

The Cold War and Civil Liberties Questionnaire

1. Is the objective of the presentation evident and does every slide directly articulate that objective?
 - a. The objective of the presentation should be apparent in each slide. In this case, the object is to improve students' understanding of how the Cold War impacted civil liberties, but there are many ways in which this presentation might be improved.
 - b. The banners of the slides indicate that they are grouped into themes including "Define Cold War," "Roots of Cold War," and "Cold War." There are perhaps more themes here than necessary as the central issue is the impact of Cold War on Civil liberties. Students may need to be reminded of what the Cold War was and how it began, but this may be accomplished with the aid of only one slide that bullets a definition and one slide that bullets key causes of the Cold War.
 - c. Not all slides directly address the impact of the Cold War on civil liberties. This discussion is directly addressed in slides 13-20. All other slides are may be of interest, but are peripheral. If the instructor wishes to improve student's sense of the history of the Cold War, a second PowerPoint may be in order.
 - d. Note that the title of the show announces that it will address "The struggle to balance national security and civil rights," but there are no slides exclusively dedicated to the discussion of national security during the Cold War this is a serious oversight. Perhaps a slide with a graph illustrating the arms race would be helpful. It is essential that every slide is aligned with the title and purpose of the presentation.

The objective is to improve students' understanding of how the Cold War impacted civil liberties, but there are many ways this presentation could be improved.

2. Is the presentation organized effectively? Is the length appropriate? Are slide sequenced logically?
 - a. There are 28 slides in this show. Even if the instructor only spent 60 seconds on each slide, the presentation would take nearly a half hour without student comments.
 - b. To improve the likelihood that this presentation will engage students in discussion and inquiry, the length should be reduced to 8-12 slides.
 - c. The sequence of the slides makes sense in the historical, chronological sense. Chronology is among the most accessible and readily understood frameworks for organizing material. The sequence of slides immediately concerned with the impact of the Cold War on civil liberties may be organized to reflect the chronology of US history, but it is not absolute. U. S. laws, such as Espionage Act, 1917, already impacted civil liberties as they prohibited membership to socialist organizations and dissemination of socialist ideas. Further, FBI black-listing and cinematic propaganda against communism was already part of American culture before 1945, the year the Cold War "officially began."

It is essential that every slide is aligned with the title and purpose of the presentation.

3. Which slides are exemplary in composition? Which slides need revision? What kinds of revision?
 - a. The title slide is very busy and its multi-colored background makes the text hard to read. Images and colors might be useful and attention-grabbing on a title page, but the most important consideration is whether the title page clearly communicates the subject and scope of the presentation, the author, and the author's title; additional information may be helpful, such as the name of the event in which the presentation is featured and the date of the event.
 - b. Slides 6 and 7 are good inasmuch as they have an image that directly corresponds with the text, aligns the content with the title of the slide, and limits the main points to a manageable number.

The image is an example of Soviet propaganda and the cult of personality that was a cardinal feature of the Soviet Union's governance in the early days of communism. The poster reads: "Lenin lived, Lenin lives, Lenin will live!" Whether these two slides should be included in the presentation, however, is a matter to be determined as the author narrows the purpose of the show.

- c. Slide 8 might be improved by having only one image, changing the title to "The Red Scare" and by including a point about how the Red scare impacted Soviet perceptions of the US
 - d. Slide 9 is problematic as it announces it will address two topics and then proceeds to address each very poorly. The image, from the cover of *Time Magazine*, August 8, 1949, is provocative and implies something about civil rights, but the text does little to illuminate the main ideas.
 - e. Slides 14 and 28 are dense. Slide 14 it is a means of emphasizing the scope of people investigated by the FBI and what censored government documents look like. Slide 28 is generally not something PowerPoints contain, but it is good form to show students the scholarship behind the presentation.
 - f. Slide 16 is a busy but has terse and clear points. The text could be improved by re-wording the first bullet; as written, the text suggests that God supported capitalism in the past and leaves open the suggestions that God switched sides. Since the second bullet already references a theological premise, perhaps a better bullet might read, "Communism enslaves free people." Leaving one or two images in the slide accomplishes two things: first, it provides primary sources that support the assertions; and, second, they help readers see that popular media and scholarly works were sources of propaganda. The show reveals its bias in this segment, however, as the only propaganda addressed is American anti-communist propaganda; there is no reference to Soviet ant-capitalist propaganda. PowerPoints should reflect an objective, scholarly, fair, and balanced perspective when making assertions and exploring controversial matters.
 - g. Slide 25 has too many images and the title implies that the only issue involved in national security is business; this is unbalanced. The image is also cluttered; it is enough to post the image of US trade with China under "Good Communists, and the image of Cuban embargo under "Bad Communists."
4. Imagine seeing this presentation as a student who knows very little about history; what problems might the

PowerPoints should reflect an objective, scholarly, fair, and balanced perspective when making assertions and exploring controversial matters.

presentation present and how might they be overcome?

- a. Students with little understanding of history will need some background information that will help them understand the Cold War and why civil liberties in both the U.S. and U. S. S. R.
 - b. Some students may need help understanding the fundamentals of civil liberty in the U.S.
 - c. The needs of the students should determine how to prepare students to maximize their learning in a given lesson. Even PowerPoints that are designed to introduce a new topic achieve greater impact when students are prepared the new information and have some familiarity with certain concepts and facts. PowerPoints, after all, do not function in a vacuum.
5. Imagine you are the instructor; can you identify 2 or 3 ways in which you might follow up on a presentation such as this to see that students learned what you wanted them to learn?
- a. Images from PowerPoints may be inserted into tests and used as a basis for essay questions; for example: a political cartoon or poster might accompany a prompt for students to identify the purpose of the material and what political perspective it represents and to evaluate whether the implications and assertions of the material were honest and fair.
 - b. A subsequent lesson that builds upon the presentation might reserve 10-15 minutes for a review of the key points presented in the show.
 - c. Students might be directed to create their own PowerPoint in which a single aspect of the material, such as the depiction of the Cold War in Warner Bros. films, 1945-1991, might be explored.