


Unit Resources - Glossary Terms from "The Cold War"

[Resources](#) > **Glossary Terms**

Glossary Terms from: 

Show As List

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38th parallel

the official border between North and South Korea, designated by 38 degrees latitude

Alger Hiss case

a case in which Alger Hiss, a former state department official, was convicted of perjury for lying under oath about his connection to the Communist Party

American Communist Party

a left-wing political party founded in 1919 whose influence faded in the wake of the United States' stand against communism after World War II

arms race

a competition between the United States and the Soviet Union to build the greatest stockpile of nuclear weapons during the Cold War

atomic bomb

a highly powerful weapon that generates massive explosive power through nuclear fission

baby boomers

individuals born in the United States between the years of 1946–1964

Beat movement

a literary movement that achieved prominence in the 1950s; the writers were nonconformists who rejected popular American culture

Berlin Blockade

starting in June 1948, an attempt by Joseph Stalin to starve people in the western parts of Berlin, Germany, into submission by cutting off all land and water routes to the city

blacklisting

creating a list of persons who are to be avoided, boycotted, or denied employment, usually for their political beliefs

bomb shelters

refuges in which to hide from a nuclear attack

brinkmanship

an approach to foreign policy in which one or more parties make risky policies that bring about a near confrontation

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka

a landmark civil rights case declaring that state-enforced segregation of public schools was unconstitutional

Civil Rights Act of 1957

the first civil rights legislation since Reconstruction, protecting voting rights and signaling the government's new involvement in the civil rights struggle

consumerism

the idea that the more goods you consume, the more you're doing to help the economy

containment

the U.S. policy that sought to limit the expansion of communism abroad

demobilization

the process of reducing the number of combat-ready troops

domino theory

the theory that if communism made inroads in one nation, surrounding nations would also fall, like a chain of dominoes toppling one another

Douglas MacArthur

an American general who led UN forces against North Korea during the Korean War

Executive Order 9981

an order that guaranteed equality of treatment and opportunity regardless of race, religion, or place of origin; signed by President Harry S. Truman on July 26, 1948

Fair Deal

President Harry Truman's program of economic and social reform

Federal Employees Loyalty Program

a program implemented after World War II designed to identify and remove from government employment individuals with a history of radical affiliations

flexible response

a military strategy that allows for a variety of responses to threats, including counterinsurgency, conventional war, and nuclear strikes

G.I. Bill of Rights

legislation and a subsequent program that gave substantial benefits to those who served in World War II; also called the Servicemen's Readjustment Act

Hernandez v. Texas

a landmark civil rights case that extended the protections of the Fourteenth Amendment to all ethnic groups in the United States

House Un-American Activities Committee

a committee in the U.S. House of Representatives that investigated alleged communist activities

Iron Curtain

a term coined by Winston Churchill that referred to portions of eastern Europe that were no longer free because of the Soviet Union's influence; the term came to refer to any communist nation

J. Edgar Hoover

director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) from 1924 until his death in 1972

Jackie Robinson

the first African American baseball player to play in the American major leagues in the twentieth century

Julius and Ethel Rosenberg

American citizens who were tried, convicted, and executed for acting as spies for the Soviet Union

Korean War

a conflict fought for control of the Korean Peninsula between communist North Korea, supported by its allies China and the Soviet Union, and democratic South Korea, supported by the United States

Lavender Scare

mass firing of homosexuals employed by the U.S. government in the 1950s

Little Rock Nine

in 1957, the first nine African American students to be enrolled in Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, whose presence in the school required military protection

Mao Zedong

leader of the Chinese Communist Party who defeated nationalist forces to take control of China after a 22-year civil war

Marshall Plan

a program that gave billions of dollars of U.S. aid to European countries to prevent them from turning to communism

McCarthyism

a campaign by Wisconsin senator Joseph McCarthy that sought to expose what he claimed was a communist infiltration of the U.S. government

middle class

a socioeconomic group generally consisting of professionals, business workers, and their families that exists above the working class but below the upper class

Montgomery Bus Boycott

a mass protest in Montgomery, Alabama, in which African Americans boycotted the city bus system in response to the arrest of Rosa Parks

mutually assured destruction

the idea that the threat of their own complete annihilation would prevent two nuclear powers from starting a nuclear war

National Interstate and Defense Highways Act (1956)

a law that authorized the construction of 41,000 miles of interstate highways across the United States

NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)

an alliance established for collective defense in 1949, originally with 12 nations, including free nations in Western Europe, the United States, Canada, and Iceland; today there are 28 member nations

rock and roll

a musical form popular among the baby boomers, strongly influenced by country music and rhythm and blues, and embracing themes such as youthful rebellion and love

Rosa Parks

a civil rights activist who was arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a bus to a white man as was expected

Second Red Scare

the fear, after World War II, of international communist infiltration

Social Security Disability Insurance (1956)

one result of a law that provided for monthly benefits to disabled workers between the ages of 50 and 64

Sputnik

the world's first artificial satellite, launched by the Soviet Union on October 4, 1957

suburbanization

a population trend in which a growing number of people move from urban areas into surrounding suburban residential areas

Taft-Hartley Act of 1947

a law that limited the power of unions

Truman Doctrine

the U.S. practice of giving aid and support to any nation or group of people threatened by communism or the Soviet Union

Truman's labor policy

a set of approaches that sought to decrease union power to strike in essential industries.

Twenty-second Amendment

a change to the U.S. Constitution that places a two-term limit on presidents; individuals serving more than two years in a presidential term to which they were not elected may not serve more than one additional term in office

United Nations

an international peacekeeping organization established in 1945

Warsaw Pact

a collective defense treaty signed by the Soviet Union and seven other communist countries in Eastern Europe in Warsaw, Poland, in 1955

welfare

financial support provided to needy individuals, generally through government programs

Whittaker Chambers

a former communist spy whose testimony led to the conviction of Alger Hiss