

The Fever of '57

EXPLORATION 2: How Does America Respond to Shock, to an attack or a perceived threat to our way of life?

Disciplines: Social Studies, History

Suggested Age: This exploration is appropriate for Grades 8 through College level, with varying levels of sophistication.

Background: Pearl Harbor, Sputnik, 9/11 – three great shocks to America in the last century. Can we learn anything from how we've responded in the past that might help us in the future? The film vividly shows us how we responded to the shock of Sputnik over days, then weeks, then months. Why were we shocked? How did we respond? What does our response tell us about ourselves, our nation, and how we viewed the Soviet Union?

Exploration 2 Activity Ideas for Students:

Activity 1a: Create an essay, large poster, or power point presentation that compares America's response to Sputnik days, weeks, months, and then 2 or 3 years after the event.

- What was the mood of the country before the attack?
- How did daily life change?
- How did political leader respond?
- How did citizens respond?
- What was the media saying?
- How did our society change after the shock?
- Did we talk to the enemy, and did this help or hinder relations?

Activity 1b: Now compare and contrast the three shocks side by side once the reality set in: Pearl Harbor, Sputnik and 9/11. Create a large poster, use a spreadsheet, or use the blackboard:

- What did we know in advance of each shock, if anything?
- Was there anything we could have done to prevent them?
- Did the shock lead to new legislation of any kind, and what was it?
- How did the President in office respond and demonstrate leadership?
- Did we talk to enemy and did that help or hinder relations?
- How did everyday citizens respond?
- How did the media respond?

Activity 1c: After completing 1b above, in which of the three crises did American leaders perform the best. In which did they perform the worst?

Activity 2: Write an essay agreeing or disagreeing with this statement: Climate Change is the 4th Shock.

Activity 3: Write an essay based on this quote and supporting article: "Big, long-term investments in new technologies are made only by governments and are almost always motivated by concerns about national security or economic competitiveness....The Internet (originally Arpanet) was created by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, which was itself established in response to the Soviet Union's launching of the first Sputnik satellite in 1957. "

<http://www.tnr.com/docprint.mhtml?i=20070924&s=nordhaus092407>

Related Media:

- Part 1 - 3 – The Fever of '57 (DVD)
- Filmmaker David Hoffman on Sputnik: A Big Shock
- Filmmaker David Hoffman on Sputnik Moments: www.thefeverof57.com/coolvideos

Student Handouts and Helpers:

- Exploration 2 Student Activity
- Online Homework Helper for Exploration 2 at www.theeverof57.com

Related National Council of Social Studies Standards:

1. **Standard VI** Power, Authority and Governance (Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create and change structures of power, authority and governance.)
2. **Standard X** Civil Ideas and Practices (Social studies program should include experiences that provide for the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic.)

Additional Questions for Classroom Inquiry and Discussion:

1. Will tomorrow be the same as today, and what forces shape our expectations?
2. What's the role of Intelligence (CIA, FBI) in preparing us for shock through intelligence, or do they prevent us from knowing things that might scare us?
3. What role do the media and political leaders play in fueling or quelling fears?
4. What role do citizens play in creating a safe and free society?
5. Think about President Roosevelt's quote, "The only thing to fear is fear itself," and put it into the context of our reaction to 9/11 and the creation of the Patriot Act. How do we balance our need for security with America's ideal of freedom?
6. To what degree should our political leaders be totally honest with the American people in times of crisis?
7. Other than climate change, what might become another major shock to the United States in the future?

Online Homework Helper for Exploration 2 (list in development, has to be annotated)

The links below are available and hot-linked for students from the website www.theeverof57.com under "Homework Helper".

Pearl Harbor

- http://www.pbs.org/perilousfight/battlefield/pearl_harbor
- <http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/pearl.htm>
- <http://content.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=4688>
- <http://www.historyplace.com/worldwar2/timeline/pearl.htm>

Sputnik

- <http://www.coldwar.org/articles/50s/sputnik.asp>
- <http://history.nasa.gov/sputnik/>
- http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/science/july-dec97/sputnik_10-2.html
- <http://www.worldmag.com/articles/13237>
- <http://www.centennialofflight.gov/essay/SPACEFLIGHT/Sputnik/SP16.htm>

9/11

- <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/military/terroristattack/sept11/index.html>
- <http://teacher.scholastic.com/scholasticnews/indepth/911/>
- <http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2002/america.remembers/>

Exploration 2

Student Activity Sheet

The Fever of '57

Your Exploration

How Does America Respond to Shock?

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Here's What to Do

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Visit The Fever of '57 Homework Helper for videos and links to help you with Exploration 2.

www.thefeverof57.com