

# Coursework



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CNN Cold War Website ([http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold\\_war](http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold_war)) Evaluation

The strengths of this website include episodes that cover the time span of the Cold War, and form a timeline of events. Another strength is the list of Cold War leaders and key players, along with brief statements of who they are. The interactive timeline is a good way to get a quick overview of the period. Taking all the features together, there is enough material on this website to study the Cold War in depth.

Weaknesses of the website include that the episode videos seem to be missing. Instead, there are just episode transcripts, and they are a little hard to follow; they seem to jump around a bit. The episode recaps are easier to understand, and are a more manageable size to study. However, they lack many details that are hard to find. For instance, in the Vietnam War episode, it might be easier to find information if there were tables or graphs of how many people on each side died, etc.

The effects of some events, such as the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, are not dealt with in enough depth to show how the people on the other side of the conflict suffered. The site could be improved with links to websites that cover the aftermath of the bombings as well as links to the aftermath of the Vietnam War. The site may also not quite convey the extent to which the Cold War's potential for global nuclear annihilation gripped the lives of ordinary people, or the effects on generations who grew up believing there was likely no future to the world. Although, this is covered somewhat in the Cold War Memories section.

The website would also be more interesting if it included more information on the Vietnam anti-war movement and the ways it was influential in changing the course of the nation. Likewise, an analysis of the effectiveness

of nuclear disarmament efforts would be interesting.

The most interesting parts of the website include the way that the causes of conflicts are given. It is easy to see what precipitated certain events, for instance, by studying the episodes in order, it is easy to see what events led to the Vietnam War. The interactive quizzes that test your Cold War knowledge, such as about culture of the time, are also interesting and fun. There are many facets to the impact of the Cold War on the United States. The competition between the U. S. and the Soviet Union compelled both countries to a space race; the U. S. was inspired to be the first to land on the moon, and the U. S. space program received great support that it may not have otherwise. The Cold War also fueled a nuclear weapons arms race in both countries, with enormous cost to taxpayers and arguably corresponding social costs.

The quagmire that resulted from the Vietnam War led the United States to rethink how it would counter communism. The Vietnam War also seemed to make United States hesitant to commit troops to a war that may have no end. Most people held onto this image atleast until the Gulf War and the invasion of Iraq.

In contrast to the U. S., the impact of the Cold War on the Soviet Union was the dissolution of the Soviet Union into the independent states Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, etc. The end of the Cold War also saw the Berlin Wall come down. The breakup of the Soviet Union occurred with relatively little loss of blood, but was an immense upheaval for the people of the region. For both countries, the most important and lasting effect of the Cold War, with its continual threat of nuclear annihilation, was probably how it changed the way people think about the survivability of war.

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