

Student Sample 5

May 8 1945, V-E day marked the end of the Nazi regime led by Adolf Hitler in Germany and ultimately the end of the dreaded World War II. The victorious superpowers, America, Britain, and Russia are now burdened with the task of reviving Europe from ruins. In contextualization, the big three superpowers met at Yalta to resolve these post-war problems. However not all countries shared a similar vision for post-war resolutions. The start of the Cold War resulted from the threat of Russia spreading communism, the US's attempts to aid Europe and repel communism, and the formation of Nato vs Warsaw, capitalism vs communism that would divide the world through many economic, political, and social factors. Europe would become the "battleground" for domination between communists and capitalists.

The economic policies offered by both superpowers to ruined Europeans caused great tensions. In the last 30 years, Russia was attacked Germany twice causing fear of millions of death plus economic hardships. Josef Stalin proclaimed at Yalta that he request control of satellite states for protection of motherland in order to avoid another invasion. This however was seen by many Allies as a play for Stalin to begin his conquering of Europe and spread communism. To ruined Europeans communism was the best method to get back to stability the quickest way. On the other hand, President Truman established the Marshall Plan which would provide economic aid to European countries. Stalin, however, refused the aid for his satellite states who desperately needed it. This totalitarian method escalated with the Berlin Blockade causing massive starvation. Tensions reached a high point when the US enacted Berlin Air Lift that flew supplies into Berlin. If Stalin were to shoot down a plane it would mean imminent war, maybe nuclear. On the contrary, Stalin reopened Berlin and war was averted.

Social difference grew among citizens in America and satellite nations. The Gallup Polls conducted in the US give the point of view change in many Americans from fondness of Russia to hatred of communism. They used propoganda such as "better dead than red" to rally support and enforce arbitration of satellite states. The purpose of the testimony of Whitaker Chambers showed the plots of US communism led by Alger Hiss was a threat to the US government. The establishment of the National Security Act was meant for defense against communist threats that would come in events like the Cuban missile crisis. Over in communist Europe, citizens came to find that communism was not as promising as it seemed.

The political action taken by both superpowers was seen as threatening to both sides causing much tension. The purpose of Stalin's comment to Churchill in Yalta is to justify the means of Soviet occupation in Poland. In addition Stalin lied about the promise of free elections in countries like Poland in order to secure his butter zone of states under communist rule. This made the USSR look mistrustworthy and greedy for domination. In response, Truman's address to the Joint Session of Congress claimed his and ultimately America's position against the spread of communism. The speech is in this historical context of the establishment of the Truman Doctrine and the idea of containment policy that would be utilized in Korean war. The US makes enemies with USSR by wanting to spread capitalism instead of communism. Considering that, the

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Soviet Foreign minister, V. M Molotov's broadcast "The Task of Our Time: Unite Against the Enslavement of People" denounces the US and Britain as more totalitarian than them with their "attacks" on communism through the Marshall Plan and Truman Doctrine trying to deter citizens from complying with communism. In America and Britain, the point of view is the exact opposite as depicted in the David Low cartoon showing Stalin "liberating" European countries and denying them aid from the US and Britain. Good intentions turned sour summarizes the political action of post-war superpowers.

Overall, the major economic, political, and social factors of post-World War II had a huge impact on world affairs. It brewed a hostility that would last for several more decades through wars like Vietnam. All until one side conquered the other. The nuclear arms race would emerge and threaten the whole world.

Student Sample 5 Scoring Guidelines

The response presents a thesis that makes a historically defensible claim and responds to all parts of the question. The last two sentences of the opening paragraph provide a clear thesis, arguing that “The start of the Cold War resulted from the threat of Russia spreading communism, the US’s attempts to aid Europe and repel communism, . . . Europe would become the ‘battleground’ for domination between communists and capitalists.”

The response develops a cohesive argument that recognizes and accounts for historical complexity. The response clearly organizes its argument into paragraphs about economic policies, social differences, and political actions taken by the U.S. and the USSR to cause the beginning of the Cold War. Each one of these paragraphs uses clear, corroborating evidence to prove its arguments.

The response utilizes the content of at least six of the documents to support the stated thesis or a relevant argument. The response uses all of the documents except document 3 to support its arguments.

The response explains the significance of the author’s point of view, author’s purpose, historical context, and/or audience for at least four documents. In the third paragraph the response adds historical context to document 2 by explaining that American distrust of communism grew due to the use of propaganda such as ‘better dead than red.’ The response adds historical context for document 7 by suggesting that the National Security Act was passed to defend against communist threats like Alger Hiss’s communist plots. In the next paragraph the response adds historical context to document 4 by arguing that the Truman Doctrine and the idea of containment support Truman’s message to Congress. The response also adds historical context for document 5, suggesting that Molotov’s denunciation of U.S. “ ‘attacks’ on communism” can be seen in the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine. Overall, the response explained the significance of the historical context for four documents and therefore earns the point.

The response situates the argument by explaining the broader historical events, developments, or processes immediately relevant to the question. The response argues in its opening lines that the “victorious superpowers” at the end of World War II did not share a “similar vision for post-war resolutions” and therefore led to a Cold War between the U.S. and the USSR.

The response provides an example or additional piece of specific evidence beyond those found in the documents to support or qualify the argument. At the end of the second paragraph, the response argues that economic tensions between the U.S. and the USSR can be illustrated with the Berlin Blockade and the resulting response from the U.S. with the Berlin Air Lift. The response argues that this economic tension could possibly lead to “imminent war, maybe nuclear.”

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This response does not earn the point for synthesis, since it does not extend the argument by explaining connections between the argument and a different historical development, situation, or geographical area (C4) or between the argument and a different course theme or approach to history (C5). In the concluding paragraph the response argues that the tensions between the U.S. and the USSR would continue for several decades “through wars like Vietnam.” While this could certainly be a great start to a synthetic argument, the response would need to discuss how Vietnam extends this argument of economic, political, and/or social tensions between the U.S. and the USSR.

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