

The Cold War and McCarthyism

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1. Work in pairs. Read the text on the Cold War and then make questions, using the phrases in bold. The first question has been done for you.

Text A

The Cold War

The term 'Cold War' is used to describe the relationship between America and the Soviet Union from 1945 to 1980. It was a period of conflict, tension and rivalry between the world's two superpowers. (1) **Neither side fought the other** – the consequences would be too terrible – but they did fight for their beliefs using other countries. For example, in (2) **the Vietnam war in the 1960s and 1970s**, (3) **South Vietnam was against the Communists and supported by America**. North Vietnam was pro-Communist and fought the south (4) **using weapons from communist Russia or communist China**.

In Afghanistan, the Americans supplied the Afghans with weapons after (5) **the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979**. They never physically involved themselves and so avoided direct conflict with the Soviet Union.

1. Did America and the Soviet Union *fight each other*?
2. When was _____ ?
3. Which country did the USA _____ ?
4. Which countries supplied weapons _____ ?
5. When did the Soviet Union _____ ?

2. In pairs read this text on McCarthyism and make the questions.

Text B

McCarthyism

(1) **The term 'McCarthyism' refers to** a period of strong anti-communist suspicion in the USA that lasted from the late 1940s to the late 1950s. **The word comes from** US Senator Joseph McCarthy who claimed that there were a large number of communists and communist sympathizers within federal government and in public life. His name raised fear throughout the 1950s.

(2) Anyone **suspected of communist sympathies** was investigated and even imprisoned.

(3) **The House of Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC)** tracked down all kinds of people. Many people were sent to jail, and famous actors, writers, teachers and government employees were (4) **blacklisted**, which meant not allowed to work, although there was no real evidence against them. In Russia, the approach was different.

Although its people were much poorer, the Russian powers tried to show the world how great it was, trying to beat the West at everything – in sport, in the space race and in many forms of culture. (5) But both countries **spied intensively on the other**.

1. What does *McCarthyism* mean and where does the word _____?
2. What happened to people _____?
3. What was the _____?
4. What does _____ mean?
5. What did both countries _____?

3. Take turns to interview your partner on the Cold War and McCarthyism.

The Cold War and McCarthyism

Activity

Information gap

Aim

To ask and answer questions about the Cold War and McCarthyism

Interaction

Pairs

Language focus

Key nouns: communism; communist; sympathizer; suspicion

Key verbs: fight, invade, support, involve, avoid, blacklist, spy

Skills focus

Reading; writing; speaking

Preparation

Photocopy one worksheet for each pair of students

Time

30 minutes

Procedure

- 1 Ask the students to work in pairs reading text A and constructing the questions using the words in bold as prompts. Monitor and help as required. In pairs students then complete the questions on the worksheet.
- 2 Repeat this process for text B.
- 3 Tell the pairs of students to decide on who will be student A and who will be student B. Student A then interviews student B on the Cold War, asking the questions they have constructed together from text A.
- 4 Then they swap: student B interviews student A on McCarthyism, asking the questions from text B. Encourage students to provide fairly full answers where they can, using the information they have learnt from the text.

Possible answers

Text A – The Cold War

1 Did America and the Soviet Union ever fight each other?

Answer: No, but they did fight for their beliefs using other countries.

2 When was the Vietnam war?

Answer: In the 1960s and 1970s.

3 Which country did the USA support?

Answer: South Vietnam.

4 Which countries supplied weapons to North Vietnam?

Answer: Russia and China

5 When did the Soviet Union invade Afghanistan?

Answer: In 1979.

Text B – McCarthyism

1 What does McCarthyism mean and where does the word come from?

Answer: The term refers to a period of strong anti-communist suspicion in the USA that lasted from the late 1940s to the late 1950s. The word comes from US Senator Joseph McCarthy.

2 What happened to people suspected of communist sympathies?

Answer: They were investigated and even imprisoned.

3 What was the HUAC?

Answer: The House of Un-American Activities Committee was a government organisation which tracked down all kinds of people suspected of communist sympathies.

4 What does blacklisted mean?

Answer: It means 'not allowed to work'.

5 What did both Russia and the USA do?

Answer: They spied intensively on each other.