



The Curtain Falls

End of the Cold War



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Grade Level	9th – 12th Grade	Time Frame	90 minutes
Subject	Social Studies	Duration	1-2 periods
Course	World History		

Essential Question

Why do governments collapse?

Summary

In this lesson, students will examine why the Cold War came to an end. Students will view video footage of the fall of the Berlin Wall, look for reasons the Cold War ended by analyzing data and Why-Lighting a reading, and extend their understanding by working in groups to create pie charts that detail the many reasons the Cold War came to an end. Students will summarize their learning by writing a six-word memoir about the end of the Cold War.

Snapshot

Engage

Students view footage from when the Berlin Wall came down and complete an I Notice, I Wonder activity.

Explore

Students analyze a chart comparing demographics of the USSR and the USA around 1980 to look for possible issues within the USSR.

Explain

Students highlight a reading about the various issues facing the Soviet Union that led to its collapse and discuss reasons for the fall of the Soviet Union.

Extend

Students work in groups to create a pie chart that divides up the reasons for the end of the Cold War and explain their reasoning. Then, the class views all of the pie charts and reviews the reasoning of each group.

Evaluate

Students create a Six-Word Memoir that summarizes the end of the Cold War.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: World History (9th through 12th grade))

WH.5.5: Evaluate the people, events, and conditions leading to the end of the Cold War including the

WH.5.5A: effects of Poland's Solidarity Movement

WH.5.5B: policies of the perestroika and glasnos

WH.5.5C: fall of the Berlin Wall

WH.5.5D: breakup of the Soviet Union

Attachments

- [End of the Cold War Student Example—The Curtain Falls.docx](#)
- [End of the Cold War Student Example—The Curtain Falls.pdf](#)
- [Lesson Slides—The Curtain Falls.pptx](#)
- [The End of the Cold War Reading—The Curtain Falls - Spanish.docx](#)
- [The End of the Cold War Reading—The Curtain Falls - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [The End of the Cold War Reading—The Curtain Falls.docx](#)
- [The End of the Cold War Reading—The Curtain Falls.pdf](#)
- [USSR AND USA Comparison Student Example—The Curtain Falls.pdf](#)
- [USSR and USA Comparison—The Curtain Falls - Spanish.docx](#)
- [USSR and USA Comparison—The Curtain Falls - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [USSR and USA Comparison—The Curtain Falls.docx](#)
- [USSR and USA Comparison—The Curtain Falls.pdf](#)

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- USSR and USA Comparison handout (attached; one per pair)
- End of the Cold War Reading handout (attached; one per student)
- Pen/pencil
- Markers/colored pencils
- Large sticky pad paper or poster board (one per group)
- Glue sticks/tape
- Card stock
- Rulers
- Scissors
- Sticky notes

5 minutes

Engage

As class is beginning, provide each student with a sticky note. Use the attached **Lesson Slides** to guide the lesson. Display **slide 3** and introduce students to the [I Notice, I Wonder](#) strategy. As students watch the following video clip, ask them to think about something they notice and something they wonder. Play "[Nov. 10, 1989: Celebration at the Berlin Wall](#)" on **slide 2**, which has footage of people celebrating the fall of the Berlin Wall.

After the video clip, give students a moment to think about something they noticed and a question they have and write their thoughts on their sticky note. Ask for a few volunteers to share what they have written down.

If students have not studied the Berlin Wall in class, explain the significance of the wall that separated east and west Germany for almost thirty years, one event that led to the end of the Cold War. Move to **slide 4** and read the essential question, why do governments collapse? Tell students to think about this question as they complete the lesson, then move to **slide 5** and review the lesson objective with students.

Optional Technology Integration

If students have personal devices, consider creating a [Padlet](#) with the column format and add two columns labeled I Notice and I Wonder. Have students add their thoughts to the Padlet and review as a class.

15 minutes

Explore

Place students in pairs and pass out the attached **USSR and USA Comparison** handout to each pair. Move to **slide 6** and introduce students to the [WIS-WIM](#) strategy. Tell students to examine the data on the handout and think about how the data might have contributed to issues within the USSR. Have students circle or highlight specific pieces of data, this is the "what I see" portion of the strategy. Close to the data students have circled or highlighted, have students write how this data might have led to issues in the USSR, this is the "what it means" portion of the strategy. Have each pair of students go over what they have written down with another pair of students, then ask for a few volunteers to share their thoughts.

Student Example

See the attached **USSR and USA Comparison Student Example** handout for an example of how students might interpret the data.

15 minutes

Explain

Tell students they will next read more about the reasons for the Soviet Union's collapse. Pass out the attached **End of the Cold War Reading** to each student but allow students to read the handout in pairs. Move to **slide 7** and introduce students to the [Why-Lighting](#) strategy. Tell students to highlight passages that could have led to the end of the Cold War. Next to the highlighted portions, tell students to write notes that explain why they highlighted the passage. After providing time for students to complete the reading, have each pair of students compare what they have highlighted with another pair of students. Ask for volunteers to share what they highlighted and how it contributed to the end of the Cold War.

Possible Student Responses

- Students might highlight the lack of control citizens had on the supply and demand of goods.
- Students might highlight the large amount of money spent on war in Afghanistan.
- Students might highlight the movements that Poland and Hungary had to become independent and anti-communist.
- Students might highlight the openness of the press resulting in citizens knowing how many issues the USSR was having.

25 minutes

Extend

Teacher's Note: Activity Preparation

Prior to class, ensure that art supplies such as card stock, scissors, rulers, glue, markers, and colored pencils are available for students to use.

Place students into groups of four and provide each group with a piece of large chart paper or poster board. Display **slide 8** and introduce students to the [Dividing the Pie](#) strategy. Tell students that they should create a pie chart that divides up the reasons for the end of the Cold War into percentages that equal 100%. Around the pie chart, they should add the reasons for assigning each piece a certain percentage. Tell students to create a rough draft of the pie chart before creating it on the large paper. Encourage students to be creative and add a title and some illustrations to the large paper.

Hang the completed pie chart posters around the classroom and provide time for students to view each group's pie charts. Have students compare the different percentage weights that each group decided upon and tell students to look for commonalities between charts.

Optional Technology Integration

If preferred, students can create their pie charts digitally using a tool such as Google Slides or [Canva](#).

Pie Chart Student Example

See the attached **End of the Cold War Student Example** to see what a completed pie chart might look like.

5 minutes

Evaluate

Tell students to return to their desks after viewing the posters, ask for a few volunteers to discuss the similarities and differences between pie charts. Pass out a sticky note to each student. Move to **slide 9** and introduce students to the [Six-Word Memoirs](#) strategy. Tell students to think of why the Cold War ended and summarize their thoughts into just six words. An example of a six-word memoir about the end of the Cold War is on slide 9. Ask for a few volunteers to share their memoirs and have students post their sticky note on the classroom door or wall as they leave for the day.

Resources

- K20 Center. (n.d.). Canva. Tech Tools. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/612>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Dividing the Pie. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/1867>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). I Notice, I Wonder. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/180>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Padlet. Tech Tools. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/1077>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Six-Word Memoirs. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/75>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Why-Lighting. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/128>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). WIS-WIM. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/1201>
- National Archives and Records Administration. (n.d.). *Graffiti on the west side of the Berlin Wall expresses the desire for a unified Germany*. National Archives and Records Administration. <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/6460198>