The Cold War Begins

- The United States and the Soviet Union became fierce political rivals after World War II because Stalin feared the capitalist West and the U.S. leaders feared communism.
- The Truman Doctrine, a U.S. policy, supported giving aid to countries threatened by Communist expansion.
- The United States sought to prevent the spread of communism through a policy of containment.
- The Marshall Plan provided U.S. aid to Europe to spur economic recovery and therefore help resist Communist aggression.
- The division of Germany, the Berlin Wall, and a growing arms race were results of political divisions and tensions between the West and the Soviet Union.
- Alliances such as NATO and the Warsaw Pact were formed as countries chose to support the United States or the Soviet Union.

China After World War II

- Mao Zedong led the Communists to victory in the 1945 civil war, and the Nationalists fled to Taiwan.
- To speed up economic growth, Mao began the Great Leap Forward in which collective farms were combined into vast communes, but the plan was an economic disaster and 15 million people died of starvation.

Cold War Conflicts

- Cold War tensions between the Soviet Union, China, and the United States led to the Korean War.
- As with Korea, the United States sent troops to Vietnam to keep the Communist regime in the north from invading and gaining control of the non-Communist south.
- The U.S. government feared that if the Communists succeeded in Vietnam, other Asian countries would fall to communism; this was known as the domino theory.
- The U.S. government considered the totalitarian regime in Cuba a threat to national security.
- Soviet ships carried missiles to Cuba; President Kennedy ordered a blockade instead of a military invasion, narrowly averting a nuclear war.