***Cold War***

**Berlin Airlift**

The Berlin Airlift could be called the first battle of the [Cold War](http://www.ducksters.com/history/cold_war/summary.php). It was when western countries delivered much needed food and supplies to the city of Berlin through the air because all other routes were blocked by the Soviet Union.

**After World War II**
At the end of World War II the country of [Germany](http://www.ducksters.com/geography/country.php?country=Germany) was divided by the [Allies](http://www.ducksters.com/history/world_war_ii/ww2_allied_powers.php) into four zones. Great Britain, France, the United States, and the Soviet Union each controlled a different zone. The capital of Germany, Berlin, was located in the Soviet Union zone, but control of this city was also split into four zones between the four countries.

**Tensions Between the East and West**
With the war over, tensions began to mount between the democratic countries of the west and the communist countries controlled by the Soviet Union of the east. The west was determined to stop the spread of communism and the [Marshall Plan](http://www.ducksters.com/history/world_war_ii/ww2_recovery_marshall_plan.php) (plan provided economic aid to help rebuild Western Europe after WW II) and the Truman Doctrine (pledge to help those countries who want to remain democratic) made this clear.

The west also wanted the country of Germany to be united under one democratic government. The Soviet Union didn't want this. Soon the two sides were at odds over the future of Germany. The west introduced a new currency called the Deutsche Mark, but the Soviets refused to use it in their zone.

**Blockading Berlin**
The city of Berlin was an island in the middle of the Soviet controlled zone. The west sent supplies there via railroads and roads. However, the Soviets wanted total control of Berlin. They figured if they cut off Berlin from their external supplies and food, then it would fall under their control.

On June 24, 1948 the Soviets blocked all rail and road traffic to Berlin. They cut off the electricity coming from the Soviet part of the city. They halted all traffic going in and out of the city. The only way in was to fly.

**Running Out of Food**
When the blockade first started, the city of Berlin had around 36 days worth of food. They also needed tons of coal for energy and other items such as medical supplies.

**The Airlift**
Without going to war or giving up the city of Berlin, the only option the western countries had was to try and fly in all the supplies. This was a huge task. There were over two million people living in the city at the time. The army estimated that it would take over 1500 tons of food each day to keep them alive.

The Soviets did not believe that an airlift would work. They felt that the people of Berlin would eventually give up.

Over the next ten months the United States and Great Britain flew around 277,000 thousand flights into Berlin. They carried over 2.3 million tons of supplies into the city. On May 12, 1949 the Soviet Union stopped the blockade and the airlift was over.

**Interesting Facts about the Berlin Airlift**

* After the airlift Germany was split into two separate countries, the German Democratic Republic in the east (controlled by the Soviet Union) and the Federal Republic of Germany in the west.
* The city of Berlin was also divided in half, with East Germany eventually building the Berlin Wall to keep people from defecting.
* The Soviets introduced their own currency into Germany called the Ostmark.

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* Around 65% of the cargo was coal. Coal was tough to airlift because of all the dust. After hauling coal for 1,000 hours, planes would weigh 100 pounds more just from all the dust.
* To make the turnaround in Berlin more efficient, flight crews were not allowed to leave their planes when they landed. Jeeps would drive out to the planes and bring them snacks.
* To help with moral in the city, pilots would drop candy attached to little parachutes over Berlin. This was called "operation little vittles". Over three tons of candy was dropped by the end of the airlift.

**Arms Race**

During the [Cold War](http://www.ducksters.com/history/cold_war/summary.php) the United States and the Soviet Union became engaged in a nuclear arms race. They both spent billions and billions of dollars trying to build up huge stockpiles of nuclear weapons. Near the end of the Cold War the Soviet Union was spending around 27% of its total gross national product on the military. This was crippling to their economy and helped to bring an end to the Cold War.


Soviet and United States build up of nuclear weapons

**The Nuclear Bomb**
The United States was the first to develop the [nuclear weapons](http://www.ducksters.com/history/world_war_ii/ww2_atomic_bomb.php) through the Manhattan Project during World War II. The US ended the war with Japan by dropping nuclear bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Nuclear bombs are extremely powerful weapons that can destroy an entire city and kill tens of thousands of people. The only time nuclear weapons have been used in war was at the end of World War II against Japan. The Cold War was predicated on the fact that neither side wanted to engage in a nuclear war that could destroy much of the civilized world.

**Start of the Arms Race**
On August 29, 1949 the Soviet Union successfully tested its first atomic bomb. The world was shocked. They did not think the Soviet Union was this far along in their nuclear development. The Arms Race had begun.

In 1952 the United States detonated the first hydrogen bomb. This was an even more powerful version of the nuclear bomb. The Soviets followed up by exploding their first hydrogen bomb in 1953.

**ICBMs**
In the 1950s both countries worked on developing Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles or ICBMs. These missiles could be launched from long range, as far away as 3,500 miles.

**Defense**
As both sides continued to develop new and more powerful weapons, the fear of what would happen if war broke out spread throughout the world. Militaries began to work on defenses such as large radar arrays to tell if a missile had been launched. They also worked on defense missiles that could shoot down ICBMs.

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At the same time people built bomb shelters and underground bunkers where they could hide in the case of nuclear attack. Deep underground facilities were built for high ranking government officials where they could reside safely.

**Mutual Assured Destruction**
One of the major factors in the Cold War was termed Mutual Assured Destruction or MAD. This meant that both countries could destroy the other country in the case of attack. It wouldn't matter how successful the first strike was, the other side could still retaliate and destroy the country which first attacked. For this reason, neither side ever used nuclear weapons. The cost was too high.


Missile fired from a submarine

**Other Countries Involved**
During the Cold War, three other nations also developed the nuclear bomb and had their own nuclear weapons. These included [Great Britain](http://www.ducksters.com/geography/country.php?country=United%20Kingdom), [France](http://www.ducksters.com/geography/country.php?country=France), and the [People's Republic of China](http://www.ducksters.com/geography/country.php?country=China).

**Détente and Arms Reduction Talks**
As the Arms Race heated up, it became very expensive for both countries. In the early 1970s both sides realized that something had to give. The two sides began to talk and take a softer line towards each other. This easing of relations was called détente.

In order to try and slow down the Arms Race, the countries agreed to reduce arms through the SALT I and SALT II agreements. SALT stood for Strategic Arms Limitation Talks.

**End of the Arms Race**
For the most part, the Arms Race came to an end with the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War in 1991.

**Interesting Facts about the Arms Race**

* The Manhattan Project was top secret, even Vice President Truman didn't learn about it until he became president. However, Soviet Union leader Joseph Stalin's spies were so good, he knew all about it.
* The US B-52 bomber could fly 6,000 miles and deliver a nuclear bomb.
* It is estimated that by 1961 there were enough nuclear bombs built to destroy the world.
* Today India, Pakistan, North Korea, and Israel also have nuclear capability.

**Space Race**

During the [Cold War](http://www.ducksters.com/history/cold_war/summary.php) the United States and the Soviet Union engaged a competition to see who had the best technology in space. This included such events as who could put the first manned spacecraft into orbit and who would be the first to

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walk on the Moon. The Space Race was considered important because it showed the world which country had the best science, technology, and economic system.

**The Race Begins**
After World War II both the United States and the Soviet Union realized how important rocket research would be to the military. They each recruited the top rocket scientists from Germany to help with their research. Soon both sides were making progress in rocket technology.

The Space Race began in 1955 when both countries announced that they would soon be launching satellites into orbit. The Soviets took the US announcement as a challenge and even established a commission whose goal was to beat the US in putting a satellite into space.

On October 4, 1957 the Russians placed the first successful satellite into orbit. It was called Sputnik I. The Russians had taken the lead in the Space Race. The Americans successfully launched their first satellite four months later called the Explorer I.

**The First Man in Orbit**
The Soviets again won the race for putting the first man into space. On April 12, 1961 Yuri Gagarin was the first man to orbit the Earth in the spacecraft Vostok I. Three weeks later the US launched the Freedom 7 and Alan Shepherd became the first American in space. Shepherd's craft did not orbit the Earth, however. It was nearly a year later on February 20, 1962 when the first American, John Glenn, orbited the Earth on the Friendship 7 spacecraft.

**Race to the Moon**
The Americans were embarrassed at being behind the Space Race. In 1961 President Kennedy went to congress and announced that he wanted to be the first to put a man on the Moon. He felt this was important for the country and the western world. The Apollo Moon program was launched.

**The Gemini Program**
In conjunction with the Apollo program the US launched the Gemini program which would develop technology for use on the Apollo spacecraft. Under the Gemini program the Americans learned how to change the orbit of a spacecraft, spent significant time in orbit to learn how the human body would be affected, brought two spacecraft together in a rendezvous in space, and also went on the first space walks outside of a space craft.

**Man on the Moon**
After many years of experiments, test flights, and training the Apollo 11 spacecraft was launched into space on July 16, 1969. The crew included astronauts [Neil Armstrong](http://www.ducksters.com/biography/explorers/neil_armstrong.php), Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins. The trip to the Moon took three days.

Upon arriving Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin moved to the Lunar module, called the Eagle, and began their descent to the Moon. There were some malfunctions and Armstrong had to land the module manually. On July 20, 1969 the Eagle landed on the Moon. Neil Armstrong stepped outside and became the first man to walk on the Moon. With his first step on the Moon, Armstrong said "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind".

**The End of the Space Race**
With the Gemini and Apollo programs the US had taken a huge lead in the Space Race. In July of 1975 with relations between the US and the Soviet Union beginning to thaw, the first US-Soviet joint mission occurred with the Apollo-Soyez project. The Space Race was effectively over.

**Interesting Facts about the Space Race**

* The Russians called their space pilots cosmonauts meaning "sailors of the universe". The Americans were called astronauts meaning "star sailors".

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* Before Kennedy was assassinated, the Russians and the Americans were discussing working together to put a man on the Moon. After he was killed, the Russians backed off the joint venture.
* The US would likely have had the first satellite in orbit if they had been allowed to use military rockets from the start. However, Eisenhower was worried he would be called a warmonger if he used military rockets for space. He told the scientists they must use research rockets instead.
* The Space Race was not a long series of successes. Both sides had plenty of failures including crashes and explosions that resulted in the death of several astronauts.

**Cuban Missile Crisis**

The Cuban Missile Crisis occurred in 1962 when the Soviet Union began to install nuclear missiles in [Cuba](http://www.ducksters.com/geography/country.php?country=Cuba). The United States refused to allow this and, after thirteen tense days and many secret negotiations, the Soviet Union agreed to remove the missiles.

This is perhaps the closest that the United States and the Soviet Union came to nuclear war during the Cold War.

**Leading up to the Crisis**
Prior to the crisis the United States had attempted to overthrow [Fidel Castro](http://www.ducksters.com/biography/world_leaders/fidel_castro.php) and the current government of Cuba with the Bay of Pigs invasion. The invasion failed, but it served as a warning to Fidel Castro. Also, the United States had installed several nuclear missile sites in Turkey and Italy with the range to strike Moscow, the capital of the Soviet Union.

As a result, the Soviet Union felt they needed missile sites that could strike at the United States. At the same time the Cuban government wanted protection from the United States. They decided to work together and have the Soviet Union put nuclear missiles in Cuba that could strike most any portion of the USA.

**How the Crisis Began**
On October 14, 1962 an American U-2 spy plane flying over Cuba captured pictures of long range Soviet missiles in Cuba. This was a crisis like never before. These missiles could reach any point of the United States with nuclear warheads causing mass destruction.

[President Kennedy](http://www.ducksters.com/biography/uspresidents/johnfkennedy.php) called a meeting with his main security advisors. They considered a number of options from diplomacy to a full scale attack and invasion on Cuba. The Joint Chiefs of Staff voted to invade. They felt this was the only viable option. However, Kennedy was concerned that this would start World War III between the US and the Soviet Union. He opted to set up a naval blockade.

**Blockade**
Kennedy announced his plan on October 22, 1962. He showed the world the missile bases and said that the United States would be putting Cuba under "quarantine". This meant that no offensive weapons would be allowed to enter Cuba. He also said that any attack on the US from Cuba would be considered an act of war from the Soviet Union.

Over the next several days the crisis became more intense. The Soviet Union said they would not back down. By the 24th, Kennedy believed the US would have to invade Cuba.

**Negotiations**
Although the Soviet Union was publicly saying they would never back down, they were secretly negotiating with the United States. Eventually the two sides reached an agreement. The Soviet Union would remove the missiles from Cuba as long as the United States agreed to never invade Cuba again. In secret, the US also had to agree to remove their nuclear missiles from Turkey and Italy. The crisis was over.

**Results of the Crisis**
The crisis was President Kennedy's greatest moment. After the Bay of Pigs failure and the construction of the Berlin Wall, his leadership had come into question. The world could feel confident in the leader of the United States again.

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**Interesting Facts about the Cuban Missile Crisis**

* The Soviet Union leader at the time, Chairman Nikita Khrushchev, thought that Kennedy was weak because of his decisions at the Bay of Pigs as well as the Berlin Wall. He thought Kennedy would back down and eventually allow the missiles.
* After the crisis a Washington DC to Moscow hotline was established between the president and the leader of Soviet Union.
* The Cuban leader, Fidel Castro, was not happy as he was left out of the negotiations between Kennedy and Khrushchev.
* Not everyone in the US was happy about the outcome. General Curtis LeMay called it the worst defeat in US history.
* Khrushchev wrote a personal letter to President Kennedy during the crisis asking that they come to an agreement in order to avoid war.

