

# #12135 TRUMAN, EISENHOWER, & KENNEDY

NEW DIMENSION MEDIA/QUESTAR, 2003

Grade Level: 3–8

12 Minutes



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### **Truman, Eisenhower & Kennedy** **Our Presidents in America's History Series**

**Subject Area:** Social Studies, U.S. History

**Synopsis:** Highlights the presidencies of Harry Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and John F. Kennedy. Discusses the use of the atomic bomb in Japan to end World War II, the Cold War, the Truman Doctrine, the Korean War, the Eisenhower Doctrine, the Space Race, the civil rights movement, the Bay of Pigs fiasco, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

- Objective 1)** Students will be able to discuss the major events of Harry Truman's presidency, including the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the spread of communism, and the Korean War.
- Objective 2)** Students will be able to describe the growing tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Eisenhower administration.
- Objective 3)** Students will be able to discuss the major events of John F. Kennedy's presidency, including the Space Race, the civil rights movement, the Bay of Pigs fiasco, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and his assassination in 1963.
- Objective 4)** Students will be able to explain the Truman and Eisenhower Doctrines, which asserted US rights to use force to defend countries threatened by communist expansion.

#### **Pre-Viewing Activities:**

- 1) Have a class discussion about communism and how it differs from democracy. On a map, point out the Communist nations in the world at the end of World War II. Also point out the countries into which communism was spreading, including Korea and Vietnam.
- 2) Vocabulary: atomic bomb, communism, expansionism, optimistic, Cold War, tranquility, suburbs, Arms Race, nuclear weapons, covert operations, Sputnik, debate, space race, civil rights movement, Bay of Pigs, assassination

#### **Post-Viewing Discussion and Activities:**

- 1) Why was the atomic bomb used in Hiroshima and Nagasaki? How many people died in these bombings? (152,000) In Truman's position, would you make the same choice? How has the technology of nuclear weapons impacted how wars are fought?
- 2) Explain the Truman Doctrine. Why was communism a threat to the United States? What conflicts did the United States become involved in to prevent the spread of communism?
- 3) Why did Truman fire General Douglas MacArthur? Was this a popular decision at the time?

- 4) How did Dwight D. Eisenhower plan to achieve peace? Explain the Eisenhower Doctrine.
- 5) How did John F. Kennedy's poise on television help him win the Presidential election? What is the role of television in elections? How might television impact viewers' decisions?
- 6) What characteristics of John F. Kennedy inspired the nation? What types of programs did he focus on while in office?
- 7) Explain the Bay of Pigs fiasco. Why did Kennedy order an invasion of Cuba by anti-Castro exiles?

**Additional Activities:**

- 1) Discuss the history of discrimination in the United States, the Civil Rights Movement, and the contributions of Martin Luther King, Jr. How is life in America today different from in Martin Luther King Jr.'s time? What types of discrimination do you see today? If possible, review King's "I Have a Dream" Speech. Have students write their own speech addressing a social problem, starting with the sentence "I have a dream."
- 2) Have a class discussion about communism today. Point out communist nations on a map. Discuss how communist governments function, the benefits and drawbacks to communism, and life in communist countries. Have students write about how their lives would be different if they lived under communism.

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