Cold War Ripples

Trace how competition shaped U.S. policy, jobs, and defense.

9-12.US2.23 "Describe the ways the United States competed with the Soviet Union culturally, economically, and politically during the Cold War, and how this competition affected postwar military and economic growth."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one cultural, one economic, and one political way the United States competed with the Soviet Union. Circle two effects on U.S. military or economic growth, then write matching numbers beside each effect and the competition that helped cause it.

Competition Beyond the Battlefield

1. In 1948, Soviet leaders blocked land routes into West Berlin, hoping Western powers would leave the city. The United States and its allies flew in food and fuel instead. That airlift was a political contest over who would shape Europe's future, not a battle between U.S. and Soviet troops. Washington also offered Marshall Plan aid to help European economies recover. Soviet leaders rejected the offer and kept Eastern European governments from joining. U.S. aid helped rebuild markets for American goods and strengthened ties with Western Europe. In 1949, the United States joined NATO, pledging to defend its members.

2. A decade later, the contest reached living rooms and concert halls. In 1959, U.S. and Soviet leaders debated the merits of their systems beside a model American kitchen at an exhibition in Moscow. The United States sent jazz musicians abroad as cultural ambassadors, while Soviet ballet companies toured widely. Each side hoped its art and daily life would win admirers. Soviet success with Sputnik, the first artificial satellite, in 1957 also raised U.S. fears about missile technology. Congress increased support for science education, and the federal government created NASA in 1958. Universities and aerospace firms gained research funding and skilled jobs.

3. Competition also expanded the U.S. military and industries that supplied it. After the Korean War began in 1950, U.S. leaders increased defense spending to contain communism and support allies. The armed forces bought aircraft, ships, and later missiles; factories hired workers, and defense contracts helped grow industries in places such as California. Military research supported technologies that also found civilian uses, but not every defense dollar created lasting prosperity. Taxes and federal budgets reflected the cost, while Americans argued over whether spending on weapons reduced funds for other needs. The rivalry thus boosted some jobs and technical fields even as it committed the country to costly long-term military readiness.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the Berlin airlift and NATO membership show two ways the United States competed politically with the Soviet Union?

2. How did the Marshall Plan link economic competition with growth in the United States?

3. How did the contest for influence and the Soviet launch of Sputnik lead to U.S. spending and jobs beyond cultural exhibitions?

4. Describe one economic benefit and one economic cost of increased U.S. military spending during the Cold War.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five- or six-sentence recommendation to a U.S. policymaker in 1960. Propose one cultural, one economic, and one political action different from the passage's examples, then explain one likely effect on U.S. military growth and one on economic growth.

ANSWER KEY

Cold War Ripples

HIGH SCHOOL · 9-12.US2.23

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one cultural, one economic, and one political way the United States competed with the Soviet Union. Circle two effects on U.S. military or economic growth, then write matching numbers beside each effect and the competition that helped cause it. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Berlin airlift and NATO membership show two ways the United States competed politically with the Soviet Union?	**The airlift kept West Berlin supplied despite the Soviet blockade. Joining NATO pledged the United States to defend its members.**
2	How did the Marshall Plan link economic competition with growth in the United States?	**U.S. aid helped European economies recover, rebuilding markets for American goods.**
3	How did the contest for influence and the Soviet launch of Sputnik lead to U.S. spending and jobs beyond cultural exhibitions?	**The powers used cultural displays to win admirers. Sputnik raised fears about missile technology, prompting support for science education and NASA; universities and aerospace firms gained funding and skilled jobs.**
4	Describe one economic benefit and one economic cost of increased U.S. military spending during the Cold War.	**Defense contracts created factory jobs and helped industries grow. Weapons spending also cost taxpayers money and could reduce funds for other needs.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would fund exchanges that bring Soviet and American students into each other's classrooms. I would offer low-interest loans for water projects in newly independent countries, with contracts open to U.S. pump makers. I would ask Soviet leaders to negotiate limits on missile deployments with inspections. The loans could create orders and jobs for U.S. factories while offering another way to gain influence abroad. If inspections made both sides more secure, missile limits could slow the growth of U.S. weapons spending, though the military would still need to prepare for threats.

Accept other passage-supported cause-and-effect explanations in Part 2. For Part 3, accept plausible proposals that differ from the passage's examples and explain both a military and an economic effect.