

Teaching notes

This resource contains four interpretations of the crisis and four questions to help students interrogate the sources.

A card sort on the impact of the crisis is also available at www.teachithistory.co.uk (quick search: 22895)

Cartoon sources

You could also get students in pairs to analyse contemporary cartoons. For each cartoon they should summarise the overall message and decide who, if anyone, is suggested as the 'winner' of the crisis.

- ❖ 'OK Mr president, let's talk' Kennedy and Khrushchev arm-wrestling for power, sitting on nuclear weapons, by Leslie Gilbert Illingworth (29 October 1962)
<http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/record/ILW3584>
- ❖ 'Let's get a lock for this thing' by Herbert Block
<http://www.filibustercartoons.com/nikita.gif>
- ❖ 'What do you mean: a menace? Surely it's all right to go fishing, isn't it?' Cartoon by German cartoonist Herbert Kolfhaus (30 September 1962)
http://www.cvce.eu/obj/cartoon_by_heko_on_the_cuban_crisis_30_september_1962-en-a6e5fbc2-3ea3-4a5d-a078-ecc79634b22e.html
- ❖ And more at <http://galleryhip.com/cuban-missile-crisis-cartoon-in-color.html>

Hot-seating activity

- ❖ Allocate pairs of students to be Kennedy and Khrushchev.
- ❖ Students should argue with each other about emerged from the crisis as the winner.
- ❖ This could be extended further with selecting two more confident students to continue their debate in front of the whole class.
- ❖ The rest of the class should then challenge them both by asking them questions.

Source A: interview with Sergei Khrushchev (Nikita Khrushchev's son) for an American newspaper (1999).

Interviewer: How close did the U.S. and the Soviet Union come to war?

Sergei Khrushchev: They were not so close as Americans thought at that time and even now, because the situation was under full control from both sides. And Kennedy and my father never wanted to begin the war. If American public opinion and the military had pressed the President to begin the invasion, nothing would have happened. ...

Why the crisis was so dangerous was because it was one of my father's biggest mistakes. When he decided to send missiles to Cuba, he understood it would be a crisis, but he did not understand the level of the crisis. He thought the American reaction would be the same as the Soviet reaction for the American missiles in Europe. It's unpleasant. It's bad. But you understand as a politician that it is not a war.

Source B: extract from Khrushchev's memoirs written in 1971 (he was ousted from power in 1964).

[In 1961] we increased our military aid to Cuba. We were sure the Americans would never agree to the existence of Castro's Cuba. They feared, and we hoped, that a Socialist Cuba might become a magnet that would attract other Latin American countries to socialism. We had to find an effective deterrent to American interference in the Caribbean. The Caribbean crisis was a triumph of Soviet foreign policy and a personal triumph in my own career. Today Cuba exists as an independent socialist country right in front of America. Cuba's very existence is good propaganda.

We behaved with dignity and forced the United States to demobilise and to recognise Cuba.

Source C: Robert Kennedy (President Kennedy's brother), in *13 Days*, his memoir of the Cuban missile crisis.

Even after it was all over [the President] made no statement attempting to take credit for himself or for his administration for what had occurred. He instructed all [his staff] that no interview should be given, no statement made, which would claim any kind of victory. He respected Khrushchev for properly determining what was in his own country's interests and in the interests of mankind. If it was a triumph, it was a triumph for the next generation and not for any particular government or people.

Source D: Kennedy's obituary in the *The Guardian*, a British newspaper, 1963.

President Kennedy will be remembered as the President who helped to bring the thaw in the Cold War. This was always his aim but only after Cuba did he really act. That crisis left its mark on him; he recognised how frightening were the consequences of misunderstandings between East and West.

Tasks

1. Read sources A-D. Underline each of the key points in the sources.
2. What does each source suggest about who won or lost the Cuban missile crisis?
3. How useful is each source to help you to answer the question 'Who won the Cuban Missile Crisis?' Think about who wrote each source and when. What was the purpose of each source?
4. In your opinion which side won the Cuban missile crisis?