

Britain, the Army and the Cold War: Interactive Timeline Teacher Notes

NATIONAL
ARMY
MUSEUM



Members of the Coldstream Guards during an infantry exercise in Germany, 1977 (c)

Purpose and scope

The interactive timeline explores Britain's position in the Cold War through the role of the Army. From an occupying force tasked with rebuilding a decimated Germany with the wartime allies at the end of the Second World War, to a NATO fighting force engaged in constant training – even warfare in Korea – in the face of rising tension with the Soviet Union and the nuclear threat. The timeline features over 100 sources from the National Army Museum's collections including photographs, documents and artefacts, as well as video interviews with British Army of the Rhine veterans discussing Cold War Berlin and the Soviet threat. It is designed to be engaged with on various levels, whether for a chronological overview or for the study of a specific topic, theme or period. Within the timeline's stories, the level of engagement is determined by the user, with the option to read information segments, view objects and play videos, plus access further information through extended captions and links to articles on the National Army Museum website. The timeline can be used by students for both classroom or homework activities, and by teachers looking to further subject knowledge.

Curriculum links

KS4

GCSE knowledge, understanding and method

- *Understanding of the key features and characteristics of the periods studied in relation to second order historical concepts of continuity, change, cause, consequence, significance and similarity and difference within situations*
- *Understanding of the relationships between different aspects within the periods studied, making connections, drawing contrasts and analysing trends. Examples of the related aspects include all or some of the following examples: between local, regional, national and international history; between cultural, economic, social, political, religious and military history; and between short- and long-term timescales*
- *The ability to understand and use critically and constructively a range of contemporary source material appropriate to the period (including written historical sources whose precise provenance is given) to frame their own valid historical questions and make their own valid historical claims*

GCSE unit links

- **Edexcel** – Superpower relations and the Cold War, 1941–91
- **AQA** – Conflict and tension between East and West, 1945–1972, Conflict and tension in Asia, 1950–1975
- **OCR A** – International Relations: the changing international order 1918–1975, Germany 1925–1955: The People and the State, War and British Society c.790 to c.2010

KS5

AS and A Level knowledge, skills and understanding

- *Demonstrate their breadth of historical knowledge and understanding by making links and drawing comparisons between different aspects of the period, society or theme studied*
- *Demonstrate their understanding of key historical terms and historical concepts, such as change, continuity, causation, consequence and significance*
- *Analyse and evaluate the causes and consequences of historical events and situations, and changes and developments in the periods and/or themes studied*
- *Use historical sources critically in their context, deploying appropriate information and reaching substantiated conclusions*

AS and A Level unit links

- **Edexcel** – Russia, 1917–91: from Lenin to Yeltsin, The German Democratic Republic, 1949–90, Germany and West Germany, 1918–89, In search of the American Dream: the USA, c1917–96, Germany and West Germany, 1918–89, Germany, 1871–1990: united, divided and reunited, The making of modern Russia, 1855–1991
- **AQA** – Tsarist and Communist Russia, 1855–1964, The making of a Superpower: USA, 1865–1975, The quest for political stability: Germany, 1871–1991, Revolution and dictatorship: Russia, 1917–1953, The American Dream: reality and illusion, 1945–1980, The Cold War, c1945–1991, The Crisis of Communism: The USSR and the Soviet Empire, 1953–2000

- **OCR A** – Britain 1930–1997, Democracy and Dictatorships in Germany 1919–1963, The Cold War in Asia 1945–1993, The Cold War in Europe 1941–1995, Russia and its Rulers 1855–1964, From Colonialism to Independence: The British Empire 1857–1965

Suggested uses

Contexts

- Research tasks
- Source analysis activities
- Teacher exposition

Focus

- Post-war Germany: allied victory, de-Nazification, division into zones of occupation, Churchill
- Outbreak of the Cold War: Berlin blockade and airlift, NATO, West and East Germany
- Britain's role in the Korean War
- Escalating tensions: Warsaw Pact, nuclear threat, construction of the Berlin Wall, life in Berlin
- Détente and flashpoints: talks, Afghanistan, Olympic boycotts, Thatcher
- End of the Cold War: dissolution of the Soviet Union, fall of the Berlin Wall, post-Cold War conflict