Title: The Truman, Eisenhower & Nixon Doctrines: Understanding U.S. Foreign Policy during the Cold War

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Course: AP US History

Time Frame: One class period

Subjects: Nixon, Eisenhower Doctrine, Middle East, Truman, Harry S., 1884-1972, Cold War

Grade Levels: 11

Classroom/Homework Activity to be performed:

In groups, the students will examine three cornerstones of American foreign policy during the Cold War – the Truman, Eisenhower & Nixon Doctrines. This exploration will involve primary source materials and critical analysis to determine the direction of U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War.

Rationale:

My students frequently have difficulty distinguishing between the Truman and Eisenhower doctrines, and how those doctrines helped to shape American foreign policy during the Cold War. This lesson will be a culminating activity in the early Cold War unit and will establish the foundation for our discussions of U.S. foreign policy during the 1960s and 1970s. The Nixon Doctrine will be introduced at this time to see how U.S. foreign policy changed in response to events (in this case, the Vietnam War).

Lesson objectives - the student will:

- Analyze the Truman, Eisenhower and Nixon Doctrines.
- Interpret the documents in light of American foreign policy during the Cold War, assessing American priorities as evidenced in the documents.
- Answer the essential question: How did American foreign policy change during the Cold War?

District, state, or national performance and knowledge standards/goals/skills met:

- Kansas High School United States History Standards (adopted 2013)
  - Standard 3: Societies are shaped by beliefs, idea, and diversity.
  - Standard 5: Relationships between people, places, ideas, and environments are dynamic.
  - Sample Compelling Questions: How did America’s international influence change after World War II? Did the spread of Communism justify U.S. government action in the Cold War era?

- Units: “World War II and its Aftermath” and “Cold War Conflicts"

Common Core Standards – History/Social Studies, Grades 11-12
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2 – Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9 – Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

**Secondary materials (book, article, video documentary, etc.) needed:**

  - This chapter addresses the post-World War II United States. It discusses the foreign policy decisions of both the Truman and Eisenhower administrations, including the issuance of both the Truman and Eisenhower doctrines.

**Primary materials (book, article, video documentary, etc.) needed:**


**Full description of activity or assignment:**

As homework the night before this lesson, have the students review Chapter 29 in their textbook, The American Nation, concentrating on the 1947 crisis in Greece and Turkey and the 1956 Suez Canal crisis. They also need to list the members of each of the following collective security organizations, as of 1950 and 1958: NATO, Baghdad Pact, Warsaw Pact, CENTO, SEATO. They should use their textbook and the internet to compile these lists.

At the start of class, review the United States’ goals during the early Cold War. They should mention stopping the spread of communism, collective security, and nuclear superiority, among other goals. The discussion should then shift to how the United States advanced those goals through the Truman and Eisenhower Doctrines. Divide the class into groups of 3-4 students, with half of the groups assigned to read the Truman Doctrine and the other half assigned to read the Eisenhower Doctrine. Each student should complete a “Fact, Perspective, Narrative, Truth”
sheet for their assigned document (see end of this lesson plan for a copy). They should also consider the following questions:

- What was the motive behind this document?
- What advantage(s) did this document give to the United States during the Cold War?
- What disadvantage(s) did this document give to the United States during the Cold War?
- How did this document help to codify American foreign policy during the Cold War?
- How successful was this document in advancing American goals during the Cold War?

Once their analysis is completed, each group will join with a group that read the other document, pairing one Truman Doctrine group with one Eisenhower Doctrine group. Each original group will explain their doctrine to the other group, answering the questions above and keeping in mind the “Fact, Perspective . . .” analysis.

Each blended group should then address the following questions:

- What are the similarities between the two doctrines?
- What are the differences between the two doctrines? What are the reasons for those differences?
- Does region make a difference in how a doctrine is implemented and/or applied? For example, is there a difference between applying a doctrine in the Middle East or in Europe? Why?
- What advantage did each region offer the United States in the Cold War?
- How did collective security organizations reflect the Truman and Eisenhower Doctrines during the 1950s?

Bring the class back together to debrief this activity. Refer to the essential question: How did American foreign policy change during the Cold War? Answer any remaining questions on the Truman and Eisenhower Doctrines.

Read the Nixon Doctrine together as a class. Address the following questions:

- What was the motive behind this document?
- What advantage(s) did this document give to the United States during the Cold War?
- What disadvantage(s) did this document give to the United States during the Cold War?
- How did this document help to codify American foreign policy during the Cold War?
- How successful was this document in advancing American goals during the Cold War?
- How is this document similar or different from the Truman and Eisenhower Doctrines? What is the reason for those similarities/differences?
- Did any factors (not foreign in origin) contribute to this doctrine?

Conclude by referring back to the essential question: How did American foreign policy change during the Cold War? Encourage the students to think about these questions:

- Did region play a role in the implementation of foreign policy during the Cold War?
- How did each doctrine help to define the United States’ goals in the Cold War?

**Full explanation of the assessment method and/or scoring guide:**

Each student will bring a historic editorial cartoon or article to class the next day that addresses one of the three doctrines: Truman, Eisenhower or Nixon. They will share these articles/editorial cartoons with the class. The students will also be responsible for an essay on the test related to American foreign policy during the early Cold
War.

FACT, PERSPECTIVE, NARRATIVE, AND TRUTH

“Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but not their own facts.” – Daniel Patrick Moynihan

FACT: Something that has really occurred or is actually the case; a truth known by actual observation or authentic testimony, as opposed to what is inferred, guessed, or hypothesized; a product of experience, as distinguished from the conclusions that may be based upon it.

PERSPECTIVE: A particular attitude toward or way of thinking about something; an individual point of view.

NARRATIVE: The story we tell or believe, in order to explain how a set of facts or events are connected to each other.

TRUTH: The quality of being true; conformity with fact or reality; an obvious or accepted fact; the character of being, or disposition to be, true to a person, principle, cause. Truth is something each person creates for him/herself – an interpretation of facts based on his or her own perspective.

Name of Source: ____________________________________________________________

Date of Source: _________________________ Author: ______________________________________
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