 B8 – The Cuban Revolution

Duration - 25 hours/8 weeks

Description of unit

Students will investigate the nation of Cuba in the post WWII period. Students will investigate the downfall of President Fulgencio Batista and rise of the revolutionary movement led by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara. The unit also looks at the political and economic situations in Cuba during the period and their relationship with the United States and impact in Latin America.

| Outcomes/content | Teaching and learning | Evidence of learning |
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|  | Geography of Cuba and its colonial past (teaching time – 1 hour)   * Students review the basic geography of Cuba and how it affected its development and history. * Examples of this can include, natural resources (sugar), coastal nation and proximity to other nations * Students also look at the roles Cuba played as a colony of the Spanish Empire. These roles can include:   + Establishment as an outpost and displacement of indigenous peoples.   + Facilitating the invasion of South and North America (Cortez and Pizzaro).   + Major commercial hub of the Empire for slave trade and sugar supplies. | * Students should be given a satellite map of Cuba and the surrounding region. Students will use this map to examine the geography of Cuba and brainstorm from what they can see the impacts Cuba’s geography would have on the local population e.g. mountainous landscape would make travel difficult. Students should also use this map throughout the topic labelling points of major interest such as cities and battlefields. * Students will view the slave trade map and discuss Cuba’s role in the slave trade as a major port and facilitator. |
|  | Ideologies of the modern world (teaching time – 2 hours)   * Students investigate the ideas and concepts prevailing around the world during the 20th century and their presence in Cuba. These ideas should include:   + Defining ‘left’ and ‘right’ politics.   + Defining Communism/Socialism and Fascism/Nationalism and investigating their role in the modern world post/WW2 - tensions.   + Growing political awareness of the proletariat and revolutions around the world (Russia, China & Romania). | * Students draw a political line where they will map out (left to right) the different ideologies (capitalism, socialism, nationalism, fascism, communism, conservatism, anarchism etc.) with definitions below them. * Students complete the 8 values political spectrum test to see where they are on the scale. They will then write a paragraph detailing why they support their selected political stance. * Students will do a SWOT analysis on communism and capitalism where they will compare each. |
|  | Political landscape of Cuba before Castro – The US puppet and Batista years (teaching time – 3 hours)   * Students investigate the political climate of Batista-Cuba and the role President Batista played in causing discontent among the Cuban population, including:   + The rise of Batista   + Suppression of civil liberties such as right to strike and freedom of speech.   + Promotion of the Catholic Church in Cuban society.   + The stagnating economy of Cuba and it’s monopolisation of sugar. * Students will also look at Cuban international relations pre-revolution (particularly the suzerainty with the U.S.A), including:   + American military, economic and political support for the Batista regime.   + American and foreign ownership of the sugar fields and its role in the declining Cuban economy. | * Students construct a dossier on President Batista detailing biographical information and also a list of alleged crimes that Batista had committed and their effects on the local population. Such example crimes could include: * High treason, for selling the nation's assets to the Americans. * Mass murder, for the killing of dissidents in Cuba. * Aiding criminals, for his close links with the American Mafia. * Students draw and label a web which details the relationships of Batista with individuals and groups. For example, Castro (enemy), U.S.A (supporter), American Mafia (supplier) etc. * Students will do a brief research on 1 Cuban capitalist/right side figure and 1 Cuban Communist/left side figure. Students will then compare the differences in beliefs between the 2 and how they would bring them into inevitable conflict. |
|  | Historical context (teaching time – 4 hours)   * Students will examine the political, economic and social conditions in Cuba under President Batista including:   + The importance of sugar on the Cuban Economy   + Living conditions of the people of Cuba * Students will need to identify the causes of the revolution in Cuba including:   + Identifying the political and societal conditions making Cuba ripe for revolution.   + Identifying who the leaders of the revolution were.   + The backgrounds of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara and how these factors influenced the men to start the revolution. | * Students should research and investigate the amount of sugar exported from Cuba in the period 1950-1963 and compile a graph demonstrating the pattern. Students should then draw the conclusion on what the impact was for Cuba and how the numbers changed over this period of time. * Students to investigate “Who were the Castro Brothers?” Establish a biography of the Castro Brothers, especially Fidel. Examine the family background and education. Answer the question – why were the Castro brothers keen to see the overthrown of the Batista regime? * Students construct a relationship web for Fidel Castro in which they examine all of his relationships and label them. Batista (enemy), Raul (brother), USSR (supplier) etc. * Students should complete an analysis of Ernesto Che Guevara eulogy by Fidel Castro. From this, students should compile a profile of Guevara’s life. (This will help with the assessment) |
| * the nature of the Cuban Revolution, including:   + the course of the revolution   + the creation of the communist state | The nature of the Cuban Revolution (teaching time – 8 hours)   * Students need to review the course of the revolution including the steps taken by Castro to seize power and Batista’s response * the creation of the communist state. What the transition to communism meant for Cuba socially, economically and politically * The ideology of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, and their influence across Latin America * The nature of guerrilla warfare and the activities of revolutionaries and how this is different to past combat wars * The aftermath of the revolution and Cuba’s place in the world including everyday life for the Cuban people. | * The first attempt at the revolution. Students should establish a timeline of events and evaluate why the revolution failed. * Students should analyse a section of “History will Absolve Me” as given by Castro in court during his trial. Students should use the speech to determine what Castro wanted for Cuba. * Castro’s time in exile – students should construct a comic strip outlining the key adventures Castro undertook whilst in exile. * Events of 1958 and Guerilla Warfare. Students look at examples of Guerilla Warfare, going through the basic definition and the weapons/tactics used. For practical and video examples teachers can search through a multiple of videos relating to the Vietnam war. Students may also analyse songs such as ‘I was only 19’ and ‘Goodnight Saigon’ and answer the following question “With reference to the song describe the experiences of soldiers combating Guerrilla Warfare”. * Events of 1958 and Guerilla Warfare. Students look at examples of Guerilla Warfare, going through the basic definition and the weapons/tactics used. For practical and video examples teachers can search through a multiple of videos relating to the Vietnam war. Students may also analyse songs such as ‘I was only 19’ and ‘Goodnight Saigon’ and answer the following question “With reference to the song describe the experiences of soldiers combating Guerrilla Warfare”. * Ideology and the establishment of communism in 1959. Students recall lesson in ideology and look at the ideology in practice and identify features in the new Communist State. How were these features different from the previous Batista regime? * Students do an analysis of the different forms of welfare found in capitalism and communism by doing a comparison between 1960’s Communist Cuba and Capitalist US. Students should be able to see the benefits and negatives of each i.e. guaranteed employment in Cuba but no freedom of speech. Students will then have to make a judgement on which one they would like to live and write a justification as to why citing historical evidence. |
|  | Cuba’s relationship with the world (teaching time – 6 hours)   * Students should assess the international reactions and foreign policy changes of countries towards Cuba, including Cuba’s relationship with the USA * Students need to discuss and assess the reasons for the shift in Cuban foreign policy towards the USSR and the consequences for that shift. Students should also examine the impact of that shift and its consequences in terms of the Cuban Missile Crisis. * Cuba’s relationship with Latin America | * Students will read through the Bay of Pigs invasion story as presented by the JFK Library. Students will then discuss what might be missing from this recount and why some facts might be omitted. Students should eventually come to the conclusion that some things are warped to protect JFK. * Bay of Pigs – students will analyse a source on the Bay of Pigs invasion. Students will detail the reasons why the invasion failed according to the veterans and cross check it against official American responses. Students will also analyse how this soured Cuban’s opinions of the US. * Cuban Missile Crisis – read the account of the Cuban Missile crisis from Sorensen, T(2008): Counselor: Life at the Edge of History- Chapter 23 and have students establish a timeline of events of the Cuban Missile Crisis, clearly identifying what the outcome of the Cuban Missile Crisis was for each country. Google search the Ted-Ed talks on the history of the Cuban Missile Crisis for a brief overview of the event. Students whilst viewing these videos will discuss the impacts of Soviet ‘friendship’ on Cuba. * Students draw up a table of the impacts of the American trade embargo on Cuba. On one side they will list materials that America lost due to the embargo and on the other the same for Cuba. They will then discuss the purpose of the embargo, was it just an attempt to please Miami Cubans or did America actually believe they could overthrow the country through non-violent means after the failed Bay of Pigs Invasion? |
| a relevant historical debate or issue, for example: | Historical debate or issue (teaching time – 4 hours)   * Evaluating Castrol’s leadership. Researching the nature of Cuba’s relationship with another country, not including the United States. * Cuba in a post Fidel Castro world. Examining the ongoing foreign relationships between Cuba and the rest of the world. | * Relationships with the world – group activity. Have students in groups adopt a country other than the United States such as South Africa, Argentina, etc and research the nature of their relationship with Cuba. * Ongoing relationship between Cuba and the United States and the implications prior to the death of Castro. Students should view the episode The West Wing S06E19 Ninety Miles Away. Have students evaluate the accuracy of the episode. * Cuba/US Relations post 2016. View news articles from President Obama’s visit to Cuba in 2016. Establish what was achieved and what the reestablishment of ties means for both nations. Discuss if this is a mutually beneficial relationship or one sided in a similar fashion to the US/Cuba relationship of the 1950s. |

Resources

* Image: [Global slave trading map](https://www.flickr.com/photos/45803876@N00/31911547722) (date accessed 31/7/17)
* [8 Values political test](https://8values.github.io/)
* Speech: [History will Absolve Me by Fadel Castro](https://www.marxists.org/history/cuba/archive/castro/1953/10/16.htm) (date accessed 31/7/17)
* [Eulogy of Ernest Che Guevara](http://www.eulogyspeech.net/famous-eulogies/Fidel-Castro-Eulogy-for-Che-Guevara.shtml#.WX6BrtOGOCQ) delivered by Fidel Castro 18th October 1967 (date accessed 31/7/17)
* Sorensen, Theodore (2008): Counselor: Life at the Edge of History, Harper Perennial

Reflection and evaluation