions of the Cold War began to ease. Both leaders agreed to reduce the number of weapons. At the end of 1989 they agreed that the Cold War was over.

Germany

Florian Osburg, ed., *Expedition Geschichte, Berlin Kl. 10*

In the beginning of the 80s the relationship between the USSR and the USA stood at a low point. The invasion of Afghanistan had isolated the USSR internationally. In the USA, the hardliners saw themselves vindicated. U.S. President Ronald Reagan, an uncompromising anti-communist, spoke publicly of the USSR as the “Evil Empire.” The room to maneuver for the USSR became increasingly smaller. In addition to the internal political consequences generated from the Afghan War came grave economic problems in the socialist camp and a creeping erosion of the up till now unchallenged Brezhnev Doctrine, which prohibited any deviation from the course of the leading power. It was most of all the increasingly self-confident acting union and citizens’ rights movements in Poland, which challenged the authorities of the USSR in the socialist camp.

In this phase of the newly sharpened Cold War, the American arms spending grew astronomically high. In addition, President Reagan began with the development of a space based missile defense system (SDI). With that a new round of the arms race seemed inevitable, but it did not come to that. What had happened? In 1985 a new man reached the top of the USSR—Mikhail S Gorbachev.

Gorbachev initiated fundamental reforms, in order to overcome the multiple crises of the Soviet social system. This caused a radical break with the traditional military politics of the USSR, which to date was oriented strictly towards military superiority. Western politicians were also prompted to consider a new security policy.

Source: Florian Osburg, ed., *Expedition Geschichte, Berlin Kl. 10* (Braunschweig, Germany: Bildungshaus Schulbuchverlage, 2008), 22. Paraphrased and trans. from the German by Ania Cramer.

Items for Analysis

1. Using the textbook selections above, fill out the graphic organizer below by citing sentences or phrases that give credit to one, two, or all three of the world leaders for ending the Cold War. Try to use a current U.S. history textbook to see what its perspective on this topic is.

Ending the Cold War	Gorbachev	Thatcher	Reagan
Britain			
South Africa			
Germany			
Current U.S. Textbook			

2. After reading the textbook selections above and doing some of your own research, explain if you think the Cold War ended because of collaboration between allies, individual leaders, political pressure, a combination of all of these, or some other factors.

CIVIL RIGHTS



INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

In the 1950s and 1960s, African Americans began to demand their civil rights through a series of protests, boycotts, sit-ins, and other forms of non-violent protest. This topic is interesting to view from the perspectives of other nations. Some countries use this event to show how it impacted their own country; others highlight it to show their students that the U.S. is not a perfect society.

China

Hanguo Zhu and Shili Ma, *History: Ninth Grade*

The discrimination against black people is an old historical issue in the United States. For a long time, black people were treated as “second-class citizens” and were discriminated according to employment, wage, housing, and the use of public facilities. The phenomenon was even more obvious in the South. The antiracism came to a peak after the war, ever since the 50s when black people in United States started the civil rights movement to fight for their legal rights. The civil rights movement was the non-violent protest (boycott, sit in, parade, etc.) made by black people from the South to fight for their legal rights of receiving an education and using public facilities.

The starting of the civil rights movement was marked by the resistance of public transportation in Montgomery, Alabama. In December 1, 1955, a black woman, Rosa Parks was arrested because of taking the seat set aside for people in the front rows of the bus (black people were supposed to sit in the back and give their seat to white people when it was crowded). Several days later, she was sentenced to prison by the court on the charge of violating the Ghetto Act. This case infuriated the local black people, and they decided to resist. The conflict lasted almost a year and forced the Supreme Court to make the judgment that it is violating the Constitution to enforce the Ghetto Act in public transportations.

In 1957, the Little Rock Incident revealed the racial discrimination in schools in the South. The Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas recruited 9 black students at the beginning of the semester and a mob of white people broke into the school to keep the 9 students from entering the school. Thousands of white people beat up black people in town. The incident astonished the United States and the whole world. Under the pressure from the public, President Eisenhower sent out troops to protect these nine students.

The movements during the 60s were mostly in the form of sit-ins. On February 1, four black college students went to a restaurant in Greensboro, North Carolina to get some

coffee, but a white waitress refused to provide service to them and asked them to leave. The black students refused to leave and stayed until the restaurant was closed. Since then, more and more black students insisted to sit despite white people's maltreatment and expanded the act all over the South, to all kinds of public places. In August 28, 1963, 250,000 black people and white sympathizers gathered together in front of the Lincoln Memorial, and the leader of the movements, Martin Luther King Jr. gave the speech "I Have a Dream," which asks for democratic freedom and rights for black people.

Under the pressure of the civil rights movement, in 1964, the Congress passed the important Civil Rights Act and abandoned the long-time racial discrimination in the use of public facilities. Black peoples' status has changed significantly, but the actual racial equality between black and white people according to politics, economy, and social status are still not realized.

South Africa

Jackie Bartels, et al., *Shuters History: Grade 11*

Are we able to learn from the mistakes of history?

As we work through this unit we will confront some very difficult questions. We will see that history has many examples of people killing one another or treating one another cruelly or disrespectfully. We will see that there are many ways in which people have, throughout history, justified unacceptable behavior against one another. It is hoped that by being aware of different types of atrocities, people will not allow them to occur. If we do not learn from the mistakes of history, we are condemned to repeat them until we do learn.

In this unit you will learn how pseudoscientific racism and other misguided beliefs were used by organizations and by governments against specific groups within their communities. You will learn about the Ku Klux Klan in the USA; about the Australian government's use of eugenics in the 1930s; more about attitudes of racial superiority in South Africa; and more about the policies of the Nazi government in Germany, policies which led to genocide in which millions of people died.

There is only one race – the Human Race

As you continue to work through this unit, always bear in mind that no scientifically acceptable way of distinguishing human beings from one another at a fundamental or biological level, has ever been found. The characteristics that unite us as a species are found within every ethnic or 'racial' group in the world. The concept of 'race' as a scientifically acceptable way of classifying and dividing human beings has been completely discredited. . . .

Source: Hanguo Zhu and Shili Ma, *History: Ninth Grade*, vol. 2 (Beijing, China: Beijing Normal University Press, 2002), 95. Paraphrased and trans. from the Chinese by Michelle Yu & Mengmei Ying.

How did/does the Ku Klux Klan in the USA justify its racist attitudes?

The beliefs of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) are not widely accepted today in the USA – it is now seen as a fringe group of extremists who have never succeeded in convincing the majority of people to support their racist ideas. They argue that mixing ‘races’ is against God’s law and favor the total segregation of all races. . . .

How did the KKK come into existence?

The Civil War between the Northern and Southern States in the USA (1861–1865) was fought mainly over the issue of slavery. The North was opposed to slavery, and the South favored it. The South lost the war and the slaves were freed. While some of them were able to move to the North, many of the freed slaves now had to find employment in the South. They were in competition with the poorer class of white Southerners, who had been impoverished by the Civil War. To defend themselves against competition in labor markets, extremists formed an organization, the Ku Klux Klan, to intimidate and harass the freed slaves. This organization was active in the late 19th century and then support dwindled until it virtually passed out of existence.

The Ku Klux Klan was revived in 1915. It was now also anti-Catholic and anti-Jewish and it spread into the Northern states of the USA after the end of World War I when returning soldiers were competing for jobs. At its peak in the mid 1920s its membership was estimated at 4 to 5 million. This is the era in which the worst atrocities, including lynching of African Americans, took place in the South. By 1930 there were about 30 000 members after some Klan members had been successfully prosecuted by the various state governments. The Ku Klux Klan has been revived several times, but today its membership is estimated to be in the low thousands.

Despite opposition of the Ku Klux Klan, the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s succeeded in removing all institutionalized discrimination against the African American population. By the time the civil rights movement had ended, all segregation had been declared illegal in the United States of America.

Source: Jackie Bartels, et al., *Shutters History: Grade 11* (Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: Shuter and Shooters Publishers, 2006), 215–216.

Items for Analysis

1. After reading the two selections above, research the Apartheid system in South Africa, and also research human rights issues in China. Then, re-read the excerpts above and try to explain why these authors, from these specific countries, would find it beneficial for their students to learn about the civil rights movement in the United States.

South Africa:

China:

2. Using a current U.S. history textbook see if there are stories about human rights issues in China or the Apartheid system in South Africa. Explain how the U.S. textbook author(s) wrote about these issues and if people in these two nations would agree with what is being said about it.

WORLD WAR I

AMERICA ENTERS THE WAR

1. Answers may vary, but typically, there would be a lot of comparisons between a current U.S. history textbook and this Italian textbook. The U.S. often focuses in on the Zimmerman Telegram, the sinking of the Lusitania, and the start of Germany's U-boat attacks.
2. Answer may vary but students might consider how this textbook seems to portray the U.S. in a more positive light by arguing that the Americans were first forced into entering this war, followed by discussing how the U.S. entry allowed the Allies to win World War I. As for the Germans, the Italian students might have a negative impression since this textbook talks about their "terrorist strategy."

PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE

1. Answers will vary. **France:** Seem to be blaming the leaders from England, France, and Italy, who all wanted to protect their own interests. Viewed the treaty as having some very "harsh conditions," and argue that the League of Nations failed mostly because the U.S. did not back it up. **Austria:** The end of the war weakened the "Old World" system and led to new central powers emerging. The victors excluded Russia, which was a mistake. England, France, and the U.S. put very harsh regulations on Germany and demanded that Germany take sole blame for starting the war. Finally, the League of Nations failed after the war, which was mostly due to the U.S. not backing it. **Germany:** The authors seem to blame the Allies (England, France, and the U.S.) for making the treaty too harsh and forcing Germany to take full blame for causing the war. Germany was not in any position to continue the war and felt it had to sign the treaty, no matter what it said.
2. Answers may vary, but most students will likely notice that this textbook does not outright give any specific blame for the start of World War I to the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. This textbook discusses how Germany received the blame for starting this war, but it does not truly come to their defense. A student might argue that the reason this textbook does not discuss this issue is that textbooks often try to reflect what is positive about a nation's history and deflect the negative. Students typically do not want to hear how their nation caused one of the greatest catastrophes in world history.

3. Typical responses might include that Germany did not want to be blamed for solely causing World War I, they were against Article 231, they found themselves in a bad military position at the end of the war, and that many Germans felt national unity was more important than continuing to fight. Answers may vary but one does get a sense that this modern German history textbook still finds more fault with the Treaty of Versailles than it does any positive contributions it might have made.
4. Student responses will vary.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE GREAT DEPRESSION

1. **Similarities between the Polish and Austrian perspectives:** Answers may include: Both view the U.S. as the nation where the Great Depression started. They also both give credit to President Roosevelt for starting the New Deal. Both discuss the financial impact this had on their citizens and the negative impact it had on their citizens' attitudes and feelings toward politics. They also both discuss how this economic depression helped lead to the rise of fascist dictators in Europe.
Differences between the Polish and Austrian perspectives: Answers may include: The Austrian textbook spent more time discussing the impact the Great Depression had on other nations, such as Germany and Russia.
2. Answers will vary depending on the main points that each student wants to emphasize.

DOMESTIC PERSPECTIVES ON THE GREAT DEPRESSION

1.

Stock Market Crash	Causes
1933	Rapid business expansion after some countries returned to the gold standard
1944	The Stock Market Crash
1974	The Stock Market Crash along with signs from the construction and automobile industries
Current U.S. Textbook	Answers will vary depending on the textbook used.

2. Answers may vary but students may notice that this textbook does not go into as much detail as later ones. It seems to point the finger for the cause of the depression at things that the other textbooks do not, and finally it tries to sound more optimistic about the future.
3. Students' answers may vary, but they might notice that the Beards' textbook does highlight the struggle between "power elites" and the common people. They seem to blame Hoover for some of the problems and emphasize how conflict is shaping the nation.
4. While answers may vary, one can see in the 1930s some Nationalistic leanings but also some Progressive history when the authors discuss how the nation will get out of the Great Depression. The 1970s textbook seems to be more from the Consensus school, based mostly on the last paragraph in that section.

THE NEW DEAL

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE NEW DEAL

1. China is a communist state, which means it has one-party rule, and a socialist economic system. In a socialist system the government regulates the production of goods and services and each company is owned by the community of workers. Answers may vary, but students might find that the Chinese authors of this textbook wanted to show Chinese students that when the U.S. was in a crisis they turned to a system that closely resembled a socialist-style economy. Students should be able to cite specific examples from the selection to demonstrate how the U.S., in the 1930s, ran programs funded by the government to help employ workers.
2. Student answers may vary but in one paragraph the author argues that the New Deal policies were "officially overrated." Answers to the second part will vary depending on what U.S. history textbook the student uses.

WORLD WAR II

THE GLOBAL IMPACT

1. Answers may vary but students may argue either that World War II hurt Venezuela because of the economic crisis brought on by the Pearl Harbor attack, or that it saved the national economy in the long run by helping it make a financial comeback.
2. Answers will vary depending on the student's research.

PERCEPTIONS OF AMERICANS DURING THE WAR

1. Answers will vary but students might consider some of the following. U.S. textbooks want to portray a positive story of American soldiers and try to avoid anything that might be seen as being negative. They might argue that this generation is getting older and it is hard for people to criticize this generation for any faults, either real or perceived. They may argue that these other nations are wrong or are embellishing what actually happened in order to appeal to their own students.
2. Answers will vary depending on the research each student does for this assignment. Typically, the U.S. views this relationship as being “special” and argues that the U.S. and Britain are two like-minded nations both fighting to save the world for democracy.
3. Answers will vary but students might find that the invasion of Iraq took place during this time and that many in England were not in favor of this war. It became common for citizens and politicians to argue that the U.S. had forced them to join this unpopular war and many used the example of the U.S. and England’s relationship during World War II to argue their point that the U.S. has often forced them to do things they did not agree with.
4. Students may come up with a variety of answers but typically the argument goes that if an author is writing a national history textbook for future generations of citizens in their own country, then their interpretation of events might often be biased by this.

INCARCERATION OF JAPANESE AMERICANS

1. Typical responses include the Progressive school because the author could be arguing that this was a struggle between the power elite and the common people. The Consensus school could also be seen in that the authors show a more moderate tone in their writing. Or, one might argue that this represents the New Left school because it is discussing Japanese Americans, who were often left out of earlier textbooks (see the 1949 selection), and it tells a story not typically discussed in previous U.S. history textbooks.
2. Students will probably notice that in 1949 this story received very little attention, but the authors of the 1974 textbook spent a little more time discussing it. Students might argue that historians did not know as much about this event in 1949 or they could argue that textbooks might not have wanted to discuss this story since it puts the U.S. in a negative light. Answers related to current U.S. history textbooks will depend on which textbook the students use.
3. Student answers will vary depending on the topic and depth of student research.

ENDING THE WAR

1.

Ending World War II	Positive	Negative
Poland	U.N. created	Poland's borders were reorganized, agreement did not last long, created the Cold War, Poland lost its independence
Germany	Ended the war and Nazi rule, liberated camps, elites lost power	
Britain		Roosevelt lost the peace which led to Soviet domination, handed Poland over, started the Cold War
Current U.S. Textbook	Possible answers might be partitioned and occupied Germany, destroyed militarism and Nazism, Russia agreed to attack Japan, helped coordinate the peace and destroyed Fascism	

- Answers will vary depending on the country and the depth of research done by the student.
- Answers will vary depending on the U.S. history textbook that the students use for their research.

THE ATOMIC BOMB

- Students' answers may vary but they could mention that these textbook authors were writing during the start of the Cold War and may have been considering other issues with Russia, especially the arms race, by 1954.
- Answers may vary but responses may include the Consensus school, since the 1947 textbook does seem to really brag about the use of the atomic bombs. The 1954 and 1966 textbooks could both possibly be from the New Left since they seem to condemn using these weapons in the future.
- Answers will vary depending on the U.S. history textbook that the student uses.

THE HOLOCAUST

1. Answers will vary depending on student’s research and understanding of this topic.
2. Answers will vary but one point students should make as they start their argument is that Israel is a Jewish state, which was formed after World War II, due to the Holocaust.

THE COLD WAR

THE MARSHALL PLAN

1.

	Positive	Negative
Austria	Saw the plan as one that would end hunger, poverty, and distress in Europe. Allowed for economic freedom and democracy	Makes the comment that Stalin was “rightfully” concerned about this program.
Norway	Began cooperating with Western Powers and joined NATO	Majority of Norwegians felt they had to join an alliance with the Western Powers, including the U.S.
Current U.S. Textbook	Answers may vary	Answers may vary

CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE

1.	For the U.S.		Against the U.S.
	Britian	Nuclear development, shared intelligence and the Test Ban Treaty	Burgess and MacLean Affair, pressure to join EEC, Suez Crisis
	Canada		Bomarc dispute, U.S. provoked U.S.S.R., U.S. election intervention, no support for Vietnam War
	South Africa		Suspicious of U.S. motives, arms to Africa
	India	Non-aligned movement and often helped mediate between the superpowers	Still ended up getting involved in wars

- Answers will vary depending on the students' research and the materials they use to make a defense of their arguments. Typical answers regarding each country's authors would demonstrate an argument stating that being citizens of a specific nation probably gives them a more favorable perspective of that country's history.

THE KOREAN WAR, 1950–1953

- Answers will vary depending on the topic and depth of the student's research.
- Answers will vary depending on the topic and depth of the student's research.

THE VIETNAM WAR, 1955–1975

- Answers will vary depending on the topic and depth of the student's research.

DRAFT DODGERS

- 2003
- 30 years. Answers may vary, but typically students will respond by stating that the amount of time since an event has taken place will lighten the passions felt about that event/situation.
- Answers will vary.
- Answers will vary.

ENDING THE COLD WAR

1.	Ending the Cold War	Gorbachev	Thatcher	Reagan
	Britain	Some argue that it was not military pressure from the West, but rather the new leader, Mikhail Gorbachev	Thatcher deserves credit for both Reagan and Gorbachev's policies	
	South Africa	There were some major changes in the world and this could be attributed to the policies of Mikhail Gorbachev		
	Germany	Gorbachev was a new leader with new policies		Reagan's SDI (Star Wars) policies
	Current U.S. Textbooks			Answers may vary but typically Reagan is seen as the main character in ending the Cold War

2. Answers will vary depending on the topic and depth of the student's research.

CIVIL RIGHTS

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

1. Answers will vary depending on the topic and depth of the student's research.
2. Answers will vary depending on the topic and depth of the student's research.