

RESOURCE LIBRARY  
ACTIVITY : 1 HR

## Kennedy in Castro's Eyes: The Impact of the Bay of Pigs Invasion on Fidel Castro

Students analyze the impact of the Bay of Pigs invasion on the mindset of Cuban leader Fidel Castro.

### GRADES

9 - 12+

### SUBJECTS

*Social Studies, U.S. History, World History*

### CONTENTS

1 Link, 1 Resource, 5 PDFs

## OVERVIEW

Students analyze the impact of the Bay of Pigs invasion on the mindset of Cuban leader Fidel Castro.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/kennedy-castros-eyes-impact-bay-pigs-invasion-fidel-castro/>

## Program

KILLING  
KENNEDY

## DIRECTIONS

### **1. Introduce information about the Bay of Pigs invasion.**

Divide students into pairs or small groups and ensure that each group has computer access. Direct students to the JFK Library: Bay of Pigs website. Ask students to read the information on the page and take notes by filling out the Five Ws Chart.

### **2. Role play a scene from *Killing Kennedy*.**

Have two students read the Bay of Pigs Scene excerpted from the *Killing Kennedy* script. Assign one student to play the role of John F. Kennedy and another to play the role of Jackie Kennedy. Before the two volunteers read the selection, instruct students to write down adjectives that would describe President Kennedy's behavior in the scene as they listen.

Have the two student volunteers read the dialogue aloud for the class. After reading, bring the class together for a whole class discussion. Ask:

- *What adjectives would you use to describe President Kennedy's behavior in this scene? Why?*
- *Based on the scene, how did President Kennedy view the Bay of Pigs invasion?*
- *Make a prediction: If President Kennedy felt this way after the Bay of Pigs invasion, how do you think Fidel Castro must have felt about the Bay of Pigs invasion?*

### **3. Discuss the Bay of Pigs Invasion.**

Write the following four questions on poster paper or the whiteboard for students to see.

- What was the objective of the Bay of Pigs invasion?
- Why did the American leaders want to overthrow the government of Fidel Castro?
- What actually happened?
- Based on the American objectives, was the Bay of Pigs invasion a success or a failure? Why?

Ask students to use what they learned from reading the Bay of Pigs Invasion handout to respond independently to the questions written on the poster paper or whiteboard. Give students approximately 10 minutes to complete their responses in their notebooks.

Have students form pairs to discuss their responses to the questions. Then, bring the class together and ask each pair to summarize one main point from their discussion. Clear up any misconceptions before moving on.

#### **4. Use primary sources to analyze the impact of the Bay of Pigs invasion on Castro.**

Tell students they will use a reading strategy called SOAPSTone to analyze a primary source document about Fidel Castro and the Bay of Pigs invasion. Distribute the SOAPSTone worksheet and the Castro and the Bay of Pigs Invasion worksheet. Lead students in completing together the speaker, occasion, and audience sections of the SOAPSTone worksheet. Tell students they will add to these sections while they read Castro's speech. Ask students to read Castro's speech and, as they read, to complete the subject, purpose, and tone sections of the SOAPSTone worksheet.

After students have had enough time to read Castro's speech and complete the sections of the SOAPSTone worksheet, lead students in a discussion about the speech. Ask:

- *What is Castro's critique of the United States? Support your answer with evidence from the text.*
- *Why does Castro consider the United States to be hypocritical? Support your answer with evidence from the text.*
- *Which leaders does Castro compare to JFK? Why?*
- *Why does Castro believe Cuba is not a threat to the United States?*
- *Is Castro justified in calling the Americans "imperialists"? Are his claims valid? Why or why not? Support your answer with evidence from the text.*

#### **5. Write a letter as Fidel Castro to Nikita Khrushchev.**

Tell students the following: *The Bay of Pigs invasion had a major impact on the way Castro viewed the United States. Castro, believing that American leaders would soon attempt another attack against him, sought out support from the other global power of the day, the Soviet Union. Now, you will put yourself in Castro's shoes and imitate his letter to Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev.*

Explain to students that they will write a letter from Castro's first-person perspective, appealing to the Soviet Union. Distribute the Write a Letter to Khrushchev worksheet, read aloud the directions, and distribute and review the Write a Letter to Khrushchev Rubric so students understand the expectations of this exercise. Have students read and review the Bay of Pigs Invasion and the Fidel Castro Speech handouts before writing their letters. Ask students to use SOAPSTone as a pre-writing strategy and to refer to their earlier SOAPSTone work if they need guidance.

After students hand in their letters, lead them in a discussion about their experiences in this activity. Answer questions students may still have about the Bay of Pigs invasion, Fidel Castro's reactions to the invasion, and the relationship between Castro and the Soviet Union/Khrushchev.

## Modification

APPARTS or a different reading strategy of your choice can be used as an alternative to the SOAPSTone strategy.

## Tip

Check for understanding throughout the lesson by asking students to summarize the impact of the Bay of Pigs invasion on Fidel Castro.

## Modification

If computers are not available for students, step 1 may be assigned as homework the previous night.

## Modification

If you have already taught the Bay of Pigs invasion to students, forgo the informational text in Step 1 and rely on students' prior knowledge.

## Tip

To ensure active participation and engagement, be sure to establish clear criteria for class discussions before beginning any discussion. For more information on establishing norms for discussions, see [Human Rights Education Associates: Establishing Rules for Discussion](#).

# Tip

To ensure students are successful in meeting the objectives of this activity, facilitate student thinking by reminding them throughout the activity to answer the questions and support their responses with evidence from the sources. Avoid telling students answers if they are stuck. Pose additional questions to support student thinking.

## Alternative Assessment

Review students' letters using the Write a Letter to Khrushchev Rubric. Excellent letters will describe Castro's attitude after the Bay of Pigs invasion and propose a potential relationship between Cuba and the Soviet Union. Check all letters for specificity and clear explanations of reasoning.

## OBJECTIVES

## Subjects & Disciplines

### **Social Studies**

- U.S. History
- World History

## Learning Objectives

Students will:

- identify and describe the causes and outcomes of the Bay of Pigs invasion by reading and discussing an informational text
- describe Castro's attitude toward Kennedy and the United States by reading and analyzing a primary source document
- evaluate the impact of the Bay of Pigs invasion on Castro's mindset toward the United States by writing a letter to Nikita Khrushchev arguing for a Soviet-Cuban alliance

## Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use
- Object-based learning

# Teaching Methods

- Discussions
- Reading
- Writing

## Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- 21st Century Student Outcomes
  - Information, Media, and Technology Skills
    - Information Literacy
  - Learning and Innovation Skills
    - Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Critical Thinking Skills
  - Analyzing
  - Creating
  - Understanding

## National Standards, Principles, and Practices

### NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM STANDARDS

- Theme 9:

Global Connections

### ISTE STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS (ISTE STANDARDS\*S)

- Standard 1:

Creativity and Innovation

- Standard 4:

Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making

### Preparation

## What You'll Need

### MATERIALS YOU PROVIDE

- Paper
- Pencils
- Pens

### REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

- Internet Access: Optional
- Tech Setup: 1 computer per classroom, Projector, Speakers
- Plug-Ins: Flash

### PHYSICAL SPACE

- Classroom

### GROUPING

- Large-group instruction

## BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

### Background Information

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, Cuba—located 145 kilometers (90 miles) off the coast of Florida—was extremely important for large U.S. corporations. According to a Department of Commerce survey released in 1956, American firms controlled 90 percent of Cuba's telephone and electric services, 50 percent of Cuba's public railways, and 40 percent of Cuba's raw sugar production. As a result, the United States government actively supported the pro-American dictator Fulgencio Batista, a brutal authoritarian ruler who thrived in opulence as poverty decimated most Cuban people.

In this climate of oppression, the Cuban people rallied to an enigmatic guerrilla fighter, Fidel Castro, who toppled Batista's government and eventually promised to bring socialism to Cuba. Unhappy with this outcome, the CIA, under authorization from President Eisenhower, developed plans to overthrow Castro. President Kennedy, less than three months after his inauguration, authorized the plan. This plot became the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, in which American-backed Cuban exiles failed to start a popular uprising against Castro.

While the Bay of Pigs invasion was an abject failure for the United States and President Kennedy, the event had equally large repercussions on Cuba, allowing Castro to consolidate his authority over the Cuban political system and pushing him into a closer alliance with the Soviet Union.

## Prior Knowledge

["General understanding of the origins of the Cold War and U.S. distrust of communism and the Soviet Union", "Basic understanding of first-person narratives (e.g., letters, diary entries) "]

## Recommended Prior Activities

- None

## Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
communism	noun	type of economy where all property, including land, factories and companies, is held by the government.
dictator	noun	person with complete control of a government.
exile	noun	forced ejection from a country, or a person who feels forced to leave.
guerrilla	adjective	having to do with warfare conducted by organized groups of civilians, not soldiers or the military.
revolution	noun	overthrow or total change of government.
socialism	noun	system of organization or government where all property, industry, and capital is owned by the community, not individuals.
Soviet Union	noun	(1922-1991) large northern Eurasian nation that had a communist government. Also called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or the USSR.



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## For Further Exploration

### Reference

- [Modern History Sourcebook: A Bipolar World](#)

### Websites

- [JFK Presidential Library and Museum: The Bay of Pigs Invasion](#)

PARTNER



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