

BUILDING BLOCK INQUIRY C3 TEACHERS

How does war shape a country's future?

C3 Framework Standard	D2.His.1.9-12. Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.
C3 Teachers Topic, Concept & Skill	★ Era 7:Conflict ★ Perspective ★ Questioning

World War II was a catalyst for many changes to the United States throughout the twentieth century. Those changes have had long lasting effects on the U.S. and throughout the world. In this inquiry, students will predict how World War II shaped the future of the United States politically, socially, economically, and internationally.

Featured Sources

Source A: "The Postwar United States, 1945-1968", *Library of Congress*

Formative Performance Tasks

COLLABORATE	Develop a list of questions historians might ask regarding how war impacts a country.
DELIBERATE	List impacts of World War II on the United States. Sort lists into political, social, economic, and international impacts.
PRODUCE	Predict how World War II shaped the future of the United States.

Teacher Guidance

Class begins with students drafting a list of questions that historians might ask themselves when determining how war might shape a country's future. Next, students read [Source A](#) in pairs using the cause, effect, and connection [reading strategy](#) to list as many impacts from World War II on the United States as possible. Impacts of World War II should go in the "Effects" column. Encourage students to read the text as many times as needed to compile a long list of impacts.

Students then [sort](#) their impacts into political, social, economic, and international impacts. Student pairs then compare their charts with at least one other pair group to discuss similarities and differences using the [protocol](#). Next, students will predict how World War II shaped the future of the United States using the [organizer](#). In their predictions, students should use evidence from their lists of impacts. In addition, students have space to ask questions about impacts of World War II in their predictions. To further the relevance of this exercise, teachers could use student predictions and questions to frame future lessons.

How does war shape a country's future?

Featured Source

Source A: "The Postwar United States, 1945-1968", *Library of Congress*

The entry of the United States into World War II caused vast changes in virtually every aspect of American life. Millions of men and women entered military service and saw parts of the world they would likely never have seen otherwise. The labor demands of war industries caused millions more Americans to move--largely to the Atlantic, Pacific, and Gulf coasts where most defense plants were located. When World War II ended, the United States was in better economic condition than any other country in the world. Even the 300,000 combat deaths suffered by Americans paled in comparison to any other major belligerent.

Building on the economic base left after the war, American society became more affluent in the postwar years than most Americans could have imagined in their wildest dreams before or during the war. Public policy, like the so-called GI Bill of Rights passed in 1944, provided money for veterans to attend college, to purchase homes, and to buy farms. The overall impact of such public policies was almost incalculable, but it certainly aided returning veterans to better themselves and to begin forming families and having children in unprecedented numbers.

Not all Americans participated equally in these expanding life opportunities and in the growing economic prosperity. The image and reality of overall economic prosperity--and the upward mobility it provided for many white Americans--was not lost on those who had largely been excluded from the full meaning of the American Dream, both before and after the war. As a consequence, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and American women became more aggressive in trying to win their full freedoms and civil rights as guaranteed by the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution during the postwar era.

The postwar world also presented Americans with a number of problems and issues. Flushed with their success against Germany and Japan in 1945, most Americans initially viewed their place in the postwar world with optimism and confidence. But within two years of the end of the war, new challenges and perceived threats had arisen to erode that confidence. By 1948, a new form of international tension had emerged--Cold War--between the United States and its allies and the Soviet Union and its allies. The Cold War spawned many tensions between the two superpowers abroad and fears of Communist subversion gripped domestic politics at home.

In the twenty years following 1945, there was a broad political consensus concerning the Cold War and anti-Communism. Usually there was bipartisan support for most US foreign policy initiatives. After the United States intervened militarily in Vietnam in the mid-1960s, however, this political consensus began to break down. By 1968, strident debate among Americans about the Vietnam War signified that the Cold War consensus had shattered, perhaps beyond repair.

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<https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/united-states-history-primary-source-timeline/post-war-united-states-1945-1968/overview/>

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Cause
Why did it happen?

Effect
What happened?

?

Connection
What do I already know about this?
OR What questions do I have about this?



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Impacts of World War II on the United States

Political Impacts	Social Impacts	Economic Impacts	International Impacts

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1. What similarities do you notice between your sorting charts?	
2. What questions and/or connections did you note for these impacts? Do others' connections help answer your questions?	
3. What differences do you notice between your sorting charts?	
4. What causes did you note for these impacts? Are these causes similar? Do the causes align with what category you placed them in?	

How does war shape a country's future?

How does war shape a country's future?
Predict how World War II shaped the future of the United States.

Evidence from ONE category

Evidence from a DIFFERENT category

What questions still remain unanswered from your cause, effect, and connections organizer?