

Oklahoma C³ Standards for United States History:

- Content Standard 5: The student will analyze the foreign and domestic policies during the Cold War, 1945 to 1975.
 - Item 2: Cite specific textual and visual evidence to describe events which changed domestic policies during the Cold War and its aftermath.
 - Objective B: Examine the impact of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the resulting nuclear arms race, the concept of brinkmanship, the doctrine of mutually assured destruction (MAD), and the launching of *Sputnik* and the space race.

Have students respond to the following questions: “Is it acceptable for a country to do everything within its power to develop military strength for defensive purposes? Should there be a concern if some of the “defensive” weapons could also serve “offensive” purposes?”

Guide students through a study of the arms race, including the proliferation of nuclear weapons, between the United States and Soviet Union. Evaluate the effectiveness of different presidential administrations in preventing the Cold War from erupting into a full-scale war between these two countries (some administrations brought a build-up of weapons while others scaled back). To help aid students understanding of the complexity of the issue, revisit the use of the atomic bomb during World War II and look at issues connected to testing of nuclear weapons by other countries as well as concerns related to “accidents” at nuclear facilities (including the aftermath of the recent Japanese earthquake). Additionally, make sure students study some of the positive benefits of using nuclear technology for energy needs.

Ask students to hypothesize how international relations might be different today if atomic or nuclear technology had never been developed. How would this have impacted the potential for ending World War II? How might this have changed the dynamics of the Cold War?

Bring up the issue of how some countries feel justified in maintaining nuclear weapons and yet are aggressively trying to prevent such from being developed within Iran and North Korea.

Finally, revisit the initial questions of “Is it acceptable for a country to do everything within its power to develop military strength for defensive purposes? Should there be a concern if some of the “defensive” weapons could also serve “offensive” purposes?” Also add two new questions “How does the possessing of nuclear weapons by some countries with the prevention of other countries from possessing them impact the current situation of international relations? Is it acceptable for the “haves” to make sure that others remain “have nots”?”