

HISTORY · Y5–Y6

# The Cold War

Knowledge Organiser — Y5–Y6

## Key vocabulary

1

**Cold War**

The period of tension and rivalry between the USA and USSR from 1947 to 1991. 'Cold' because the two superpowers never directly fought each other.

2

**Capitalism**

Economic system where businesses are privately owned and compete for profit. The USA's system.

3

**Communism**

Economic and political system where the state controls the economy and property is shared. The USSR's system.

4

**Nuclear weapons**

Weapons of mass destruction powered by nuclear reactions. Both superpowers built huge arsenals — enough to destroy the world many times over.

5

**NATO**

North Atlantic Treaty Organization — military alliance of Western nations led by the USA, founded 1949.

6

**Warsaw Pact**

The USSR's equivalent military alliance of Eastern European communist states, founded 1955.



7

**Iron Curtain**

Winston Churchill's term for the ideological and physical barrier dividing democratic Western Europe from communist Eastern Europe.

## Cold War events

1947–1991

- 1947: Truman Doctrine — USA pledges to support countries resisting communism
- 1949: USSR tests its first nuclear bomb; NATO founded
- 1950–53: Korean War — first 'hot' proxy conflict of the Cold War
- 1957: USSR launches Sputnik — first satellite; Space Race begins
- 1961: Berlin Wall built — dividing East and West Berlin
- 1962: Cuban Missile Crisis — closest the world came to nuclear war
- 1969: USA lands on the Moon (Apollo 11)
- 1985: Mikhail Gorbachev becomes USSR leader — begins reform
- 1989: Berlin Wall falls — symbol of Cold War's end
- 1991: USSR collapses — Cold War ends

