THE COLD WAR: ARMS RACE AND SPACE RACE

The Arms Race

The Arms Race was an aspect of the Cold War in which the United States and the Soviet Union competed to have greater military force than the other. Because of the lack of information on the Soviet Union, the United States based much of its need for military innovation on the assumption that the Soviet military status was greater than that of America. The Arms Race had two fronts, nuclear weaponry, and conventional military weapons. Of these two, the more active was the nuclear front. America believed that if the Soviet Union were to have more nuclear warheads than the U.S., they would be less afraid to use them. For this reason, U.S. strived to maintain, at minimum, nuclear equality with the Soviets. Also, nuclear rivalry led to the invention of a long line of increasingly deadlier weapons – each more powerful than the last.

1. WHO was involved in the Arms Race?

2. In your own words, WHAT was the Arms Race?

3. WHY did the Arms Race take place?

4. What happened AS A RESULT of the Arms Race?

Nuclear Fears at Home

As a result of the Arms Race and the growing threat from the Soviet Union, the U.S. government prepared American citizens for the possibility of a nuclear attack at home. The Office of Civil Defense created a short movie called “Duck and Cover” to be shown in schools throughout America in the 1950s. After watching the movie in class, respond to the questions below.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1SNIImIPS9c

5. What did the movie teach school children to do? Why?

6. Do you think this movie was necessary? Why or why not?

The Space Race
The Space Race was an aspect of the Cold War, in which the United States and the Soviet Union competed to have greater technology than the other. Following the conclusion of this conflict, the United States and the USSR (Soviet Union) began doing long-range missile testing. As a result of this, Sputnik was launched in 1957.

Sputnik was the world's first artificial satellite. The launch of Sputnik proved to be a significant victory for the Soviets during the Space Race. Not only did this historic launch prove that they had a greater amount of technological knowledge than the US, but it also established their presence in space as well. If the Soviets had a rocket powerful enough to launch a satellite, could their rockets armed with atomic weapons reach the United States?

The U.S. entered the "space race" in 1958 when it launched one of its own satellites into orbit around the earth. The U.S. also set up the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, or NASA. Its mission was to direct an American space program to compete with that of the Soviets. Several years later, President John F. Kennedy set what was thought, at that time, to be the unachievable goal of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the earth. During the following months, rockets were launched, docking mechanisms tested, spacesuit designs analyzed, and "space walks" were performed. Finally, in 1969, all of this work paid off.

7. a) Why did the launch of Sputnik increase tensions between the U.S. and Soviet Union?

b) How did the U.S. respond to this?

On July 20, 1969, American astronaut Neil Armstrong took mankind's first steps on the moon. In the following two and a half years, twelve American men would set foot on the moon. Not only did these landings represent a US victory over the Soviets, but also a technological triumph that proved to the US and the rest of the world that anything was possible with technology.

**Watch the multimedia video clip of Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin’s 1969 moon landing.**

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0TYuXj5saGk&feature=f01t

8. What impact do you think America’s moon landing had on the Cold War? Why?