

Exploration 2

Student Activity Sheet

The Fever of '57

Your Exploration

How Does America Respond to Shock?

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 it tell us about ourselves?

Here's What to Do

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>

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

www.thefeverof57.com