After the War

Trace how World War II reshaped power and sparked Cold War tensions.

MWH.C.7.1 "Evaluate the effects of World War II including the origins and escalation of the Cold War. Explain the major consequences of World War II, including physical and economic destruction, civilian loss of life..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two effects of World War II, circle two differences between the Cold War blocs, and number two events that raised tensions. Use your marks to trace how the war led to new conflicts.

From Ruins to Rivalry

1. In 1945, ruined streets and shattered factories marked much of Europe and Asia. Tens of millions of civilians had died, and millions more had fled or been expelled, including ethnic Germans forced from parts of eastern Europe. Rebuilding drained European governments, while demands for independence weakened their colonial empires. The United States emerged with a powerful economy; the Soviet Union emerged with a vast army in eastern Europe. Both became superpowers, and nuclear weapons raised the stakes of any future conflict.

2. Their wartime alliance gave way to a contest over Europe's future. The United States and its Western allies generally favored multiparty elections and private enterprise; Soviet leaders imposed one-party governments and state-directed economies on eastern satellites. The "Iron Curtain" named this division. The United Nations offered a forum for diplomacy, but NATO and the Warsaw Pact organized rival military alliances. Countries in the Non-Aligned Movement sought independence from both blocs rather than joining either side's military camp.

3. In 1948, Soviet forces blocked land routes into West Berlin; Western planes supplied the city until the blockade ended in 1949. The 1956 Suez Canal Crisis exposed Britain's and France's declining power when U.S. and Soviet pressure helped force their withdrawal from Egypt. That year, Soviet troops crushed an uprising in Hungary. Later protests in Poland and Czechoslovakia also challenged Soviet control. Together, these crises showed that superpower rivalry and declining colonial power shaped conflicts across Europe and beyond.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the war shift power away from European countries?

2. How did political and economic differences help divide Europe?

3. How did the UN's role differ from the roles of NATO and the Warsaw Pact?

4. How did the Berlin Blockade and Suez Crisis reveal different postwar power struggles?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine advising a newly independent country in 1956. In four sentences, recommend joining a military bloc or remaining non-aligned, using two different facts from the passage and explaining one trade-off.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two effects of World War II, circle two differences between the Cold War blocs, and number two events that raised tensions. Use your marks to trace how the war led to new conflicts. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the war shift power away from European countries?	**European governments faced costly rebuilding and weakening colonial empires, while the United States gained economic power and the Soviet Union held a vast army in eastern Europe.**
2	How did political and economic differences help divide Europe?	**Western allies generally favored multiparty elections and private enterprise, while Soviet leaders imposed one-party rule and state-directed economies on eastern satellites.**
3	How did the UN's role differ from the roles of NATO and the Warsaw Pact?	**The UN provided a forum for diplomacy; NATO and the Warsaw Pact were rival military alliances.**
4	How did the Berlin Blockade and Suez Crisis reveal different postwar power struggles?	**The blockade tested Western access to West Berlin, which the West maintained by air. Suez exposed the declining power of Britain and France when U.S. and Soviet pressure helped force their withdrawal from Egypt.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would advise our new country to remain non-aligned. The Suez Crisis shows that Britain and France could no longer act without pressure from the superpowers. NATO and the Warsaw Pact were rival military alliances, so avoiding both might keep us out of their disputes. The trade-off is that we might have less protection if another country attacks.

Accept either recommendation if the student supports it with two distinct passage facts and explains a plausible trade-off. For question 4, accept answers that contrast the struggle over access to West Berlin with the decline of British and French power at Suez.