

I.E. Weldon Secondary School
International Baccalaureate Program
Grade 12 Twentieth Century Topics

Topic 5: The Cold War

This topic addresses East–West relations from 1945. It aims to promote an international perspective and understanding of the origins, course and effects of the Cold War—a conflict that dominated global affairs from the end of the Second World War to the early 1990s. It includes superpower rivalry and events in all areas affected by Cold War politics such as spheres of interest, wars (proxy), alliances and interference in developing countries.

Major themes

Origins of the Cold War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideological differences • Mutual suspicion and fear • From wartime allies to post-war enemies
Nature of the Cold War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideological opposition • Superpowers and spheres of influence • Alliances and diplomacy in the Cold War
Development and impact of the Cold War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global spread of the Cold War from its European origins • Cold War policies of containment, brinkmanship, peaceful coexistence, détente • Role of the United Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement • Role and significance of leaders • Arms race, proliferation and limitation • Social, cultural and economic impact
End of the Cold War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break-up of Soviet Union: internal problems and external Pressures • Breakdown of Soviet control over Central and Eastern Europe

Material for detailed study

- Wartime conferences: Yalta and Potsdam
- US policies and developments in Europe: Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan, NATO
- Soviet policies, Sovietization of Eastern and Central Europe, COMECON, Warsaw Pact
- Sino–Soviet relations
- US–Chinese relations
- Germany (especially Berlin (1945-61)), Congo (1960-64), Afghanistan (1979-88), Korea, Cuba, Vietnam, Middle East
- Castro, Gorbachev, Kennedy, Mao, Reagan, Stalin, Truman