



EXPLORING THE COLD WAR

A GUIDE

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1. A FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This little guide intends to fulfil two purposes: on the one hand, to explain how our [website](#) came to be, in case some of our visitors are teachers interested in replicating the process and creating a website on the Cold War or any other topic. Thus, in sections 3 and 4 you will find a detailed explanation of the objectives we aimed for and the work methodology and procedures we followed.

On the other hand, we would like to offer some guidelines on how to use our [website](#) in the classroom as a resource to make learning about the Cold War more appealing to teenage students. In section 5 you will find the pedagogical principles behind the web structure and some tips on how to make full advantage of all the materials on it, either in teacher-led lessons or to be used by independent learners.

This project would have not been possible without the collaboration of several external agents who offered their training and expertise to both teachers and students. We would like to thank:

- Tomáš Královič, PHD Student, Department of History UKF (Nitra)
- Peter Stehlík, freelance web developer
- Sara Martín Gutiérrez, Doctor in Contemporary History, Universidad Complutense, Madrid
- All the staff of the [Haus der Geschichte](#), both in Berlin and Bonn, with a special mention to Dr. Simone Mergen, Head of the Pedagogical Department, [Haus der Geschichte](#), Bonn

And, last but not least, thanks to the wonderful group of students from our four schools who have been involved in the project for these two years, for their hard work and their enthusiasm.



2. PARTICIPANT SCHOOLS

[GAMO DIANA \(SPAIN\)](#)



Gamo Diana is a state-funded primary and secondary school run by the Catholic order of the Redemptorists in Aluche, Madrid. We aim to prepare our students to be active participants in an ever-changing world, to be critical and committed citizens.

[COLLEGIUM JOSEPHINUM \(GERMANY\)](#)



Collegium Josephinum Bonn is a Catholic secondary school (Gymnasium) for boys only, run by the Catholic order of the Redemptorists, located in the north of Bonn. Focusing on natural sciences, classical and modern languages. The school puts special emphasis on general and Christian education, as well as social projects.

[RYDAL PENRHOS \(WALES, UK\)](#)



Independent School with nursery, primary and secondary provision. The school is a charitable Trust established by the Methodist Church. The school is very international with a significant number of international boarding students coming from over 20 countries, as well as day pupils from the local area.

[SPOJENÁ KATOLICKÁ ŠKOLA \(SLOVAKIA\)](#)



Gymnázium sv. Cyrila a Metoda is a Catholic foundation boarding school with a mix of boarders and day students. The school focuses on natural sciences and modern languages. As a Catholic school we put particular emphasis on the spiritual and moral formation of students and teachers.



3. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

With this project we intended to prepare pupils for an ever-changing multi-cultural world, with complex problems that can only be solved by working together. Within this framework, we set the following objectives:

- To examine the Cold War and its impact on partner countries.
- To produce a [website](#) to be used by schools around the world, elaborated by students for students
- To contribute to our students becoming global citizens, fostering their curiosity about global events and helping them to make connections between the school curriculum and the wider world.
- To make pupils independent learners and to research and select appropriate material to design the [website](#) and the learning materials.
- To use ICTs, working in international groups, and to reflect together on our different experiences and perspectives of our recent past.
- To enhance language skills via translation of learning materials and communication in international groups.
- To investigate history through stories, interviewing direct witnesses from the Cold War era and learning about how much their daily lives were affected by it.
- To produce unbiased teaching resources, overcoming the problem of viewing history from a national perspective by examining the same issues from the point of view of the four partners.
- To enable our students to compare the Cold War era with our present time, looking for similarities and differences so as not to repeat mistakes from the past.



4. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND WORK METHODOLOGY

In September 2017 we started selecting the participants among our 15 -17 students. Then we prepared student profiles (Annexe A) and share them with our partner schools.

Teachers met in Berlin (October 2017) in order to visit some of the historical sites of the Cold War. Furthermore, we were trained by the museum guides on how to present information in a more attractive way. Thus, we learned that museums are visited by three different types of people: “*skimmers*” (they walk quickly through the exhibition, they only pay attention to basic information, they stay “on the surface”); “*swimmers*” (they stop in some parts of the exhibition, they read more information and require longer and deeper texts); and “*divers*” (They take their time to visit the exhibition, they read all the information provided and get in depth in all topics). We decided that we would organize the information in our [web](#) in the same way: a brief summary and an image for our “*skimmers*”, a more detailed article with more images for our “*swimmers*”, and finally a series of links with further information for our “*divers*”.



On these first stages of the project we also decided to include a time line depicting the Cold War most relevant events, and we prepared a [test](#) to assess our students’ previous knowledge on the period. Finally, we announced a competition to design a logo for the Project. The winner would be elected during the first international student meeting.



After these initial guidelines, the project started to develop organically, also taking into account students’ input on what topics to include and how the [web](#) should be designed. In the first international student meeting in Nitra (November 2017), students learned about the historical context of the Cold War and web design. Teachers realised that students lack previous knowledge to fully grasp the different national experiences of the period. Consequently, we decided to meet in national groups to decide which information would



students from other countries need to understand our national history during the Cold War. Then, we mixed students in international groups again so that they could share our different perspectives on that age, which was really rewarding. Moreover, we agreed that we had to include national timelines in our [web](#) too.

We proceeded to organize students in international groups to start collecting information (both written and visual) about the different aspects of the Cold War. Each student chose to work on a political aspect (the Berlin wall, the Cuban missile crisis, the Korean war, the Vietnam war, the uprisings in Eastern Europe and the bloc influence in Africa and Latin America) and a social one (religion, sports, popular culture, counterculture, daily life in communist Europe, space race, espionage, propaganda and censorship, and freedom). The information would be organized according to the “*skimmers, swimmers, divers*” framework; students started working in their teams to write the “*skimmer*” sections of all the topics, and they chose chief editors who would be responsible for the final version of each section. We created a shared file in Google Drive to upload the material and to make its edition and revision easier. At the end of each work session we had a plenary to share the work done and get some feedback.



The rest of the course participant students and teachers met every week or two weeks in our schools to work on the different topics and produce the national timelines. Students looked for, curated and edited information on the topics they had chosen (both political and social) and uploaded them on Google Drive. Each of the teachers involved was responsible for two or three topics, monitoring their progress and communicating both with their students and the international ones. Once the information was revised and edited by the international group and had the teachers’ seal of approval, it passed to another file on Drive so that the students responsible for the web construction knew that was the final draft and the one they would have to upload.



In the second international meeting in Colwyn Bay (June – July 2017), students and teachers revised the work done by the other groups in a second edition process before starting to upload it on the [web](#), which was still under construction itself. We also started working on the guidelines for the following course: teaching materials to make the study of the Cold War more accessible, including games; interviews to Cold War “witnesses”, who gave us a more “personal” view on the experience in the different countries (“To History through stories”); and a selection of objects to represent diverse aspects of the era, which could serve as “hooks” to start surfing our [web](#).

In September 2018 we started selecting a new group of 15-year-old students to join the second year of the project. In the third international meeting in Madrid (November 2018), we focused on producing games about the different topics on our [web](#). During the process of producing these games, a new group of students had the chance to read the [web](#) content thoroughly, therefore allowing us to continue editing the information on the political and social topics. This work would continue throughout the whole week, with plenary sessions interspersed so that we could check on what every group were doing and give some useful feedback as a whole group.





One of these proposals was working on the interviews and objects sections in national groups, in order to be more efficient. The idea that our students are able to learn about the past from a more personal perspective (*"To History through stories"*) is at the heart of our project, so before starting to talk with Cold War witnesses, we received some useful training on how to make good interviews about historical events (Annexes B and C)

During the rest of the course we looked for good stories, interviewed the students' grandparents, former teachers, some public figures..., edited and transcribed the interviews, put English subtitles and uploaded them on our [web](#). We also gathered a collection of objects relevant to the Cold War era in each of our countries, as a way to get our students closer to the way people used to live then.



Finally, in the closing meeting in Bonn (June – July 2019), we officially presented our [web](#) in the [Haus der Geschichte](#). We had been preparing the whole week, giving the finishing touches and rehearsing with the students of the hosting school. Our big day started with a [flashmob](#) of the EU anthem, the "Ode to Joy" by Beethoven. Later we had the official presentation with Dr. Simone Mergen, Head of the Pedagogical Department of the Museum, and the presence of two of our schools' headmasters, CoJoBo and Gamo Diana.

Our students explained the different sections on our [web](#) to the visitors, just as we had rehearsed the previous day. It was really satisfying to see how proudly they talked about their work. We also handed out badges with the project logo and flyers with a link to our [web](#) (Annexe D). After a morning of hard work, Kathrin Esswein, representing the [German national agency](#), warmly congratulated us: "You nailed it!"



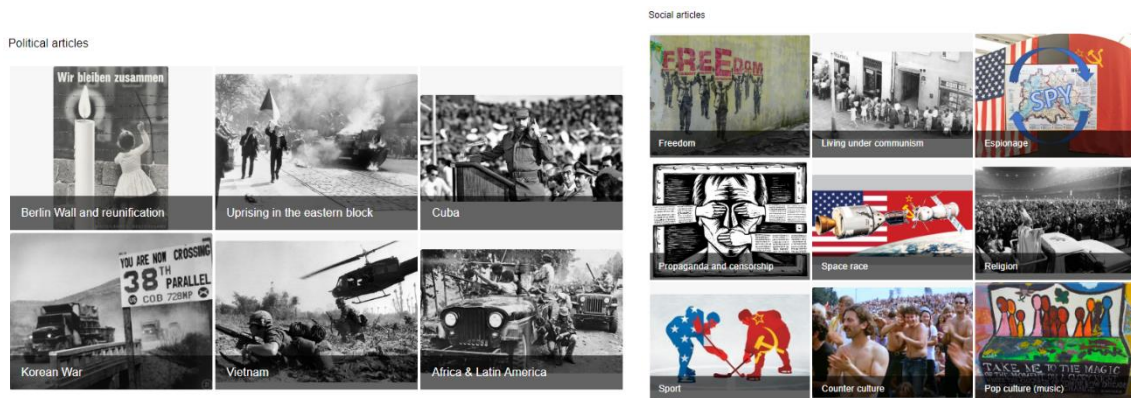


5. THE WEBSITE:



Our [web](#) opens with a welcome page which promises that with a quick look you can learn about the Cold War in five minutes (evidently we expect our visitors to spend much more time on our [web](#)!) Then there is a main menu with the project logo, a brief definition of the Cold War and the four main sections: TOPICS, RESOURCES, GAMES AND TIMELINES.

a. TOPICS



If we click on the section [TOPICS](#), there is a menu with all the political and social articles, identified with an image. All the articles are structured in the same way. Let's take the topic "[Sports](#)" as an example.

Sport



During the Cold War, nations used sports to promote their political, social, and economic development. Between the end of World War II and the collapse of Communism, "Cold War sport" went beyond the bipolar USA-USSR rivalry to also include Africa, Asia, and Latin America. With success and failure measured every four years at the Olympic Games, sport assumed more significance during the Cold War than at any other time in its history.

As we have already explained in section 4, the organization of our [web](#) revolves around the principle that people have different ways to Access information on a topic. There are people who only need a general view, a short summary, a significant image. They are the "*skimmers*", and we had them in mind when we thought of the introduction of each article.

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Other people (the “*swimmers*”) require longer and deeper texts. In this case, a subsection of the article analyses the impact of the match between the USA and USSR ice hockey national teams during the 1980 Winter Olympics.

Miracle on ice

Miracle On Ice was the match between the teams of the USSR and the USA at the 1980 Winter Olympics. The fact that this match was not, indeed, a final, emphasises the rivalry between the two superpowers, as the match was a major media event nonetheless, despite the countries having to play further matches against other teams in order to actually secure medals. The reason that this match was deemed so significant was probably due to the fact that the highly praised Soviet team had been checked.

Following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the USA emerged victorious from the match, which served as a major morale booster for citizens of the USA.



Picture 2: The United States hockey team celebrates after their victory. (Source: nhl.com)

Finally, the “*divers*” take their time, read all the information provided, and go through all the topics in depth. We thought of them when we included the series of links with further information at the end of each topic. For instance, the first link we find in the sports article is a [video](#) of the final minute of the aforementioned hockey match.

For further information see these links:

- [Miracle on ice](#)
- [Red Army, the story of the Soviet Union's famed Red Army hockey team through the eyes of its players](#)
- [Miracle, the story of Herb Brooks, the player-turned-coach who led the 1980 U.S. Olympic hockey team to victory](#)
- [Timeline](#)
- [1952-1992 Olympics](#)
- [A podcast on sports in the Cold War](#)
- [A podcast on how the Cold War created doping](#)
- [Statistics and Facts about Olympics during the Cold War](#)
- [Advanced/In-Depth Walkthrough of sports during the Cold War](#)

b. TIMELINES


When you click on the section [TIMELINES](#), an international timeline appears. There is also a header menu where you can access the national timelines by clicking on the different countries.

Timelines

International 🌐 Wales 🇬🇧 Germany 🇩🇪 Slovakia 🇸🇰 Spain 🇪🇸



International timeline

A short chronology of the battle of the superpowers

Events	Explanation	Pictures
1945 – Nuclear scare	The USA drops 2 nuclear bombs in Japan. The new weapon characterizes the Cold War.	

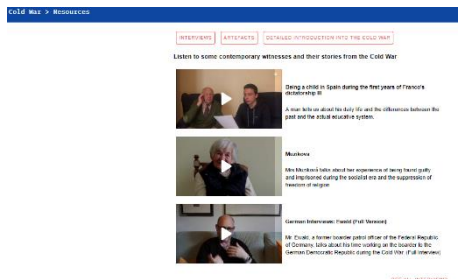
German timeline

A short chronology of the battle of the superpowers

Events	Explanation	Pictures
July 17th – August 2nd, 1945 – Potsdam Conference	After the war Germany and its capital Berlin is divided into four zones. They are directed by military governors of the victorious powers USA, GB, F, USSR.	
June 24th, 1948 – May 1949 – Berlin Blockade	Russia's response to the merge of the partitions of Berlin. All roads and rail links to that sector are cut. Therefore, the inhabitants of Berlin have no access to food supplies and faced starvation. The Berlin Airlift brings food to West Berlin with permanent flights of British and US-American airplanes.	

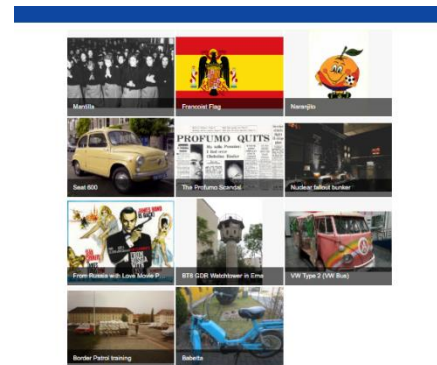


c. RESOURCES:

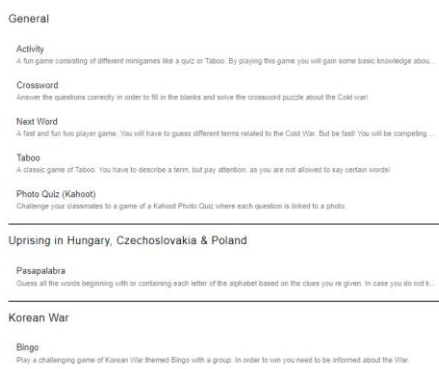


Within the section [RESOURCES](#) we can find to two subsections which try to get us closer to the reality of the era from a more personal, daily-life perspective. Thus, we have gathered testimonies from several witnesses to the Cold War (To History through stories), who recount their first-hand experience of different aspects of the period: the partition of Germany, the religious repression in Eastern Europe countries, the space race and the man landing on the Moon, the lack of freedom in Spain during General Franco's dictatorship, the fear to a nuclear war...

We have also collected a series of objects or places from our countries which we could consider "iconic". For example, the typical cars from Spain and Eastern Germany, or the motorcycle from Czechoslovakia, which are perfectly recognizable by the population from those countries, brings us closer to the social and economic reality of those days, so different from ours.



d. GAMES



Finally, in the section [GAMES](#) we find games related to the Cold War in general, and also to many of the political and social topics. There are several kinds of quizzes and contests, word soups, crosswords, Kahoots, a bingo, boardgames..., all of them created by our students. According to their level of difficulty and the topic addressed, they can be used either as preliminary activities or as a review after working with the [web](#).



e. SOME SUGGESTIONS

As we have already mentioned, the [web](#) can be used by independent learners, as reference material for an assignment, for example; of course, it is also devised so that it can be used for teacher-led instruction in the classroom.

One possible approach could be to start by showing students the images from the presentation page, without the topic names, so that they try to guess what the photos refer to and have a brainstorm about topics and main actors of the Cold War. A similar activity would be using the objects images, so that they try to guess which country they are from and why they are on the [web](#). After that, the lesson could proceed with a more detailed work on the different sections on the [web](#).

If it is the case that our visitors are not from the partner schools countries, it would be very interesting to produce their own national time, similar to the ones on our [web](#); moreover, they could also look for iconic objects from their country, and even interview some witness to the era who could represent their national perspective on the Cold War.

On the other hand, the games on our [web](#) are an excellent way to review the contents of a written test. Some of them could even be used as assessment tools, such as the Kahoots.

Finally, we find it incredibly enriching that there is the possibility of going in-depth and discussing the similarities and differences between the communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the dictatorship of General Franco in Spain. This is mainly enabled by the interviews, which deal with the lack of freedom, the repression, the isolation from Western Europe, the media control, the role of religion..., all of them fascinating topics for debate and to extract valuable lessons for the future.



6. CONTACT

If you need more information on any aspect of the project, please contact us:

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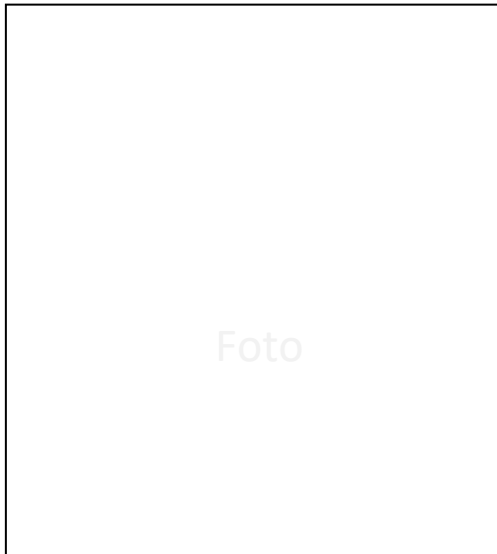


7. ANNEXES

- A. STUDENT'S PROFILE
- B. INTERVIEW CONSENT
- C. INTERVIEW GUIDELINES
- D. MUSEUM PRESENTATION FLYER



Personal Profile



First name:

Last name:

Date of birth:

City of residence:

Sisters and brothers:

Pet(s):

School:

Grade:

My favourite subjects are:

Freetime:

My hobbies:

What I also like to do...:

What I'm interested in:

My motto in life:

What is also important to me:



Interview consent form

Interviewer: please **Read Out** before the interview

The purpose of this interview is to help bring the period of history known as The Cold War to life via the stories of those who lived through that era. The recordings are taken as part of an Erasmus+ project on The Cold War

Videos and transcripts will be available for school pupils to use in learning about the era and the content will be accessed via our YouTube Channel.

I hereby consent that I am aware of how the recording may be used in schools and give my consent for the interview to be hosted online for use by schools in teaching History. I can withdraw my consent at any time.

Full Name.....

Signed Date dd/mm/yyyy/...../.....

Record of collected data

Place of interview	
Main topic covered/context	
Age at the moment of the event being discussed	
Place of birth/Nationality	
What was your role/function/job title at the time of the event being discussed	



INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

About interviews and oral history

- Memories change, they are a construction of the past
- Memory is a highly reliable source of history (oral history)
- Remembering the past is often influenced by current situation (political, economic, social)
- Written history is not the only real history (it is normally done by people in power)

Before the interview

- An interview needs to be prepared
 - ◆ Know the person's context (childhood, political system they lived in, other social circumstances)
 - ◆ Find some other historical sources from the time they lived in
- Do not ask about sensitive topics directly
 - ◆ Dialogue with scripted topics
 - ◆ E.g. childhood: not ask about facts directly, ask them to talk about their childhood and they will narrate
- How to contact the interviewed person?
 - ◆ Tell them about the purpose of the interview (Erasmus+ project)
 - ◆ What will it be about?
 - ◆ How will it be done?
- Prepare technical advice beforehand
 - ◆ Video camera is the best → body language & spoken information
- Choose a comfortable place for the interview (their home?)
 - ◆ Good lighting
 - ◆ Quiet and comfortable atmosphere

During the interview

- Interviewed person needs to sign a form
 - ◆ Make clear how the interview will be used
- Collect background information about interviewed person
 - ◆ School, jobs, political party
- Open questions, simple language, daily life
- Memory has gender (Different circumstances in life, different questions to ask)
 - ◆ E.g. mothers relate dates of events to family history
 - Were they married?
 - What about children and their situation?



- Family life is more important than dates
- ◆ E.g. men will rather remember dates
 - People in power in history
 - No connection to family needed
- Be brave enough to also ask about difficult topics
- Be flexible
 - ◆ Spontaneous change of topic is possible
 - ◆ Try to lead back to topic but without pressure
- Rhythm of interview is normally slow
 - ◆ Taking time to remember
 - ◆ There can be pauses
 - ◆ The interviewed can get emotional when remembering
- Take no more than an hour or one and a half hour
 - ◆ People lose attention
 - ◆ Memory changes?
- Finish the interview not abruptly (Thank them, say goodbye, make them feel comfortable with the interview)

After an interview

- Memories can be wrong
 - ◆ Self-censorship
 - ◆ Painful memories
 - ◆ People may not want to open their whole self to you
- Memories are not objective
 - ◆ Recreation of the past from a specific point of view
 - ◆ Compare with other sources
- Transcript the interview
 - ◆ Choose important parts of the interview
 - ◆ People tend to narrate too much unimportant things
- Interpretation of transcript
 - ◆ Search for other sources from that time
 - ◆ Do not generalize → compare sources
 - ◆ Contrast it with social normality at that time
 - ◆ Valuable actions?



Exploring the most important facts about the Cold War in just 5 minutes — how does that work?

Next to short and compact basic facts you'll find deeper going information, interviews with witnesses, historical objects, games, timelines...

Developed for pupils by an international group of pupils.
Developed in an Erasmus-plus-Project by schools from Bonn, Madrid, Wales and Slovakia.

* <http://cold-war-cajiba.appspot.com/text/>



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