



Thaw in the Cold War: Eisenhower and Khrushchev at Gettysburg



(Eisenhower National Historic Site)

Perhaps a change of scene would make a difference. Dwight D. Eisenhower and Nikita Khrushchev, opposing leaders of the United States (U.S.) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) at the height of the Cold War in 1959, had reached an impasse. Even at the informal setting of Camp David, with occasional escapes from the intrusive protocol and ever present advisers, the leaders were making little progress in their effort to lessen the tensions. As he and Khrushchev boarded the helicopter for the short flight from Camp David to the president's Gettysburg, Pennsylvania farm, Eisenhower hoped that the quiet, rural atmosphere would have the intended effect on Khrushchev.

Eisenhower always found the farm "an oasis of relaxation." He and his wife, Mamie, purchased the farm in 1950; it was the only home the Eisenhowers ever owned. Though originally intended as a retirement home, it also served as a weekend retreat after Eisenhower's 1952 election to the presidency. The Eisenhowers especially enjoyed the glassed-in porch where they entertained family and friends, played cards, read, and watched television. Eisenhower also pursued his hobby of oil painting on the porch. He once wrote that if they ever built another home "it would be built around such a porch." On adjoining farms, Eisenhower raised his prize-winning herd of Angus cattle.

Sharing this private side of his life with world leaders had proved beneficial for Eisenhower when he met with allies of the United States, including West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan. But would it work, he wondered, with his Cold War adversary? As they landed at the edge of the farm field in front of his home, he hoped this private meeting with Khrushchev would move the world toward peace.



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Where this lesson fits into the curriculum

Time Period: 1950s

Topics: The lesson could be used in American history units on the Cold War, or in government and world affairs courses for units on negotiation and conflict resolution. Students will sharpen their skills in using primary documents and in interpreting maps and visual data.

Relevant United States History Standards for Grades 5-12

This lesson relates to the following National Standards for History from the UCLA National Center for History in the Schools:

US Era 9

- **Standard 2A:** The student understands the international origins and domestic consequences of the Cold War.
 - **Standard 3A:** The student understands the political debates of the post-World War II era.
-

Relevant Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

This lesson relates to the following Curriculum Standards for Social Studies from the National Council for the Social Studies:

Theme I: Culture

- Standard C: The student explains and gives examples of how language, literature, the arts, architecture, other artifacts, traditions, beliefs, values, and behaviors contribute to the development and transmission of culture
- Standard E: The student articulates the implications of cultural diversity, as well as cohesion, within and across groups.

Theme II: Time, Continuity and Change



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- Standard C: The student identifies and describes selected historical periods and patterns of change within and across cultures, such as the rise of civilizations, the development of transportation systems, the growth and breakdown of colonial systems, and others.
- Standard D: The student identifies and uses processes important to reconstructing and reinterpreting the past, such as using a variety of sources, providing, validating, and weighing evidence for claims, checking credibility of sources, and searching for causality.

Theme IV: Individual Development and Identity

- Standard B: The student describes personal connections to place - as associated with community, nation, and world.
- Standard C: The student describes the ways family, gender, ethnicity, nationality, and institutional affiliations contribute to personal identity.

Theme V: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

- Standard D: The student identifies and analyzes examples of tensions between expressions of individuality and group or institutional efforts to promote social conformity.

Theme VI: Power, Authority, and Governance

- Standard C: The student analyzes and explains ideas and governmental mechanisms to meet needs and wants of citizens, regulate territory, manage conflict, and establish order and security.
- Standard F: The student explains conditions, actions, and motivations that contribute to conflict and cooperation within and among nations.
- Standard G: The student describes and analyzes the role of technology in communications, transportation, information-processing, weapons development, or other areas as it contributes to or helps resolve conflicts.
- Standard I: The student gives examples and explains how governments attempt to achieve their stated ideals at home and abroad.

Theme IX: Global Connections

- Standard A: The student describes instances in which language, art, music, belief systems, and other cultural elements can facilitate global understanding or cause misunderstanding.
- Standard B: The student analyzes examples of conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among groups, societies, and actions.
- Standard D: The student explores the causes, consequences, and possible solutions to persistent, contemporary, and emerging global issues, such as health, security, resource allocation, economic development, and environmental quality



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- Standard E: The student describes and explains the relationships and tensions between national sovereignty and global interests in such matters as territory, natural resources, trade, use of technology, and welfare of people.

Relevant Common Core Standards

This lesson relates to the following Common Core English and Language Arts Standards for History and Social Studies for middle and high school students:

Key Ideas and Details

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-12.1
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-12.2
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-12.3

Craft and Structure

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-12.4
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-12.5
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-12.6

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-12.7

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-12.10



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About This Lesson

This lesson plan is based on the National Register of Historic Places registration file, "[Eisenhower National Historic Site](https://npgallery.nps.gov/pdfhost/docs/NRHP/Text/67000017.pdf)" [<https://npgallery.nps.gov/pdfhost/docs/NRHP/Text/67000017.pdf>] (with [photographs](https://npgallery.nps.gov/pdfhost/docs/NRHP/Photos/67000017.pdf) <https://npgallery.nps.gov/pdfhost/docs/NRHP/Photos/67000017.pdf>). It was written by Carol A. Hegeman, Supervisory Historian, Eisenhower National Historic Site and edited by Fay Metcalf, education consultant. TwHP is sponsored, in part, by the Cultural Resources Training Initiative and Parks as Classrooms programs of the National Park Service. This lesson is one in a series that brings the important stories of historic places into the classrooms across the country.

Objectives

1. To define and describe the Cold War;
2. To explain Eisenhower's personal style of diplomacy and how he used it effectively during the Cold War;
3. To describe the role Eisenhower's Gettysburg farm played in easing Cold War tensions;
4. To analyze and evaluate public papers and transcripts of presidential news conferences;
5. To investigate the impact of the Cold War period on their own community.

Materials for students

The materials listed below can either be used directly on the computer or can be printed out, photocopied, and distributed to students.

1. A map of Eisenhower's Gettysburg farm and surrounding region;
2. Readings from transcripts of press conferences and briefing papers;
3. Oral history accounts of Khrushchev's visit to Gettysburg;
4. A photo of Eisenhower and Khrushchev;
5. Photos and a site plan of Eisenhower's Gettysburg farm.

Visiting the site

Eisenhower National Historic Site, administered by the National Park Service, is located in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The site is open daily. It is closed January 1, Thanksgiving Day, and December 25. For additional information, write to the Superintendent, Eisenhower National Historic Site, 1195 Baltimore Pike, Suite 100, Gettysburg, PA 17325 or [visit the park web pages](#).



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Getting Started



In 1959, these two men were the heads of the most powerful governments in the world. Who are these two men? What countries do they represent?



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Photo Analysis Worksheet

Step 1:

Examine the photograph for 10 seconds. How would you describe the photograph?

Step 2:

Divide the photograph into quadrants and study each section individually. What details--such as people, objects, activities--do you notice?

Step 3:

What other information--such as time period, location, season, reason photo was taken--can you gather from the photo?

Step 4:

How would you revise your first description of the photo using the information noted in Steps 2 and 3?

Step 5:

What questions do you have about the photograph? How might you find answers to these questions?



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Setting the Stage

Dwight David Eisenhower (1890-1969) enjoyed a long and distinguished military career and attained the rank of five-star general before becoming the 34th president of the United States. One of the most serious problems Eisenhower faced during his eight years in office (1953-61) was the Cold War, a struggle between the Soviet Union and the United States. While the Soviet Union tried to spread communism throughout the world, the United States used its energies to help countries fight against it.

Under Soviet-style communism, the rights of the individual were always secondary to the intentions and needs of the state. Farms and factories were owned by the government. The government chose what was shown on television, printed in newspapers, or taught in schools. To speak out against the government was to risk going to prison. Soviet leaders argued that their dictatorship of the proletariat was the wave of the future. Once the whole world became communist, there would be no cause for war. But until that time they saw themselves in permanent conflict with the democracies of Europe and America. The United States, with its constitutional guarantees of individual rights, was widely recognized as the leader of the Western democracies, and was the natural and inevitable enemy of communism.

The Cold War began at the end of World War II when the Soviet Union attempted to create its own "sphere of influence" by refusing to remove its troops from Eastern Europe. It was a war of mutual propaganda, espionage, and encroachment on neutral territory. Each side used spies to steal the other's military secrets. Covertly, both countries helped smaller nations in their fights for or against communism by supplying them with weapons and economic aid.

What made the Cold War so frightening was the very strong possibility that it could turn into a "hot" war--nuclear war--at any moment. By 1953 both the United States and Soviet Union had produced nuclear weapons. To allay both countries' fears, Eisenhower proposed in 1955 an Open Skies plan of mutual overflights. The plan was flatly denounced by Nikita Khrushchev, the new leader of the Soviet Union, who, in 1958, further heightened Cold War tensions by issuing the Berlin Ultimatum. He insisted that if the United States and its Western European allies would not recognize East Germany as a separate nation, he would deny them access to Berlin.

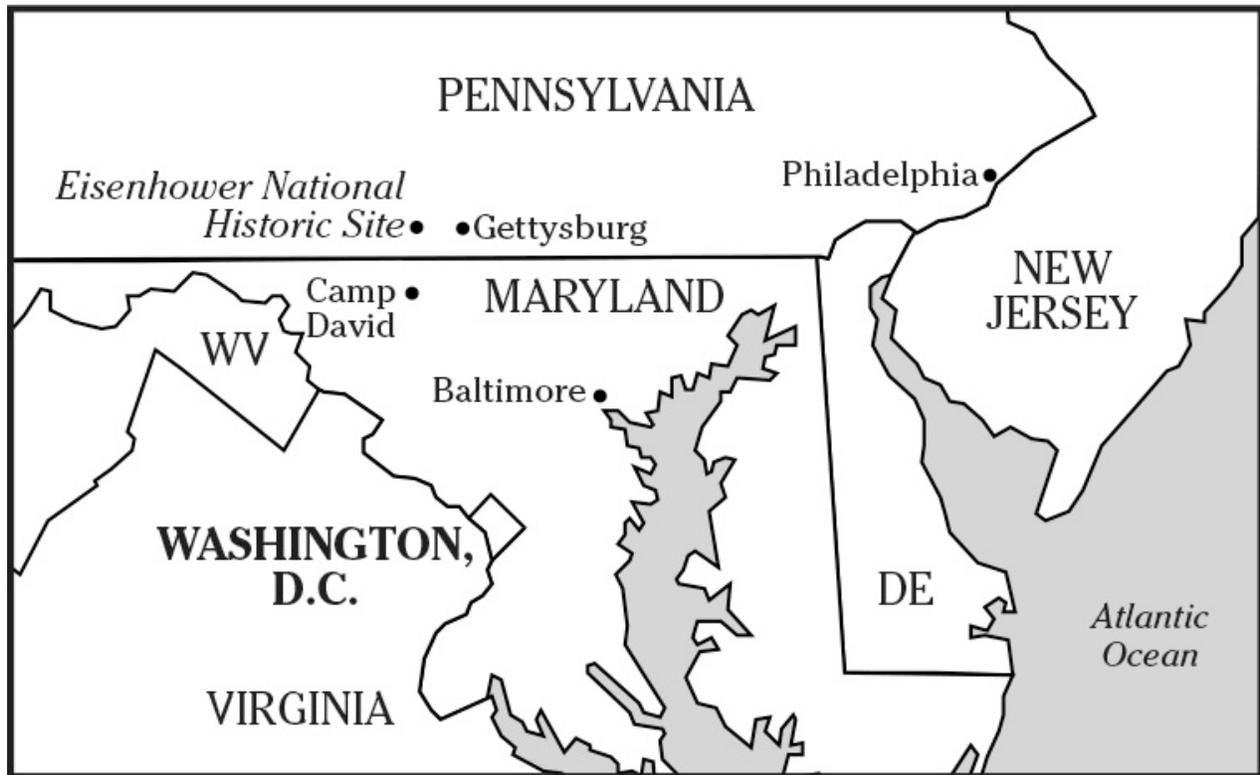
Eisenhower knew that diplomacy could ease the tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union. Although he intended to invite Khrushchev to visit the United States only after Khrushchev backed down on Berlin, the State Department made a mistake and issued the invitation too early. Eisenhower was furious, but Khrushchev was coming to the United States.



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Locating the Site

Map 1: Eisenhower National Historic Site and Surrounding Region



Eisenhower grew up on a farm in Abilene, Kansas. During World War I he served at Camp Colt in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Recalling his love for this small town in the foothills of the Appalachians, Eisenhower and his wife Mamie purchased a 189-acre farm in the Pennsylvania countryside near Gettysburg in 1950. Their plans to retire to the property were postponed when Eisenhower won the 1952 presidential election. The Gettysburg farm served as a weekend retreat during his two terms in office.



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Determining the Facts

Reading 1: The Invitation to Nikita Khrushchev to Visit the United States

The President's News Conference, August 3, 1959

THE PRESIDENT: I asked this morning for this special press conference on the subject of the impending exchange of visits between Mr. Khrushchev and myself....

Sometime back, I suggested to the State Department that I believed in the effort to melt a little bit of the ice that seems to freeze our relationships with the Soviets, that possibly a visit such as I now have proposed would be useful....

Now, at this identical time, an identical statement is being issued in Moscow....

[Eisenhower reading:] The President of the United States has invited Mr. Nikita Khrushchev, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, to pay an official visit to the United States in September. Mr. Khrushchev has accepted with pleasure.

The president has also accepted with pleasure Mr. Khrushchev's invitation to pay an official visit to the USSR later this fall.

Mr. Khrushchev will visit Washington for 2 or 3 days and will also spend 10 days or so traveling the United States. He will have informal talks with the president, which will afford an opportunity for an exchange of views about problems of mutual interest.

On his tour of the United States, Mr. Khrushchev will be able, at first hand, to see the country, its people, and to acquaint himself with their life.

President Eisenhower will visit Moscow and will also spend some days traveling in the Soviet Union. This will provide further opportunity for informal talks and exchange of views about problems of mutual interest with the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR.

On his tour of the Soviet Union, President Eisenhower likewise will be able at first hand to see the country, its people, and to acquaint himself with their life.

Both governments express hope that the forthcoming visits will help create better understanding between the U.S. and the USSR and will promote the cause of peace.

[Ends reading]

THE PRESIDENT: Now, one or two other items...

The heads of state were notified just recently about this impending visit...on balance, they think it's a very good thing to do....

In the meantime, I might tell you that this morning I have taken considerable trouble to inform some of the leaders of Congress, and those that I've heard from have been quite favorably disposed toward this plan.

I want to make this clear: by no means am I intending to be or can I be any spokesman for the Western powers in my talks with Mr. Khrushchev. I can be a spokesman only for America and for its government. Nevertheless, I have already suggested that prior to these



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meetings, I go to meet our friends in Europe and to discuss with them problems of mutual interest...

Q. Fletcher Knebel, Cowles Publications: Could you say, sir, was it just two items of correspondence, you invited him and he accepted, or was there more than that?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'd say it is a little bit more complicated than that. [Laughter]

Sterling F. Green, Associated Press: Thank you, Mr. President.

The President's News Conference at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, August 12, 1959

THE PRESIDENT. Good morning. This is one way to get some of you people to come up to see the famous battlefield, isn't it? I have no announcements. We'll go to questions.

Q. John M. Hightower, Associated Press: Mr. President, what results do you hope to achieve in your talks with Premier Khrushchev?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I would hope for a bettering of the atmosphere between the East and the West. I do not by any manner of means intend or plan that this meeting can become a real negotiation of basic problems between the West and the East, because I have no intention of attempting to be the spokesman for the West.

You will recall that Mr. Adenauer has gone to Moscow, Mr. Macmillan has gone to Moscow, and there have been these private talks between these several countries — Mr. Khrushchev and the prime ministers of these two countries. I am trying to do my best to see whether we can't bring about a somewhat better situation in the relations between the two and maybe he can learn a little bit more about our country as certainly I can about his....

Q. Robert C. Pierpoint, CBS News: In recent weeks, sir, we have been invited...to share your hospitality at the White House, and to speak with you personally....also you have now instituted...a new form of diplomacy by travel around the world.

THE PRESIDENT: When you have a situation that has gone on, as we have had this cold war since 1945...it becomes the kind of stalemate that...has the element of almost hopelessness for people....I am trying to end the stalemate and to bring people together more ready to talk....



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Questions for Reading 1

- 1) What reasons did Eisenhower give for inviting Khrushchev to the United States?

- 2) When was the official statement to the press issued?

- 3) How did Eisenhower try to ensure public support for the trip?

- 4) Why might the Western powers (France, Great Britain, and West Germany) have been concerned about Eisenhower and Khrushchev meeting? What did Eisenhower say to allay those fears?

- 5) Traditionally, formal relations between countries was primarily the business of their foreign ministers. Why do you think that changed during the Eisenhower administration? Why do you think that Eisenhower denied that he was negotiating anything?

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Determining the Facts

Document 1: State Department Memorandum for the President

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

*President
has seen
it*

September 16, 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Planning for Camp David

In the meeting with Foreign Minister Gromyko this morning (memorandum of conversation enclosed) we reached agreement on a tentative plan for talks at Camp David as follows:

Saturday morning:

1. Germany and Berlin
2. Disarmament
3. Nuclear Tests

Saturday afternoon:

4. Exchanges and Contacts
5. Nuclear Reactor Information
6. Political Treaty and Other Bilateral Questions
7. Laos and Iran

Sunday morning:

8. Trade
9. Possible Summit Meeting
10. Final Communique

Mr. Gromyko indicated in addition to the Soviet group (Mr. Khrushchev, Mr. Gromyko, Ambassador Menshikov, Mr. Soldatov and Mr. Troyanovski) who would be staying at Camp David, they might wish to bring Soviet experts when specific topics were to be discussed. He mentioned only Mr. Lunkov (Germany and Berlin), Mr. Sobolev (Disarmament), Mr. Zhukov (Exchanges and Contacts), and Mr. Yamelyanov (Nuclear Reactor Information).

It

DECLASSIFIED
Authority *100-11-181-104*
By *MLF Date 11/1/07*

UNCLASSIFIED

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U.S. Department of the Interior



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It was agreed that there would be no public announcement concerning the list of topics for discussion at Camp David, but it was also agreed that either side could raise any question at any time it wished, and that each side would prepare separate papers on each subject but would not exchange them.

It was suggested that it might be desirable to reserve Friday evening and Saturday evening for general discussions and in this connection we made reference to your discussion with Chairman Khrushchev yesterday on the subject of "International Communism".

Mr. Gromyko referred to the "Treaty of Friendship" proposed by the Soviet Government in 1956 and, at his request, this was included as a topic on the tentative list together with our mention of Other Bilateral Issues.

Mr. Gromyko inquired about our views on zones in Europe for arms limitation, etc., in relation to disarmament, to which I replied that we had in Geneva made it clear that we would discuss this subject only in relation to a reunified Germany.

If you approve, we will plan to bring up to Camp David for our side the following when the subjects indicated are scheduled to be discussed:

Disarmament, Nuclear Tests and Nuclear Reactor Information - Mr. Philip Farley of the Department, Mr. John Irwin of the Department of Defense and Mr. John McCone, Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission. May wish to include Admiral Rickover, who discussed reactor information in Moscow.

*Also
Kistakousky
McCone will
not bring in*

Laos - Assistant Secretary Parsons

Exchanges and Contacts - Ambassador Lacy of the Department and Mr. Allen of USIA

Trade - Under Secretary Dillon.

Position papers have already been prepared on all the above mentioned subjects and many others which might come up. We will provide you with special brief talking

papers

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- 3 -

papers covering each of the listed topics as well as others which might be raised either by the Soviets or by ourselves. There is also a talking paper entitled "Major Themes of Khrushchev's Public and Private Statements and US Counter-arguments", which may prove useful in the general discussions which may be held on Friday and Saturday evenings.

Christian A. Herter

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christian A. Herter".



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Determining the Facts

Document 1: State Department Memorandum for the President (Transcription)

[Note: Each page has "Secret" typed at the top and bottom, but "Unclassified" has been stamped over it.]

[Note: Each page has a stamped seal that says "The Dwight D. Eisenhower Library" indicating owner of document.]

[Note: In the right-hand corner of Page 1 there is a handwritten note saying "President has seen." and it was initialed.]

Department of State
Washington
September 16, 1959

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Declassified
Authority MR 87-193 #4
By: bc NLE Date: 8/6/87

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[Note: Beside this paragraph two handwritten notes say "also Kistiakowsky" and "McCone will not bring him"]

Laos- Assistant Secretary Parsons

Exchanges and Contracts- Ambassador Lacy of the Department and Mr. Allen of USIA

Trade- Under Secretary Dillon.

Position papers have already been prepared on all the above mentioned subjects and many others which might come up. We will provide you with special brief talking (Page 3) papers covering each of the listed topics as well as others which might be raised either by the Soviets or by ourselves. There is also a talking paper entitled "Major Themes of Khrushchev's Public and Private Statements and US Counter-arguments", which may prove useful in the general discussions which may be held on Friday and Saturday evenings.

Christian A. Herter
[signed]

(Courtesy of Dwight D. Eisenhower Library)



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Determining the Facts

Reading 2: Khrushchev Visits Eisenhower's Farm, September 26, 1959

Excerpt from Eisenhower National Historic Site oral history interview with John S. D. Eisenhower, Eisenhower's son, January 26, 1984, on the porch in the Eisenhower home, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

When my father was president, he developed the habit of bringing visiting world leaders to the farm. Such informality, he reasoned, would make them feel at home. Visiting dignitaries soon got the word of such favored treatment, so everybody had to be brought to the farm, so they would receive what everybody else had! In September 1959, the White House laid it on for Khrushchev to come to Camp David, though we later learned that he was suspicious at first about Camp David — what kind of a place it was. The Russians were always afraid for their lives when they came over here. However, when Khrushchev found out what a nice place Camp David was, he was delighted.

To show him how he lived, when not in Washington — and to make him feel at home — Dad took Khrushchev for the four-minute trip to the farm in a helicopter. It's a long trip by car from Camp David down here. My family was at our home when he came, and we were told to bring all four children up here. Khrushchev sat in this chair (near the television) and Dad sat over in that chair (by the easel). Barbara, the kids and I sat on the couch and on settees. (Mother was not here.) Khrushchev leaned back and beamed. Playing the role of grandfather, he told each child what his or her name meant in Russian. He couldn't figure Susan, which is sort of remarkable in a way, because Susan means something like "serene," I believe. (That name seemed to be the most obvious.) Khrushchev also invited the children to go to Moscow —which is another story. Maybe they were pressed a bit for time....But, Khrushchev, in these surroundings, came off at his best — genial, grandfatherly, folksy.

Dad preferred to take visitors over to the showbarn to show his ribbons....He was very much at home with these Angus, and he'd always have his prize bull, Ankonian 3551, in the corral. As a farm boy, unafraid of cattle, Dad would climb into the corral with this bull and poke him in the rump with his shotgun until the bull would stand up. After all, Dad wanted the visiting dignitary to see the fine rump on this bull that would make such fine beef! The Secret Service were petrified, but didn't dare to protest.

Excerpt from Eisenhower National Historic Site oral history interview with Bob Hartley, Eisenhower's herdsman, June 18, 1981.

Khrushchev was here, too. He knew more about agriculture than any of them [other world leaders]. Although, I talked to him, he talked to me more than any of the rest of them but through an interpreter. He really was interested and he asked a lot of questions.



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Excerpt from Eisenhower National Historic Site oral history interview with Barbara Eisenhower, Eisenhower's daughter-in-law, August 20, 1983.

I remember when he brought Khrushchev up. Khrushchev was so impressed with individual dwellings, especially as they left the Washington area. He was so impressed with the fact that there were so many individual homes instead of all apartments, like it is in Moscow. He didn't think it was good particularly. He thought we were wasting space. He thought it was improvident more than anything else....[Khrushchev] was here on the farm, and I remember I brought the children over. He gave them each a little red star to put in the buttonhole of their lapel, and I remember after we got back in the car and drove home, I made them give me the stars and I threw them out the window. The reason I did was because they were communist insignia....I just didn't want them wearing souvenirs of his visit....He liked the children very much, and he was very grandfatherly, which is strange. You know, you don't think of him that way. He wanted them to come to Moscow. We were going to make a State visit there and John and I were going to go, and he wanted the children to come. He really pestered my father-in-law about it. He sent his ambassador over almost every week to the White House to try and talk Ike into bringing them.

Excerpt from Eisenhower National Historic Site oral history interview with General Andrew Goodpaster, White House staff secretary, November 7, 1983.

My recollection is that we had all of our activity [with the Berlin Crisis] down in Washington until Khrushchev came to visit at Camp David....I was at Camp David, the official part of it. I think [Eisenhower took world leaders like Khrushchev to the farm] so that he would have an opportunity to talk in circumstances that would encourage a little more freedom of discussion. It would not be so heavily official and it would be his opportunity to get more of what he called "the other man's equation," and also to convey, in a more constructive and positive setting, his own views.



Thaw in the Cold War: Eisenhower and Khrushchev at Gettysburg

Questions for Reading 2

- 1) Why do you think Eisenhower brought Khrushchev to his farm and home?

- 2) If you were Khrushchev, how do you think you would have reacted to Eisenhower's hospitality? Why?

- 3) How did Khrushchev's reaction to American housing patterns reflect his cultural and economic values? Have American attitudes changed toward land use since Khrushchev's visit?

- 4) How did Barbara Eisenhower's reaction to Khrushchev's visit reflect America's attitude toward communism in the 1950s? Did America's attitude change over the next 30 years?

- 5) List the advantages and disadvantages of using oral history to learn about recent events. Do you think historians would need to corroborate oral history accounts with other documentation? Why or why not?



Thaw in the Cold War: Eisenhower and Khrushchev at Gettysburg

Determining the Facts

Reading 3: Khrushchev Speaks of His Gettysburg

During Khrushchev's visit with Eisenhower, he learned much about life in the United States. Khrushchev experienced the simplicity that American life could offer as he visited Eisenhower's farm and interacted with his grandchildren. Within days of entering the country, Khrushchev also learned to appreciate the power of the free press. During a press conference on September 27, 1959 at the National Press Club in Washington, D. C., Khrushchev utilized his skill at manipulating the media.

Q. Mr. Jaffe of the CBS News. What reason did President Eisenhower give you for postponing his visit to Russia until next spring?

PREMIER KHRUSHCHEV: I would like to reveal a secret, although I have not asked the president's permission, but he said he would follow me on television and I will allow myself to say how this happened.

Yesterday the president was kind enough to invite me to his farm where I met his wonderful grandchildren. I established direct contact with those wonderful grandchildren of his, and we held a conference with them as to whether they should accompany their grandfather to our country, and if so, when. At that conference with the president's grandchildren, they and I reached a unanimous decision that they certainly should come with the president. The questions of time arose, and I took it upon myself to suggest that perhaps springtime would be the best time of the year for a visit like that because everything is in flower then. The weather is warm. Nothing is frozen up. And therefore, that is the way — and then we had an exchange of views with the president and came to the same conclusion. So there is no point in looking for fleas where fleas do not exist. If I have revealed something which I should not have revealed, I ask the president to excuse me.

I'm sure that my grandchildren would approve of this action of mine and therefore there is agreement both among the grandchildren and among the grandfathers.

After the Gettysburg visit, good will remained for a time as Khrushchev finally agreed to remove the time limit on the Berlin Ultimatum, thereby nullifying it. Eisenhower then agreed to Khrushchev's desire for a summit conference with Great Britain and France to discuss Berlin and other issues. In the following months Khrushchev continually referred to the "Spirit of Camp David" (a feeling of friendship and camaraderie), an opinion that Eisenhower and his advisers failed to share, although they too thought Khrushchev's visit was a success. Khrushchev began to make preparations for Eisenhower's June visit to the Soviet Union, even going to the extreme of building a country dacha (house) for Eisenhower's use and a golf course, since the Soviet Union had none.

Eisenhower looked forward to the Paris summit in mid-May and his trip to the USSR in June as harbingers of the end of the Cold War. His hopes for the future were dashed, however, when an American U-2 spy plane was shot down over the Soviet Union on May 1, 1960. Angry that the United States was spying on military installations in the Soviet Union even as the two countries planned "friendly" negotiations, Khrushchev walked out on the Paris summit. The visit to the USSR was canceled and the Cold War continued for another 30 years.



Thaw in the Cold War: Eisenhower and Khrushchev at Gettysburg

Visual Evidence

Photo 1: President Eisenhower and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev pose in front of Aspen Lodge at Camp David, Maryland, September 25, 1959



(United States Navy)

Teaching with Historic Places

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Thaw in the Cold War: Eisenhower and Khrushchev at Gettysburg

Questions for Photo 1

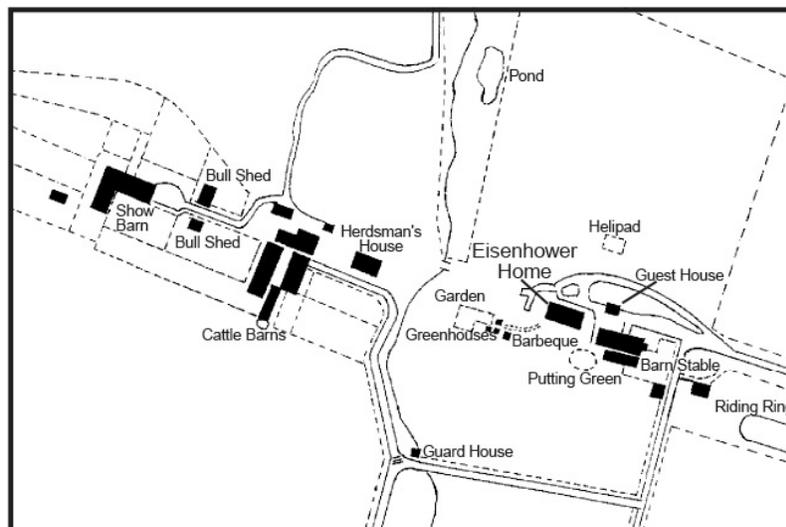
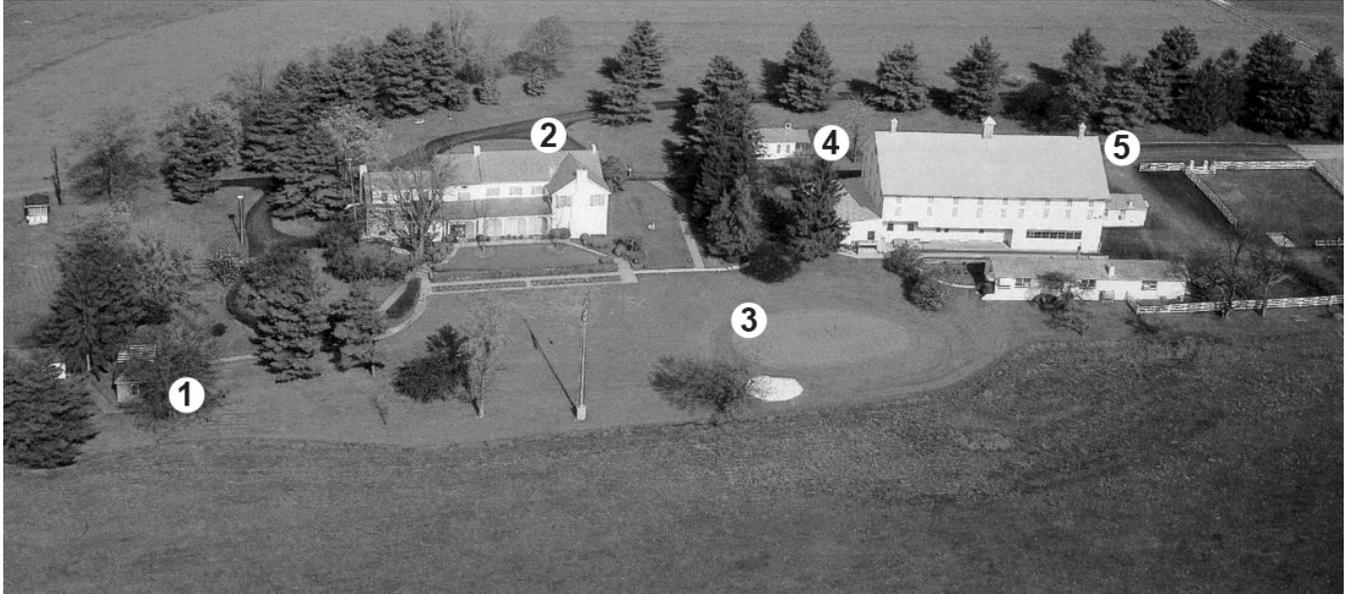
1) Describe the expressions of Eisenhower and Khrushchev. Why would you expect world leaders to be presenting a friendly attitude toward one another at the beginning of an international conference?



Thaw in the Cold War: Eisenhower and Khrushchev at Gettysburg

Visual Evidence

Illustration 1: An Aerial View of Eisenhower National Historic Site



(Eisenhower National Historic Site)



Thaw in the Cold War: Eisenhower and Khrushchev at Gettysburg

Visual Evidence

Photo 3a: The Porch of the Eisenhower Home



(Eisenhower National Historic Site)



Thaw in the Cold War: Eisenhower and Khrushchev at Gettysburg

Visual Evidence

Photo 3b: The Porch of the Eisenhower Home



(Eisenhower National Historic Site)



Thaw in the Cold War: Eisenhower and Khrushchev at Gettysburg

Questions for Photo 3

- 1) No photographs of Khrushchev's visit to the farm were ever taken. Use Photos 3a and 3b and John Eisenhower's description in Reading 2, to visualize Khrushchev's visit. Would the setting create a comfortable environment, and could that be helpful in lessening tensions? Why or why not?

- 2) What evidence of Eisenhower's hobbies do you see?

- 3) In what ways do you think talking with Khrushchev in this room would have been advantageous to Eisenhower?



Thaw in the Cold War: Eisenhower and Khrushchev at Gettysburg

Putting It All Together

While Khrushchev's trip to the United States did not end the Cold War, it was successful in temporarily lessening tensions between the two nations. Eisenhower and Khrushchev both got the minimum concessions each wanted from the other. In addition, Eisenhower gained a better understanding of Khrushchev's complex personality, information that would prove valuable as the Cold War continued. The following activities will help students better understand the Cold War Period.

Activity 1: Researching Why Eisenhower Never Visited the Soviet Union

Eisenhower's biggest disappointment as president was his failure to end the Cold War. Have students use a U.S. history textbook, periodicals from the spring and summer of 1960, and biographies of Eisenhower to research the U-2 incident, the Paris summit, and their results. Then divide the class into two groups and have them debate the following statement: "The crash of the U-2 in the Soviet Union was a major reason for the growing enmity between the U.S. and the USSR." Award points to the teams for the quality of their arguments. At the conclusion of the debate, ask students to decide what they think might have happened if the U-2 incident had not occurred. Then discuss the concept of turning points in history.



Thaw in the Cold War: Eisenhower and Khrushchev at Gettysburg

Activity 2: International Diplomacy

In a classroom discussion, ask students to name some events from the 1960s to the present that involved international diplomacy. (Examples include former president Carter's trips to Haiti and Bosnia, 1994; President Reagan's visit to Moscow, 1988; Camp David accords, 1978-79; and Paris peace talks, 1968.) Divide students into groups of four or five and assign each group one of the events. Ask students to research their event and answer the following questions: What were the issues that led to the event? Who were the parties involved? Why were they at odds? What did each party hope to gain by meeting? Where did the meetings take place? Do you think the location had any influence on the attitudes of the people involved? Was there a mediator? If so, who? What role did the mediator play? Was there an atmosphere of congeniality or hostility? What was the outcome of the meetings? Compare these meetings with the meeting between Eisenhower and Khrushchev.

Ask one person from each group to briefly explain their event to the class. Next have a different group member represent each of the parties involved (including the mediator if applicable) and present their side of the issue. For each event, hold a debate on which party the class believes was most "right" in their views. Teachers may wish to conclude the activity by discussing with students the following questions: Can they think of examples of negotiations that were held on a national level? state? local? Are formal negotiations useful? Why or why not? What other ways are there to solve conflicts?



Thaw in the Cold War: Eisenhower and Khrushchev at Gettysburg

Activity 3: Preparing for Nuclear War

In the 1950s, with tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States high, communities prepared for the possibility of atomic warfare. As nuclear weaponry became more and more sophisticated, Americans worried that Soviet long-range bombers and missiles could strike anywhere in the United States. Towns designated and stocked fallout shelters, and schools drilled students to prepare for nuclear attacks. The fear was so omnipresent and so real to people who were school children during that time, which, in many cases, their uneasiness has never entirely left them. Have students interview someone who lived in their community or area in the 1950s and ask how they prepared for the possibility of nuclear war. Did their family stock food and water? Did they build a family-sized fallout shelter? Were larger fallout shelters constructed for the community? Where were they located? Were air raid drills conducted? How often? What procedure was followed during the drills? How did these events affect their day-to-day life and their peace of mind? Now ask students to find out if any physical evidence of the Cold War remains in their area such as fallout shelters or air raid sirens. Have students report their findings to the class.



Thaw in the Cold War: Eisenhower and Khrushchev at Gettysburg

References and Endnotes

Reading 1

Reading 1 was abridged and excerpted from *Public Papers of the Presidents: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1959* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960), 560-575.

Document 1:

Courtesy of Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

Reading 2

From the Eisenhower National Historic Site archives.

Reading 3

Courtesy of Dwight D. Eisenhower Library



Thaw in the Cold War: Eisenhower and Khrushchev at Gettysburg

Additional Resources

Thaw in the Cold War: Eisenhower and Khrushchev at Gettysburg contrasts the simplicity of Eisenhower's farm to the complexity of the negotiations taking place between the most powerful world leaders of the 1950s. Below are materials for further exploration of Eisenhower and his presidency, the life of Nikita Khrushchev, and Soviet-American relations during the Cold War.

Eisenhower NHS

The Eisenhower National Historic Site is a unit of the National Park System. The [park's web pages](#) provide resources for educators and a [video tour](#).

American Presidents Travel Itinerary

The Discover Our Shared Heritage online travel itinerary on [American Presidents](#) provides information about the 34th President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and his Pennsylvania farm, the [Eisenhower National Historic Site](#).

National Park Service - Museum Management Program

[American Presidents & First Ladies: Dwight D. Eisenhower and Mamie Eisenhower](#) is an online multimedia exhibit that explores multiple facets of Eisenhower's presidency, the trend-setting style of First Lady Mamie, and gives visitors an intimate view of the Eisenhowers in their comfortable home, with their family and friends, and a look at Ike's successful cattle operation at Eisenhower Farms in Gettysburg, PA. The Museum Management Program also has two lesson plans focused on the Eisenhowers in their Teaching with Museum Collections series: [Eisenhower's Presidency](#) and [The Eisenhower Farm: Leaving the Land Better Than He Found It!](#)

Biographies of President Eisenhower

The following include:

- a copy of Eisenhower's [First](#) and [Second](#) Inaugural Addresses;
- [a portrait](#) from the White House;
- A timeline of Eisenhower's presidency and related links provided by the [Eisenhower Center](#).

National Archives (NARA)

The National Archives maintains the [Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library](#). In addition, the Archives has placed on its web site a large number of items about Eisenhower and his presidency. To find them, visit the [NARA search engine](#).





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*President
has seen
it*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

September 16, 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Planning for Camp David

In the meeting with Foreign Minister Gromyko this morning (memorandum of conversation enclosed) we reached agreement on a tentative plan for talks at Camp David as follows:

Saturday morning:

1. Germany and Berlin
2. Disarmament
3. Nuclear Tests

Saturday afternoon:

4. Exchanges and Contacts
5. Nuclear Reactor Information
6. Political Treaty and Other Bilateral Questions
7. Laos and Iran

Sunday morning:

8. Trade
9. Possible Summit Meeting
10. Final Communique



Mr. Gromyko indicated in addition to the Soviet group (Mr. Khrushchev, Mr. Gromyko, Ambassador Menshikov, Mr. Soldatov and Mr. Troyanovski) who would be staying at Camp David, they might wish to bring Soviet experts when specific topics were to be discussed. He mentioned only Mr. Lunkov (Germany and Berlin), Mr. Sobolev (Disarmament), Mr. Zhukov (Exchanges and Contacts), and Mr. Yemelyanov (Nuclear Reactor Information).

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Authority *MR 77-15144*

By *hca* NLE Date *4/1/80*

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It was agreed that there would be no public announcement concerning the list of topics for discussion at Camp David, but it was also agreed that either side could raise any question at any time it wished, and that each side would prepare separate papers on each subject but would not exchange them.

It was suggested that it might be desirable to reserve Friday evening and Saturday evening for general discussions and in this connection we made reference to your discussion with Chairman Khrushchev yesterday on the subject of "International Communism".

Mr. Gromyko referred to the "Treaty of Friendship" proposed by the Soviet Government in 1956 and, at his request, this was included as a topic on the tentative list together with our mention of Other Bilateral Issues.

Mr. Gromyko inquired about our views on zones in Europe for arms limitation, etc., in relation to disarmament, to which I replied that we had in Geneva made it clear that we would discuss this subject only in relation to a reunified Germany.

If you approve, we will plan to bring up to Camp David for our side the following when the subjects indicated are scheduled to be discussed:

Disarmament, Nuclear Tests and Nuclear Reactor Information - Mr. Philip Farley of the Department, Mr. John Irwin of the Department of Defense and Mr. John McCone, Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission. May wish to include Admiral Rickover, who discussed reactor information in Moscow.

*Also
Kistkowski
McCone will
not bring in*

Laos - Assistant Secretary Parsons

Exchanges and Contacts - Ambassador Lacy of the Department and Mr. Allen of USIA

Trade - Under Secretary Dillon.

Position papers have already been prepared on all the above mentioned subjects and many others which might come up. We will provide you with special brief talking

papers

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papers covering each of the listed topics as well as others which might be raised either by the Soviets or by ourselves. There is also a talking paper entitled "Major Themes of Khrushchev's Public and Private Statements and US Counter-arguments", which may prove useful in the general discussions which may be held on Friday and Saturday evenings.

Christian A. Herter

Christian A. Herter



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