

Are We MAD?

Impact of the Cold War

K20 Center, Aimee Myers
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Grade Level	10th – 11th Grade	**Time Frame**	90 minutes
Subject	Social Studies	**Duration**	2 class periods
Course	U.S. History, World History		

Essential Question

How can fear impact a nation?

Summary

This lesson about the Cold War invites students to further examine the concepts of brinkmanship and mutually assured destruction (MAD). Students first engage with the topics by considering how to set up a community in a fallout shelter. They further explore the idea of brinkmanship by playing a dice game and creating metaphors comparing brinkmanship to familiar concepts. Students then analyze an article and public service announcement about MAD and the Cold War. To summarize their learning at the end of the lesson, students draft a brief written response to the lesson's essential question.

Snapshot

Engage

Students determine how to successfully form a fallout shelter community after a nuclear disaster.

Explore

Students play a dice game and create metaphors to understand the concept of brinkmanship.

Explain

Students analyze a news article about the historical and contemporary aspects of mutually assured destruction.

Extend

Students watch and analyze a public service announcement about nuclear disaster survival.

Evaluate

Students write a response to the lesson’s essential question.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

CLR401: Locate important details in somewhat challenging passages
CLR402: Draw logical conclusions in somewhat challenging passages
IDT401: Infer a central idea in straightforward paragraphs in somewhat challenging literary narratives

Oklahoma Academic Standards SOCIAL STUDIES (Modern World History)

MWH.C.7.1: Evaluate the effects of World War II including the origins and escalation of the Cold War.

Oklahoma Academic Standards SOCIAL STUDIES (Modern World History)

USH.C.6.2: Describe domestic events related to the Cold War, including the threat of Communism and its aftermath.

Attachments

- Lesson Slides—Are We MAD.pptx
- Survival Activity—Are We MAD.docx
- Survival Activity—Are We MAD.pdf
- Window Notes—Are We MAD.docx
- Window Notes—Are We MAD.pdf

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Survival Activity handout (attached; one per student)
- Window Notes handout (attached; one per student)
- Dice (one per pair of students)
- Notebook paper
- Pencils or pens
- Student devices with internet access

20 minutes

Engage

Use the attached **Lesson Slides** to guide the lesson. Pass out one copy of the attached **Survival Activity** handout to each student.

Display **slide 3** and share the directions for the activity. Tell students that they should imagine they are in a fallout shelter and must select survivors to stay in the shelter. Allow students time to completely read the handout and individually choose seven people to stay in the shelter.

Move to **slide 4** and place students into groups of three to four. Tell students to work in their groups to form a consensus around which seven people should stay in the shelter. After providing time for students to work in their groups, ask several volunteers to share their thoughts about who they kept in the shelter and what influenced their decisions.

Move through **slides 5–6** to review the essential question and learning objectives.

20 minutes

Explore

Organize students into pairs and give each pair one die.

Display **slide 7** and introduce the concept of *brinkmanship*, as defined on the slide. Share that the game they are about to play will help them gain a greater understanding of brinkmanship.

Move to **slide 8**. Tell pairs that they should role-play so that one student assumes the role of the United States and the other assumes the role of the Soviet Union. Introduce the following rules of the game:

- Each roll the die once.
- If you roll a 1, 3, or 5 you don't fire nuclear weapons.
- If you roll a 2, 4, or 6 you fire nuclear weapons.
- Note the outcome of the roll.
- Repeat the process and keep track of each outcome.

Provide several minutes for students to play the game.

Move to **slide 9** and introduce the Synectics strategy. Have students discuss with their partners how brinkmanship is similar to a game of chicken. If students need help, consider defining what a game of chicken is. Invite volunteers to share out how they believe the two are similar. Guide students to understand that brinkmanship was like a game of chicken because both countries never fully knew the other country's intentions.

Lead a whole class discussion in which you guide students to develop another comparison between brinkmanship and another game or concept. Then, have students resume working with their partners. Have pairs work together to develop two additional responses and record their responses on a sheet of notebook paper.

Sample Student Responses

- Brinkmanship is like blackjack because you have no clue what cards the dealer holds.
- Brinkmanship is like the stock market because you can invest but you could lose everything you invested.

25 minutes

Explain

Pass out one copy of the attached **Window Notes** handout to each student. Introduce the Window Notes strategy. Move to **slide 10** and explain the concept of *mutually assured destruction (MAD)* to students. Then, display **slide 11**. Have students use an internet-connected device to access the article *How did we forget about mutually assured destruction?* using the link on the slide, https://k20.ou.edu/r9.

Provide time for students to read the article. As they read, have them complete the Window Notes handout. Then, have students discuss their notes with a partner. Ask students to discuss any unfamiliar words they noticed and what they think the main idea of the article is. Invite volunteers to share out what connections they made between the article and the topics discussed in class.

Teacher's Note: Lesson Scaffolding

Depending on the needs of your students, consider reading the article aloud with the whole class.

20 minutes

Extend

Display **slide 12** and have students take out one piece of notebook paper. Introduce the S-I-T- (Surprising, Interesting, Troubling) strategy to students. Share that students should watch the following video, *Duck and Cover*, which was a public service announcement shown in schools during the Cold War. Tell students that as they watch, they should identify one surprising thing, one interesting thing, and one troubling thing about the video.

Move to **slide 13** and play the video.

Teacher's Note: Video Length

The video is approximately 9 minutes long. The entire video does not need to be shown for students to gain an understanding of nuclear weapons and fallout. If needed, show just part of the video.

5 minutes

Evaluate

Display **slide 14** and have each student take out a sheet of notebook paper. Introduce the Quick Write strategy. Have students write a response to the lesson's essential question, "How can fear impact a nation?"

Collect and review students' responses to check their understanding of the lesson content.

Resources

- de Castella, T. (2012, February 15). *How did we forget about mutually assured destruction?* BBC News. http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-17026538
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Quick write. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/1127
- K20 Center. (n.d.). S-I-T (Surprising, interesting, troubling). Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/926
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Synectics. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/120
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Window notes. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/189
- Nuclear Vault. (2009, July 11). *Duck and cover (1951) Bert the turtle* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKqXu-5jw60