

Who won the CUBAN
MISSILE CRISIS?

GCSE HISTORY
MODERN WORLD
ASSESSMENT BOOKLET
PAPER 1

NAME _____

TEACHER _____

TARGET GRADE _____

Who won the Cuban Missile Crisis?		With books	As revision	TEST
4 marks		Tick to show when you have done this question		
72	Describe the Bay of Pigs invasion. (Jan 2011)			
73	Describe how Cuba changed under Castro. (June 2011)			
74	Describe the USA's reaction to the Cuban Revolution. (Jan 2012)			
75	Describe the USA's response to Castro's seizure of power in Cuba. (June 2010)			
6 Marks				
76	Explain why the Soviet Union became involved in Cuba. (Jan 2011)			
77	Explain Kennedy's options after missile sites were discovered in Cuba. (June 2011)			
78	Explain why Krushchev placed missiles in Cuba. (Jan 2012)			
79	Explain why the failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion caused problems for America. (June 2010)			
10 Marks				
80	'Kennedy handled the Cuban Missile Crisis better than Krushchev did.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. (Jan 2011)			
81	'The USA was more responsible for causing the Cuban Missile Crisis than the USSR'. How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. (June 2011)			
82	The outcomes of the Cuban Missile Crisis were equally successful for i/ the USA ii/ the USSR iii/ Cuba How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer referring only to i, ii and iii. (Jan 2012)			
83	'The Cuban Missile Crisis was a victory for the Soviet Union'. How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. (June 2010)			

Chapter 5: Who won the Cuban missile crisis?

In October 1962, the world was brought to the brink of nuclear war as the USA and USSR faced each other in a conflict over the island of Cuba. The USA was trying to contain the spread of Communism but faced problems in Cuba where Communists had seized power. In this chapter, you will learn how the USA reacted to the Cuban revolution and why the Cuban missile crisis almost led to a nuclear war.

Focus points

Each key question in the OCR course is divided into focus points. To do well in the examination, you will need a good understanding of each focus point.

- How did the USA react to the Cuban revolution?
- Why did Khrushchev put missiles into Cuba?
- Why did Kennedy react as he did?
- Who won the Cuban missile crisis?

Key content

In order to fully understand the focus points, you will need to have a good working knowledge of:

- the Cuban revolution and the reaction of the USA
- the Bay of Pigs invasion
- the beginnings of the missile crisis
- the missile crisis – day by day
- the end of the crisis and its consequences.

5.1 The Cuban revolution and the reaction of the USA

Cuba is a large island in the Caribbean Sea. It is only 144 km from the coast of the USA. For many years, the USA was very happy with the political and economic situation in Cuba.

- US businesses dominated Cuba. They owned its major industries (sugar and tobacco).
- US tourists enjoyed holidays in Cuba, especially in the capital, Havana.
- The USA dominated Cuba militarily – there was a large US naval base at Guantanamo.

The USA supported the leader of Cuba, Fulgencio Batista. The USA knew Batista was a corrupt and unpopular dictator. Despite this, it supported him because he was anti-Communist.

In 1959, US policy went terribly wrong. From 1956, a young Communist called Fidel Castro had led a campaign of guerilla warfare against Batista and eventually overthrew him in 1959.

- Castro took over many US-owned businesses.
- He also took over much US-owned land.
- He gave the land to ordinary Cuban farmers.
- He forged close links with the USSR (led by Nikita Khrushchev).
- Khrushchev sent him advisers, economic aid and military equipment.

5.2 The Bay of Pigs invasion

The USA was furious at Castro's actions (and Khrushchev's support for Castro). From 1959 to 1961, there was a tense, frosty relationship between the USA and Cuba. During this time, the USA gave support to Cubans who had left Cuba to get away from Castro.

In January 1961, US President Eisenhower broke off diplomatic relations with Cuba, and this policy continued under Eisenhower's successor, President Kennedy. He supplied weapons and transport for 1,500 Cuban exiles to land in Cuba and overthrow Castro. They landed at the Bay of Pigs and were met by 20,000 Cuban troops with weapons supplied by the USSR. The Bay of Pigs was a humiliating disaster for Kennedy.

The failure at the Bay of Pigs was bad enough for Kennedy, but he also feared that it would encourage other countries to become Communist and risk becoming enemies of the USA. The crisis also further strengthened Castro's position in Cuba. Khrushchev had already decided that Kennedy was weak and unwilling to use force over Cuba. He met Kennedy in June 1961 in Vienna, but the talks did not go well and gave Khrushchev the view that the USA would not back up its **containment** policy by using force. This led directly to the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962.

5.3 The beginnings of the missile crisis

After the Bay of Pigs, Khrushchev gave Castro large amounts of Soviet military equipment to prevent a follow-up American-supported invasion of Cuba.

The Americans became increasingly alarmed about the Soviet military build-up in Cuba. In September 1962, the Soviets told Kennedy they had no intention of placing nuclear missiles in Cuba; it was a lie.

Why did Khrushchev put missiles in Cuba?

The USSR supplied many of its allies with non-nuclear weapons, but the Cuban crisis was the first time that nuclear weapons were installed outside Soviet boundaries. There were several reasons for Khrushchev's actions.

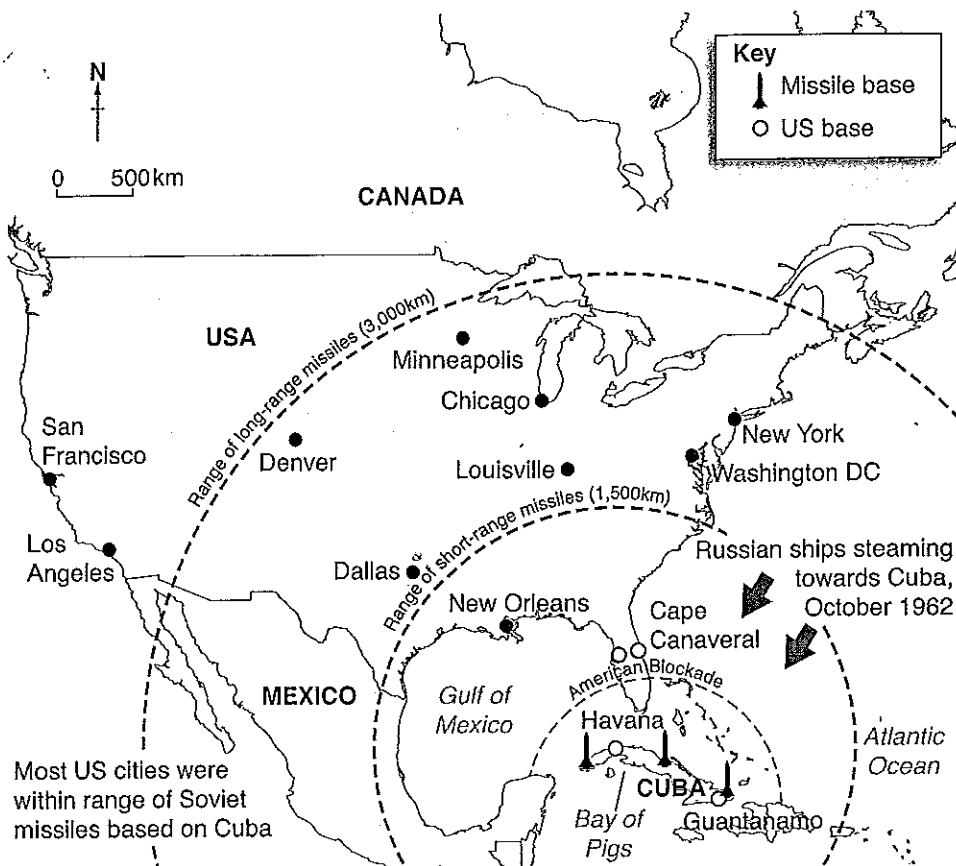
- Khrushchev wanted to produce more nuclear warheads and close the 'missile gap' between the USA and the USSR.
- The USA had missiles in Western Europe and Turkey, well within range of the USSR. Placing missiles in Cuba would help restore the missile balance.
- The USSR had many more cheap, medium-range missiles than the USA so a launch site in Cuba, close to the US coast, was an ideal place to put missiles.
- Soviet missiles in Cuba would strengthen Khrushchev's bargaining position against the USA.
- Khrushchev was very keen to defend Castro. Cuba was the only Communist country in the **western hemisphere** and had just survived the Bay of Pigs attack.
- Khrushchev was keen to strengthen his own political position in the USSR. Missiles in Cuba would be seen as another major propaganda victory against the USA.

Key terms

Containment: a foreign policy aimed at containing the political influence or military power of another country – for example, US policy to stop the spread of Communism during the Cold War.

Western hemisphere: the area of the world that includes North America, South America and Central America.

Exam tip History is often about cause and effect, and explaining why people did what they did. In this case, it is really important that you understand the reasons why Khrushchev allowed Soviet missiles to be placed in Cuba and the effect this had on the USA.



The location of missile sites in Cuba and the threat posed to US cities.

Why did Kennedy react as he did?

Part I: Kennedy's options

On 14 October 1962, a US spy plane photographed the construction of nuclear missile sites on Cuba. In the days that followed, Kennedy and his advisers had several options. They were:

Do nothing

For: The USA still had a much larger nuclear force than the USSR. Overreacting to the Cuban missiles might lead to a nuclear war between the USA and USSR.

Against: To do nothing would be seen as a sign of weakness and encourage the Soviets to challenge the USA elsewhere in the world, possibly in Berlin.

Surgical air strike: an immediate air strike against missile sites in Cuba.

For: Destroy the missiles before they became operational.

Against: The US air force could not guarantee to destroy all the missiles. Some might be launched against US cities and kill millions of people. Bombing Cuban missile sites would inevitably kill Soviet soldiers, too, and this would cause Khrushchev to respond. Bombing a small country such as Cuba without warning would be seen as a very aggressive act by many other countries.

Invasion: a full-scale US invasion of Cuba.

For: Remove the missile bases and Castro from power.

Against: This would cause an inevitable Soviet response – possibly an invasion of West Berlin and nuclear war.

Diplomatic pressure: to involve the United Nations and other international organisations to resolve the dispute.

For: Involvement of other countries might force the Soviets to remove the missiles.

Against: It was very unlikely that diplomacy would cause Khrushchev to give way, so this option was seen as very weak.

Blockade (quarantine): US navy to stop Soviet ships delivering any further weapons to Cuba, along with a demand for missiles already in Cuba to be removed.

For: This would show firm action by the USA without using immediate force. It would give Khrushchev time to consider his next actions, and the USA the option of an air strike or invasion later if the blockade did not work.

Against: A blockade would not remove the weapons already in Cuba. Action was likely to be slow in producing results. It did not rule out Soviet retaliation in other parts of world – for example, Berlin.

Key terms

Blockade: cutting off a place or country by surrounding it with troops or ships.

5.4 The missile crisis – day by day

- 9 October 1962** Kennedy orders a US U-2-spy plane reconnaissance flight over Cuba. The flight was delayed until 14 October because of bad weather.
- 14 October 1962** A U-2 flying over western Cuba takes photographs of missile sites under construction.
- 15 October 1962** US intelligence agencies analyse the photos and confirm that Soviet nuclear missiles have been placed in Cuba.
- 16 October 1962** Kennedy forms a group of advisers called EX-COMM, which begins to discuss in secret how to respond to the crisis.
- 17 October 1962** Kennedy continues his normal duties as President so as not to arouse suspicion while EX-COMM works on possible options.
- 18 October 1962** Soviet Foreign Minister, Gromyko, and Kennedy meet but Gromyko denies that there are any 'offensive' missiles in Cuba, and Kennedy does not tell him of his discovery.
- 21 October 1962** Kennedy's military advisers tell him that an air strike could not guarantee to destroy all Soviet missiles in Cuba. Kennedy decides on a blockade (quarantine) of Cuba.
- 22 October 1962** Kennedy broadcasts live on US TV and tells the American public about the existence of the missiles and his intention to quarantine Cuba as the first step to getting them removed.
- 23 October 1962** The Organisation of American States (OAS) unanimously supports the blockade of Cuba by the USA.
- 24 October 1962** The US blockade of Cuba begins. Soviet ships sailing to Cuba with questionable cargo either slow down or turn around, except for one. American military forces are put on alert and go to DEFCON 2, one step short of war.

- 26 October 1962** Kennedy is informed that evidence from reconnaissance flights shows that the missile sites are nearing completion. Khrushchev sends a private letter to Kennedy proposing to remove Soviet missiles if Kennedy publicly announces that he will never invade Cuba.
- 27 October 1962** A new official letter from Khrushchev arrives, proposing a public trade of Soviet missiles in Cuba for US missiles in Turkey. An American U-2 spy plane is shot down over Cuba, killing the pilot – Major Rudolf Anderson. Kennedy decides to delay an attack on Cuba. He ignores Khrushchev's second letter and agrees to the terms in the first letter. Kennedy sends his brother Robert, one of his advisers, to meet the Soviet ambassador in Washington DC. The Soviets are told secretly that the USA will not invade Cuba and will remove its missiles from Turkey within 6 months. If the Soviets do not agree to this deal, Kennedy informs them that the USA will invade Cuba immediately.
- 28 October 1962** Khrushchev announces on Radio Moscow that he has agreed to remove the missiles from Cuba.

Revision task

Using the calendar on pages 54–55, draw a timeline to show the key events in the Cuban missile crisis. Explain what you consider to be the most important events during the crisis.

Why did Kennedy react as he did?

Part 2: Kennedy's reasons

There was no doubt as to the seriousness of the Cuban missile crisis.

- Kennedy was under serious pressure from US military leaders to bomb and invade Cuba immediately. This would have almost certainly led to a war with the USSR.
- Kennedy tried to give himself and Khrushchev a means of solving the crisis without immediate conflict. This is why he chose a blockade.
- Kennedy also realised that he needed to give Khrushchev a way out without appearing to humiliate the Soviet leader – that is why, in private, he agreed not to invade Cuba and later remove US missiles from Turkey.
- Kennedy used the opportunity of Khrushchev's first letter to explore ways to solve the crisis whilst at the same time convincing the Soviets that he was prepared for war.

5.5 The end of the crisis and its consequences

On the morning of 28 October, Radio Moscow broadcast that the USSR was prepared to remove the missiles from Cuba. The missile crisis was over, but important lessons had been learned by both sides.

- Firstly, it is widely agreed that the Cuban missile crisis was the closest that the USA and USSR came to nuclear conflict throughout the whole of the **Cold War**. There was general agreement that future disputes like this had to be avoided, so the missile crisis actually helped improve US–Soviet relations.
- Secondly, the USA and USSR decided to set up a telephone link (hotline) between Moscow and Washington DC so that problems could be discussed to avoid future crises.
- Thirdly, nuclear arms talks began and, in 1963, a Test Ban Treaty was signed by the USSR, the USA and Britain.

Key terms

Cold War: political hostility between countries that stops short of actual armed conflict.

Revision task

How far was the Cuban missile crisis a real threat to world peace?

Copy and complete the table below to show how far the events of the crisis and the actions of the leading figures caused a real threat.

Reasons: real threat to peace	Reasons: little threat to peace

So who won the Cuban missile crisis and what were the outcomes for the USA, the USSR and Cuba?

The USA

- Kennedy was immediately seen by world opinion as the 'victor' in the Cuban missile crisis. He had stood up to the Soviets and they had backed down.
- Kennedy had also successfully stood up to some of his hard-line military advisers who wanted to invade Cuba. The crisis showed how dangerous their ideas were.

BUT

- Kennedy also agreed in secret not to invade Cuba and, more controversially, to remove NATO missiles from Turkey at a later date.
- Castro remained in power in Cuba and so the Communist threat remained.
- Kennedy had made plenty of enemies. He was now distrusted by some key generals, who thought he was not really prepared to fight the spread of Communism. He was hated by Cuban exiles in the USA since Castro had survived the Bay of Pigs and the missile crisis.

The USSR

- Khrushchev had prevented a US invasion of Cuba and had a guarantee that no further invasion attempts would take place.
- In public, he could claim to have acted reasonably and as a peacemaker by agreeing to remove the missiles from Cuba.
- Khrushchev had US agreement that NATO missiles in Turkey would also be removed, although this was a secret agreement and unknown at the time.

BUT

- The USSR was shown to have lied to the UN and the world about nuclear missiles in Cuba.
- Khrushchev had been forced to back down in the face of US pressure. Soviet missiles were removed and many in the USSR felt humiliated.
- Khrushchev was unable to make public his secret agreements with the USA.
- In 1964, Khrushchev was replaced as Soviet leader. Historians consider the outcome of the missile crisis contributed to his downfall.

Cuba

- Castro remained in power and the USA agreed not to attempt further invasions.
- Cuba remained heavily armed, although not with nuclear weapons, and became a focus for other Communists in South America.
- Castro maintained his control of former US industries.

BUT

- Cuba remained poor and isolated in the western hemisphere, unable to trade with the USA and therefore dependent on the USSR for supplies and equipment.

Comment

The Cuban missile crisis is now seen by historians as the event that nearly triggered a nuclear war between the USA and USSR. Recent evidence shows that Soviet nuclear submarines were stationed off the US east coast ready to launch their missiles if instructed by Khrushchev. Kennedy also had the American military ready for war. In the end, both Kennedy and Khrushchev managed to achieve at least some of their objectives and remain in control of their military commanders who were urging the use of force.

Revision task

The Cuban missile crisis: who was the winner?

Copy and complete the table below to show who gained most from the missile crisis. The winner may be the one who achieved his objectives.

	Objectives	Success or failure?
Kennedy		
Khrushchev		
Castro		

Summary/revision plan

Below is a list of headings that you may find helpful. You can use this list as a checklist to make sure that you are familiar with the material. You can also use the list as the basis of a plan for some of the essay-type questions on the exam papers.

1 The Cuban revolution and the reaction of the USA

2 The Bay of Pigs invasion

3 The beginnings of the missile crisis

- Why did Khrushchev put missiles in Cuba?
- Why did Kennedy react as he did?
 - Part 1: Kennedy's options
 - Do nothing
 - Surgical air strike
 - Invasion
 - Diplomatic pressure
 - Blockade (quarantine)

4 The missile crisis – day by day

- Why did Kennedy react as he did?
 - Part 2: Kennedy's reasons

5 The end of the crisis and its consequences for

- the USA
- the USSR
- Cuba.