

Ideas Behind Iron Curtain

Compare self-governance and economic choices during the Cold War.

USII.7.c "describing the differences between a communist nation and a democratic nation including, but not limited to self-governance and economic philosophy;"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details about self-governance in a democratic nation, circle two details about self-governance in the Soviet Union, and number two economic differences 1 and 2.

Two Systems, Two Ideas

- ① During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union represented competing ideas about government and the economy. The United States was a democratic nation. Citizens voted in regular elections and could support different political parties. They elected leaders who made many public decisions. The Soviet Union was governed by the Communist Party. One party held political power, and citizens did not choose among competing parties in free national elections. These differences shaped how people could take part in governing their country.
- ② In a democratic nation, people often owned farms, shops, and factories. Businesses decided what to produce and what prices to charge, although governments could set rules and provide services. This mixed-market system allowed consumers to choose among goods. In the Soviet command economy, the state owned most major businesses and farmland. Government planners set production goals and prices. Workers had jobs, but they had little control over the larger economic choices. Shortages could occur when planners did not match what people needed.
- ③ These systems affected everyday life. An American family might compare products from several stores and vote for candidates from different parties. A Soviet family might receive goods made by state-run factories and live under leaders chosen within the Communist Party. Democratic governments can disagree about laws and economic rules, and communist governments have varied over time. Still, self-governance and economic control were key contrasts between the two Cold War rivals. Studying both helps explain why their competition was also a contest of ideas.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did citizens take part in self-governance in the United States, and how was this different in the Soviet Union?

2 Compare who owned major businesses and farmland in the two economic systems.

3 Who made major production and price decisions in the Soviet command economy?

4 According to the passage, why could shortages occur in the Soviet command economy?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Make a two-row comparison table in your own words. In one row, compare how each system chose national leaders, and in the other row, compare how each system would decide how a new factory operates.

TOPIC	DEMOCRATIC NATION	COMMUNIST NATION

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline two details about self-governance in a democratic nation, circle two details about self-governance in the Soviet Union, and number two economic differences 1 and 2. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did citizens take part in self-governance in the United States, and how was this different in the Soviet Union?	U.S. citizens voted in regular elections and could support different parties. In the Soviet Union, the Communist Party held power, and citizens did not choose among competing parties in free national elections.
2	Compare who owned major businesses and farmland in the two economic systems.	In the democratic nation, people often owned farms, shops, and factories. In the Soviet command economy, the state owned most major businesses and farmland.
3	Who made major production and price decisions in the Soviet command economy?	Government planners set production goals and prices.
4	According to the passage, why could shortages occur in the Soviet command economy?	Shortages could occur when government planners did not match production to what people needed.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

TOPIC	DEMOCRATIC NATION	COMMUNIST NATION
Choosing national leaders	Citizens vote for leaders and may support different parties.	The Communist Party holds power, so citizens do not choose among competing parties in free national elections.
Operating a new factory	Private owners and businesses can decide what to make and what prices to charge.	The state owns major factories, and government planners set production goals and prices.

Accept equivalent descriptions of voting, competing political parties, private ownership, state ownership, and government planning. For the table, accept accurate comparisons stated in the student's own words.