

Teacher Fellowship Programme 2017: The Cold War in the Classroom



Historical Association

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in partnership with



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Teacher Fellow Resource: Cold War revision aid and interpretation guide

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Cold War revision aid and interpretation guide

Introduction and rationale

This resource is based on an idea for an activity for an overview of the Holocaust, developed by Paul Salmon of UCL. I found it very effective in helping post-16 students in their understanding of events. The Cold War period seemed to offer a similar opportunity to provide a chronological overview of events. Furthermore, the students often found it difficult to connect the historiography of the Cold War with the main events. So another aim of this resource is to provide a visual and interactive connection between them.

Timelines are often seen as one-dimensional and relegated to a lower status in the study of history. However, as Tim Chapman recognised:

Timelines are just one tool useful for developing chronology, both for single studies of particular changes but also for comparative work. They allow pupils to work with greater independence and a wider vocabulary. (Teaching History, 73, 'Historical Witnesses', October 1993, pp.25-26).

The aim of this resource is to develop the latter factors in particular. Students will work in collaboration and progress their understanding in partnership. The interactive nature of the resource allows the teacher and student to develop points through discussion and make links thematically and chronologically. More able students can be stretched through questioning: both in terms of informed, spontaneous questioning from the teacher and through encouraging students to ask questions of the timeline themselves.

The link to an exam-style interpretations question seemed a logical step, but equally a more narrative descriptive account would be valid as links could be highlighted through the timeline activity, cause and consequence being an obvious development to be identified.

The resource is a revision exercise but seeks to be more than a regurgitation of events. Knowledge of the sequence of events is needed to complete the exercise but progress should be witnessed through the discussion of links, more in-depth knowledge and sequencing over time. The lesson can be used at all key stages and ability levels, by reducing content or asking more questions of the content included or, just as importantly, omitted. This is therefore an end-of-unit lesson useful at all stages and, by changing the exam-style question to suit the specific needs of the group, can be used by all students from Year 9 onwards. There is no timing given for the lesson as it may prove restrictive. It is envisaged that the full exercise will take more than one session to complete all tasks; the time taken to complete all tasks will depend on the individual teacher and student group.

By being able to manipulate the content and discuss openly in groups, or as a class, knowledge will be increased and a more in-depth understanding developed. I know from my use of the Holocaust timeline that students were able to make connections across time and recall specific events in later lessons by using their visual memory. This is a messy, unstructured and dangerous lesson in some ways but it does allow independent thought and

ideas to be shared. However, the depth of understanding gained and the assistance it will give to students in their studies do depend on the guile and instinct of the teacher to intervene and encourage when necessary.

On most of the event slides in the main presentation is a suggested source, in the slide notes, of varying type, which could be used in this lesson or in a subsequent lesson as a focus or starter activity.

Suggested teaching aims and learning objectives

1. To organise a sequenced overview of a selection of Cold War events.
2. To position and link individuals and historical interpretations to events.
3. To develop knowledge and understanding of the different stages of the Cold War.
4. To construct an exam-style response to a question.

Preparation

Part 1

The timeline requires blank wall spaces, along which the cards will be placed, or desks placed in long rows for a flat surface presentation of the cards. The use of a wall does work better; my students often recalled events by the event's position on the wall. Each group will require one set of the following cards: dates, events, historical interpretation definitions, historians' names and leaders' names. Initially this may seem like a lot of photocopying but the cards are reusable. Prior knowledge is needed as the early part of this activity is very much concerned with using recall to develop knowledge and understanding.

Part 2

For the written elements of the exercise, students will need individual copies of the Historians' interpretation sheet (A4) and the Interpretation guide (A3).

Further guidance for the lesson is on the main lesson PowerPoint provided. Some suggestions for questioning are on the slide notes.

Teacher guidance notes on the resource: slide by slide

Slide 1

This slide should ideally have a striking image on it. Due to copyright restrictions we cannot provide the image. An image suggestion can be found at:

<http://hyperallergic.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/cold-war-graphics-640.jpg>

If you would like to include this, the cartoon can be found at the above address. The cartoon can be used to discuss interpretations, spheres of influence, representations used and selection of countries by the cartoonist.

Slide 2

Lesson objectives could include:

- Can I organise a sequenced overview of a selection of Cold War events?
- Can I position and link individuals and historical interpretations to events?
- Can I develop my knowledge and understanding of the different stages of the Cold War?
- Can I construct an exam-style response to a question?

The class should be separated into groups of four to six. It would be advisable to have mixed ability groups. Desks should be in long rows or blank areas of the wall designated for them to use. They will need Blu Tack if the wall is being used. Instructions for the students are on the PowerPoint. Teacher notes are on each slide and more detailed notes are below.

Resource guidance for timeline task

Activity 1: The 26 events cards (Activity 1 and 2 PowerPoint) are given to each group and they will be placed in chronological order on a timeline. If wall space is available this would be preferable, but desks placed in a row would also be suitable. There are two variations of the activity, with one PowerPoint having events and dates separated ready for cutting, so the events are placed on the timeline first and the dates given as a separate task. Therefore, for this activity, the cards will have to be cut into events cards and dates cards for two activities. The second PowerPoint cards (Quicker Activity 1 and 2 PowerPoint) has dates with the events and could be used for a quicker version of the activity or for less able students.

There are also decade cards (Decades PowerPoint) provided depending on the teacher's judgement of student ability. Using decades rather than specific dates may be less intimidating for some students.

Slide 3

Activity 2: The 26 dates cards are added to the timeline unless completing the quicker activity cards.

Slide 4

Activity 3: Definitions for events will be added to the timeline created in Activity 1 and 2. Students will show a deeper understanding of individual events. These cards are on the Definitions PowerPoint. Some definitions could be left out of a higher-ability group's pack and students could write their own for a more challenging activity.

Slide 5

Activity 4: Groups will add three of their own events to the timeline that they consider significant enough to be included. You may change the number of events to be added to any number you wish. Alternatively, to differentiate between groups, they can be given different numbers of events to add. On blank cards they should write the name, date and a description of the event. Once completed, each group should tell the class one event they have added and why they thought it should be added to the timeline. More able students may be given a specific target, such as to include an event that did not directly involve the USA or USSR or an extra economic or social event.

Slide 6

This can be run through quickly, with students self-correcting if necessary. Their own choices are obviously not included and so discussion will be the teacher's own knowledge. There is a teacher's timeline sheet that does have more events on to help (PowerPoint Teacher's timeline).

Slides 7–32 and 34–36

The slides can be used to simply check the order, or questioning on detail or significance can take place. There are 26 events, so questioning on each slide is not recommended to keep the pace of the lesson moving and maintain student interest.

Each slide has an image reference for an image to support the event in the notes. For copyright reasons, these have been removed, but their inclusion would be useful for further discussion. There are questions provided in the slide notes for most slides.

Slide 33

Activity 5: The leaders of the USA and USSR are added to the timeline in chronological order. This cannot be completed to match events precisely, due to the size of the cards, but gives a rough positioning. Use cards from Activity 6 Leadership PowerPoint.

Slide 37

Activity 6: To help them decide on a significant event, encourage students to use higher-order thinking skills and not just plump for any event. It may be useful to get them thinking by explaining why some events could be classified as significant. Robert Phillips, in 'Historical significance – the forgotten "Key Element"?' (*Teaching History*, 106, 'Citizens and Communities', March 2002), uses Partington's criteria in order to understand what 'significant' could be. It is argued that what makes an event significant is dependent upon the following factors:

- 1. Importance – to the people living at the time.
- 2. Profundity – how deeply people's lives have been affected by the event.
- 3. Quantity – how many lives were affected.
- 4. Durability – for how long people's lives have been affected.
- 5. Relevance – the extent to which the event has contributed to an increased understanding of present life.

The class could vote on the most convincing argument based on the suggested criteria.

Slide 38

Activity 7: Students now consider the changing interpretation of events over time. The interpretation cards are the titles of different schools of historical interpretation. There are four cards and they should be placed roughly within the time period they cover. Descriptions cards are then added, describing the main ideas of each of the four groups of historians. Match them to the school of thought already added. The final set of cards has historians' names, and these need to be placed with the matching description cards.

The historians' names are for more able and advanced groups. Be careful not to move the PowerPoint forward, as the next slide has the ordered ideas, so do not show the students at this point.

Slide 39

To confirm whether students have the correctly matching descriptions, ask individual groups to give one description and the name of that particular viewpoint.

Slide 40

Activity 8: Use the Cold War historiography sheet. Using the completed timelines, students complete the boxes on the sheet. They can feed back to the class or, alternatively, compare and discuss their responses in pairs. The explanation box could be used as an extension activity, depending on ability.

Slide 41

Activity 9: Cold War interpretations chart 1 and/or 2

The students are now ready to use the information in an exam-style question suggested on the A3 sheet. The sheet will lead them to focus on the areas they will receive most marks for. They can use the resources from the lesson to help complete the preparation sheet. This can be completed individually or in pairs. The students can move on to answer the question as a full written question or leave it as a plan. There are two different sheets – one interpretation from the OCR website and an alternative one if the students have already used the OCR example. Both can be marked using the same mark scheme.

Original interpretation and mark scheme can be found

at: <http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/207068-unit-j410-02-international-relations-1918-c.2001-with-germany-1925-1955-sample-assessment-material.pdf>

Source 42

This final slide can be deleted if the exam question is not to be answered and is to be left as a plan.

Cold War historiography

Traditional/Orthodox

Revisionist

Please write the names of three events that could support the historical interpretation in each box.

Post-revisionist

Contemporary/Post-1991

Which of the interpretations do you think has the strongest case? Explain your view in 50 words.

Interpretations exercise Study Interpretation B. Explain why not all historians and commentators have agreed with this interpretation. Use other interpretations and your knowledge to support your answer.

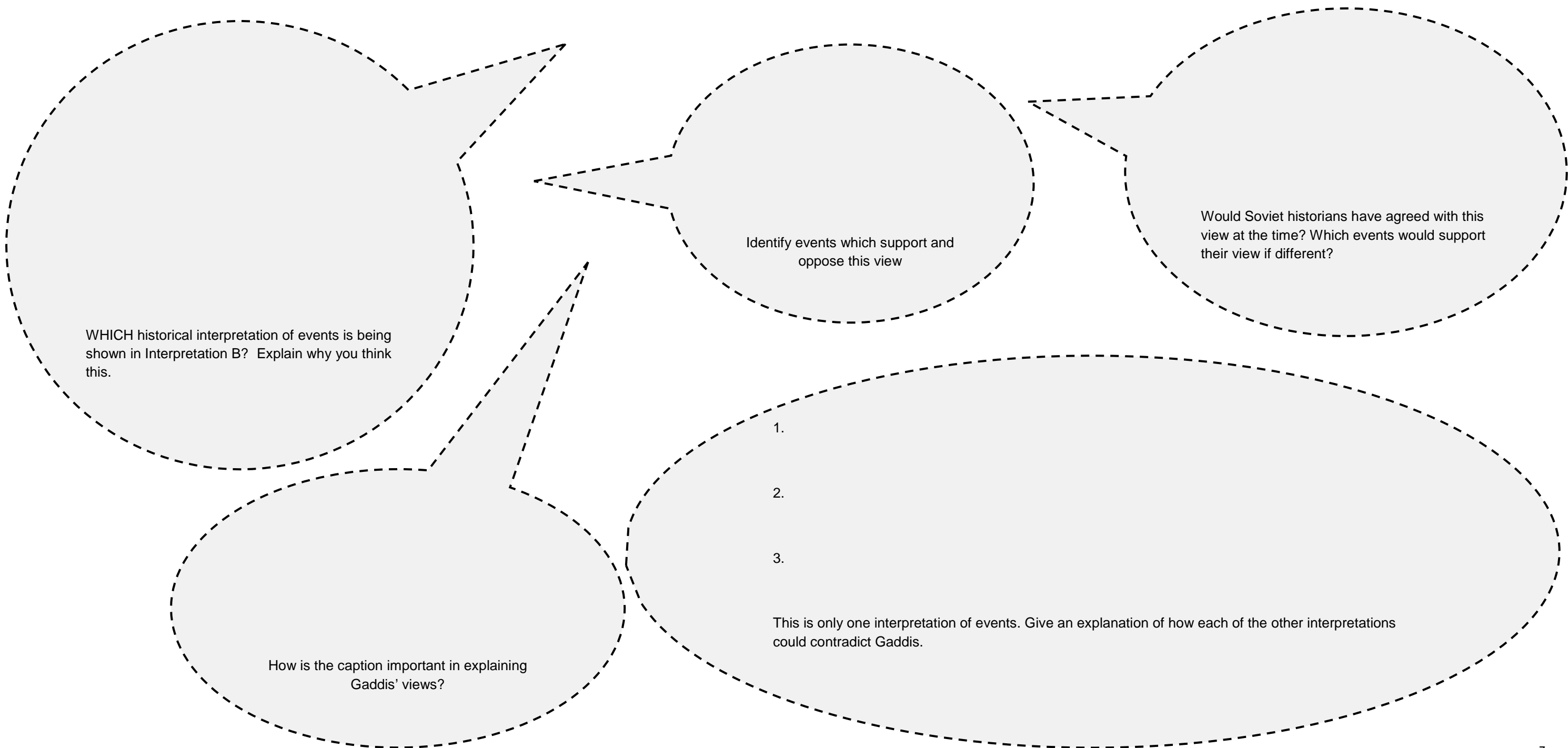
What is the overall message of Interpretation B? Summarise your ideas here.

Interpretation B

Here, then, was the difficulty after the war. The Western democracies wanted a form of security that would reject violence. Security was to be for everyone, it was not to be a benefit denied to some in order to provide it to others. Stalin saw things very differently: security came only by intimidating or eliminating potential challengers. The contrast, or so it would seem, made conflict unavoidable.

From *We Now Know: Rethinking the Cold War* by the American historian John Lewis Gaddis, published in 1997. Gaddis was writing about relations between the USA and the USSR immediately after the Second World War.

- Task: In each speech bubble, analyse what is being written using the suggested exam criteria:*
1. AO4 (a, b and c): Analyse individual interpretations and how and why interpretations differ. [10]
 2. AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the periods studied. [5]
 3. AO2: Explain and analyse historical events and periods studied using second order historical concepts. [5]
- You must cover each of the three focus areas at least once in your response.*
- This is a planning sheet so spill out of the bubbles if you have more to say – you are not being marked on neatness.*



Interpretations exercise Study Interpretation B. Explain why not all historians and commentators have agreed with this interpretation. Use other interpretations and your knowledge to support your answer.

What is the overall message of Interpretation B? Summarise your ideas here.

Interpretation B

The Cold War was caused by the military expansionism of Stalin and his successors. The American response... was basically a defensive reaction. As long as Soviet leaders clung to their dream of imposing Communism on the world, the West had no way (other than surrender) of ending the conflict. When a Soviet leader appeared who was willing to abandon that goal, the seemingly interminable Cold War soon melted away.

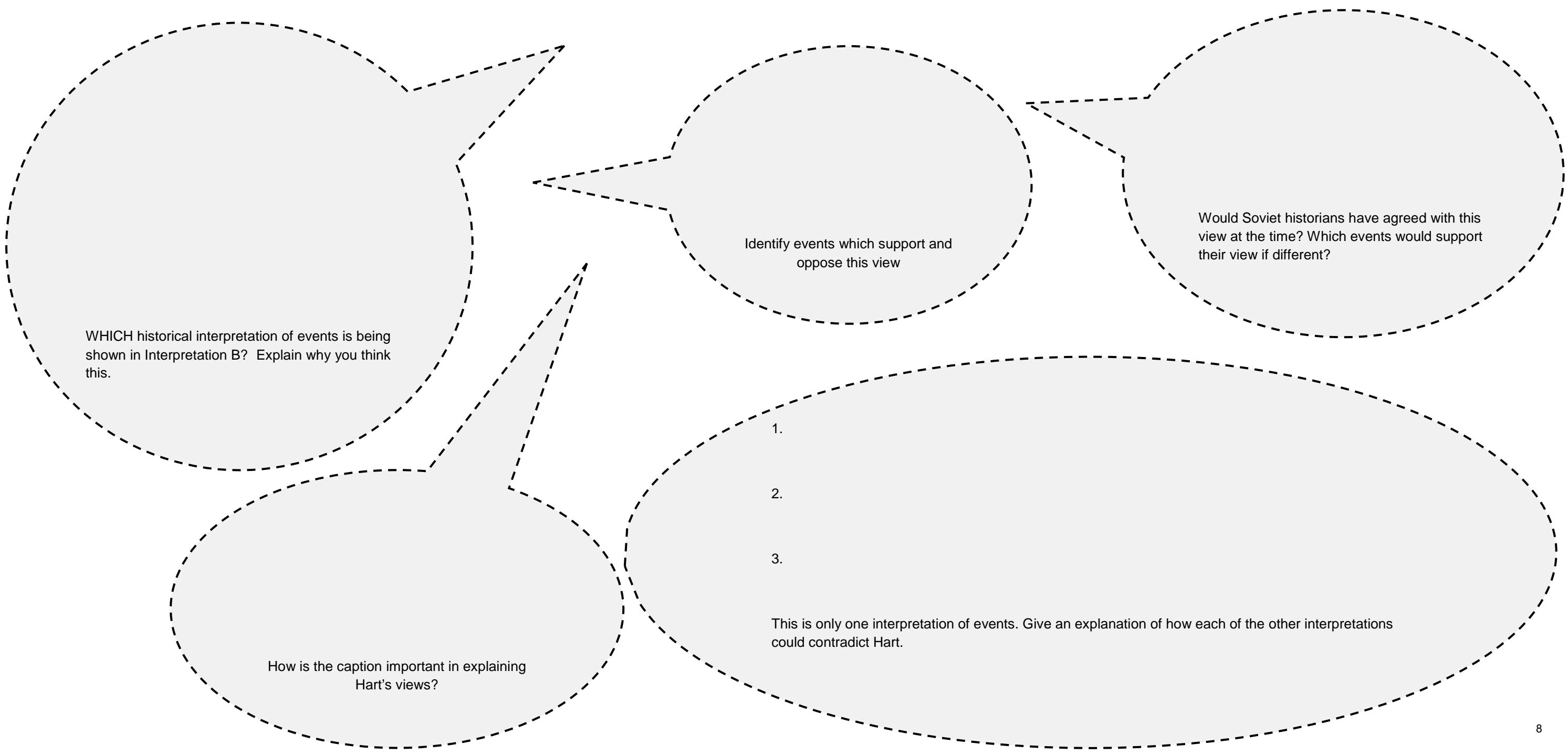
Summary of Michael Hart’s argument justifying placing Mikhail Gorbachev in his top 100 most influential persons in history. Hart is author of: *The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History* (1986)

Task: In each speech bubble, analyse what is being written using the suggested exam criteria:

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Teacher copy of Timeline 1945–91

1945	
YALTA CONFERENCE	The 'Big Three' met to sort out what would happen to Europe after the end of the War. Problems arose immediately about the control of Eastern Europe. Stalin did eventually agree to the principle of 'free elections' in Eastern Europe. Agreements were also made that divided Germany and Berlin into four sectors owned jointly by the major powers, Britain, France, the USA and the USSR.
POTSDAM CONFERENCE	The 'Big Three' had changed – Roosevelt had died and was replaced with Truman, and Churchill lost the election during the conference and was replaced with Attlee. Stalin began to feel that he was not being shown the respect he deserved, especially by Truman, who attempted to intimidate Stalin with the news of the successful atomic bomb test in the USA.
HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI	'Little Boy' bomb, dropped on Hiroshima on 6 August 1945, had a capacity of 12,500 tons of TNT – it killed 70,000 people within two seconds. 'Fat Man' bomb, dropped on Nagasaki on 9 August, had a capacity of 25,000 tons of TNT – it killed 50,000 people within two seconds. Japan unconditionally surrendered on 14 August.
COMMUNIST CONTROL OF EASTERN EUROPE GROWS	Albania (1945); Bulgaria (1945); Poland (1947); Hungary (1947); Romania (1945–1947); Czechoslovakia (1945–1948); East Germany (1949) – Russia turned their zone of Germany into the German Democratic Republic in 1949.
1946	
KENNAN'S LONG TELEGRAM	This was an analysis of the foreign policy of the USSR and its possible future actions. It stated that the Soviet leadership were suspicious and aggressive and that there must be no compromises with the USSR. Only a hard-line approach would be effective in containing Communism. The Telegram proved to be the basis for the Truman Doctrine.
1947	
TRUMAN DOCTRINE	The USA pledged \$400 million to help Greece and Turkey due to the fact that Britain was no longer in a position to do so. This was an attempt to stave off Communism and the first example of an active US policy to combat the threat of Communism in Europe.
1948	

MARSHALL PLAN	This was a huge pledge of money to help countries that wished to stave off Communism. More than \$13 billion was given to a vast number of European countries including Britain, France and West Germany. The USA made sure that all countries who took aid were now also major trading partners of the USA!
COMINFORM	This was the USSR's reaction to the Truman Doctrine – it was an organisation that was set up to 'co-ordinate' Communist groups and parties across Europe.
1949	
COMECON	This was the USSR's reaction to the Marshall Plan – it provided economic assistance to the countries of Eastern Europe.
NATO	The Berlin crisis had illustrated the fact that the West needed a more centrally co-ordinated approach to the threat of Communist expansion. This established military co-operation in the event of war, and included countries such as Britain, France, Canada and Belgium, as well as many smaller Western European nations.
USSR GET THE A-BOMB	The USSR secretly tested their first A-bomb a full six years earlier than the USA had expected them to. The radiation was detected, and thus the power balance of the Cold War had now dramatically been shifted.
1950	
McCARTHYISM	A hunt for the 'Reds under the Beds' took off in the USA. Joseph McCarthy single-handedly sought to oust all Communist sympathisers in the USA.
NSC-68	In the light of the new nuclear threat of Communism, NSC-68 was produced, outlining the new direction that the USA's foreign policy needed to take in order to contain Communism. This new direction would now focus on rollback, the view that Communism needed to be confronted and pushed back to safeguard the free world.
1955	
WARSAW PACT	This was essentially the USSR's response to NATO, although this was more of a forced agreement that co-ordinated the defences of the Soviet Bloc under the control of the Soviet Union. NATO agreed to a West German Army of half a million men. The Warsaw Pact was a reaction to this. The Pact made its members even more reliant upon the USSR for military aid in the event of an attack from outside or within.
1956	

KHRUSHCHEV'S SECRET SPEECH	In 1956, Khrushchev made a 'secret' speech denouncing Stalinism and the cult of the individual. It pointed out in clear terms how dictatorial the regime of Stalin was, and exactly how he purged the Communist Party of any possible threats using illegal methods, including torture, in the late 1930s. The speech seemed to many to herald a new era in the Communist Party.
1960	
U-2 SPY PLANE SHOT DOWN	The USA had developed a spy plane, the U-2, which was able to fly above the reach of Soviet missiles and planes, and thus should have been able to fly and spy safely. Gary Powers was flying a mission across the USSR when his plane was shot down. This was a significant political victory for Khrushchev, who was able to highlight the underhand elements of the USA. It was particularly important as it was just before the two powers were due to meet at a peace conference in Paris. Khrushchev was furious at the blatant rudeness and betrayal that the USA had shown, remarking, 'Why shit where you are about to eat?!' Khrushchev stormed out of the conference.
1961	
BERLIN WALL	West Berlin had constantly been the thorn in the USSR's side, and by 1961, they had lost millions of workers across the borders. Khrushchev had to stop West Berlin from undermining the control and power of the USSR. To do so, a wall would be built that surrounded the whole of West Berlin.
TSAR BOMB	A Russian bomber dropped the Tsar bomb, the largest nuclear weapon ever detonated, in a test over the Arctic Ocean. The 57-megaton Tsar bomb was thousands of times more powerful than the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945.
1962	
CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS	The relationship between the USA and Cuba had deteriorated so much that Cuba had looked to the USSR for help. In return for trade, the USSR was placing nuclear warheads and missiles on Cuba, only 60 miles away from mainland USA, meaning 90% of the USA was within range of the missiles that would take only five minutes to reach them.
1964	

GULF OF TONKIN RESOLUTION	Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution by a unanimous vote in the House and a nearly unanimous vote of 88-2 in the Senate, giving President Lyndon Johnson the authority to send American troops to Vietnam and to use 'all necessary measures to repel armed attack'.
1968	
CRUSHING OF PRAGUE SPRING IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA	The Prague Spring was a period of political liberalisation in Czechoslovakia. It began on 5 January, when reformist Slovak Alexander Dubček came to power, and continued until 21 August when the Soviet Union and members of its Warsaw Pact allies invaded the country to halt the reform.
1972	
SALT I TREATY SIGNED (STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATIONS TALKS)	After two and a half years of negotiation, the first round of SALT was brought to a conclusion on 26 May 1972, when President Nixon and General Secretary Brezhnev signed the ABM Treaty and the Interim Agreement on strategic offensive arms.
1979	
SOVIET FORCES INVADE AFGHANISTAN	Afghanistan was viewed by Moscow as an important buffer state. Soviet troops were sent in to support the government against the Islamic Mujahedeen. America put a ban on the export of grain to Russia, ended the SALT talks taking place then and boycotted the Olympic Games due to be held in Moscow in 1980.
1989	
EASTERN EUROPE CHANGES DIRECTION	Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria and Albania all rejected communism.
MALTA SUMMIT	Gorbachev and Bush established a good working relationship. No new agreements were made, but both leaders declared that the Cold War was over.
1991	
COMMUNISM FALLS IN THE SOVIET UNION	With the Eastern Bloc free of the Soviet Union, the Soviet empire itself began to crumble. On 8 December, the Soviet Union ceased to exist.