

# Exploring the Marshall Plan through Primary Documents



A new citizen of Essen, Germany, looks at a world of rubble

At the end of World War II, Europe lay in ruins and Soviet armies occupied much of Eastern Europe. In the next two years, communist governments were installed in most of these occupied countries and our former ally assumed the role of a political and military opponent. What was the need for this massive aid plan? How was the Marshall Plan perceived at home and abroad? How effective was this aid? Students will use primary sources to answer these questions.

<b>Overview</b>	
<b>Objectives</b>	Students will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine a variety of primary sources (political cartoons, photographs, speeches, and posters) to examine the source, message, audience, and intent of the source.</li> <li>Students will assess the need for aid in Europe after World War II</li> <li>Students will assess the impact of the aid program on participating countries</li> </ul>
<b>Recommended Time Frame</b>	One class period
<b>Grade Level</b>	9+
<b>Curriculum Fit</b>	Modern U.S. History
<b>Materials</b>	Copies of pictures and other documents – see second file Copies of document analysis forms, enclosed. If doing the extension poster activity in class, paper or poster board, crayons, markers for posters.

<b>Michigan High School Content Expectations</b>	
	<p><b>P1 Reading and Communication</b></p> <p>P1.1 Use close and critical reading strategies to read and analyze complex texts pertaining to social science</p> <p>P1.2 Analyze point of view, context, and bias to interpret primary and secondary source documents.</p> <p><b>8.1.1 Origins and Beginnings of Cold War</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actions by both countries in the last years of and years following World War II</li> </ul> <p><b>8.1.2 Foreign Policy during the Cold War</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate the origins, setbacks, and successes of the American policy of “containing” the Soviet Union.</li> </ul>

## Procedures

### Start of class

1. Students begin by thinking and writing about this question in their notebooks: Imagine you are about to become a parent. As a new parent, what concerns/worries do you have about your new child, his/her future, and your responsibilities as a parent?
2. After students have thought and written, share some of their responses in class.
3. After this short discussion, distribute or project the picture of the infant in front of the war ruins of Essen, Germany. Begin with students sharing and recording their observations of details in the picture. Then repeat steps 1 and 2 as students try to place themselves as parents in Europe in 1945-46 trying to build a new life for themselves and their families. (It may be necessary to remind students that families would have lost loved ones in the fighting, people might be missing and unaccounted for, or could have been disabled in some way from the war, and homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed.)
4. Cost of the war. Distribute the analysis sheet for viewing photos. Working in pairs or small groups, students will view a series of pictures of war damage and record their observations. The pictures may be printed for students to view at their seats or may be projected for the entire class to view as a group. View photos *Kirkens, Norway had scarcely begun to rise from the ground; Walcheren, Holland after Allies bombed the dyke.*
5. After students have viewed the pictures and recorded their observations, begin a class discussion to compile their observations. What sorts of damage had they observed? Students should be able to categorize what they have observed (e.g. loss of homes, businesses destroyed, etc.)
6. It was not just the extent of the damage and the human suffering in Europe that was a concern to the United States after the defeat of the Nazis. Our former ally, the Soviet Union, was supporting communist or pro-Soviet governments in the countries occupied by its armies at the end of the war. A civil war in Greece (local communists against the monarchy) drew attention to the possible spread of communism outside of Soviet-occupied areas.

Look at the map of Cold War Europe. Take time to identify the countries on the map and the affiliation (West or Soviet) of each country. Students should see the correlation between the type of government of each country and the nationality of the occupation army at the time of the armistice.

Project or distribute the cartoon *While the Shadow Lengthens*. Again students should first record observations of the cartoon details in their notebook before the class discussion.

7. Distribute copies of President Truman's remarks about the need for the Marshall Plan or, alternately, George C. Marshall's Commencement Address at Harvard University. Reading quietly or aloud in class, students should highlight or underline the reasons for recommending such an extensive plan to help European countries. Then students should answer the questions that accompany the handout.

**Background for the students:**

Secretary of State George C. Marshall proposed the aid program in a commencement address he delivered at Harvard University, June 5, 1947. He envisioned a “joint effort” to rebuild Europe, with the U.S. providing funding, food, medicines, and basic material and equipment. The European nations were to develop their own plan for rebuilding. “Our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos,” Marshall declared. All nations suffering war damage were invited to participate, even the Soviet Union and its new satellite nations.

8. Project or distribute copies of *Can he Block it?* Students record their observations of the cartoon and their interpretations prior to beginning class discussion.
9. The procedure is repeated with *The People Speak*. The class discussion should focus on the literal scene that is portrayed, the message or point of the cartoon, and the viewpoint or bias of the artist. Why did these countries not participate?

Optionally, at this time students could receive view *It's the Same Thing*. Again they should observe and record what they see in the cartoon as well as what is the message about recovery in the Soviet bloc countries.

They might also receive or view the cartoon from *Izvestsia* portraying the Soviet view of the Marshall Plan and the intentions of the United States. Again, students should record observations as well as their interpretation of the cartoon.

10. Project, or distribute copies of the following photographs: *Walcheren, Holland After; Holland: Red Cross Collects Plasma; Pruning Vines; France: Streptomycin for Tuberculosis; Belgian Metalworks; Feeding Miners; American Tourists; China Display at Macy's*.
11. Allowing about three to four minutes per picture, students record their observations for the respective pictures.
12. To assess the impact of the Marshall Plan, students/the class will construct either a T-chart or Venn diagram to compare Europe after World War I and after World War II with the Marshall Plan. After completing the diagram, students will return to their notebooks and write their assessments of the impact of the Marshall Plan on the people of Europe.

Points to consider:

- What sorts of assistance did it pay for?
- How were Europeans involved in implementing the plan?
- How is this different than the situation in Europe after World War I?
- How did American businesses and farms also benefit from the Marshall Plan?

**Background information:**

Between 1948 and 1951 over \$13 billion in aid was sent to Europe. The Marshall Plan focused on immediate needs (food, medicine, housing); rebuilding factories and infrastructure; expanding trade between the European nations and the rest of the world; combating inflation and establishing financial stability in Europe; providing technical assistance; working toward the creation of a common market free of national trade barriers. By the end of the plan in 1951, European production was 40 percent above pre-war levels. People had returned to work and were seeing improvement in their standard of living. Communist parties in western Europe had lost their political influence.

## Evaluation

The enclosed rubrics may be used to evaluate student responses in analyzing pictures and the homework poster assignment.

## Extension

1. Distribute the Marshall Plan poster sheet. Students complete the sheet to analyze the poster. For homework students design their own Marshall Plan poster, either from the perspective of 1948-1950 or from the perspective of 2009, a sixty-year reflection on the plan.
2. The Library of Congress exhibition on the Marshall Plan ([For European Recovery: The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Marshall Plan](#)) includes an article for business people about doing business with the government under this aid package. Print and distribute copies of this article (<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/marshall/mb1a.html>). What procedures and requirements were there for businesses to participate under the plan? Would these requirements make it attractive to participate?
3. FOREIGN AID PRIORITIES. Considering the war on terror in the world today, what should be the priorities of the United States in providing foreign aid?
  - A. Form small groups to discuss and rank the following forms of U.S. foreign aid from most (1) to least (6) important.
    - **Humanitarian aid** (food, clothing, medicine, etc.) to nations experiencing droughts, earthquakes, civil wars, and other disasters
    - **Cash grants** to poor developing nations
    - **Loans** to poor developing countries
    - **Civilian advisors** to provide assistance in building the economy and democracy in poor developing countries
    - **U.S. military bases and troops** in strategic countries around the world
    - **Military arms and equipment** to countries threatened by terrorists
  - B. Each group should report to the class on its choice for the most and least important form of U.S. foreign aid along with the group's reasons for its choices.

This activity comes from the Summer 2004 *Bill of Rights in Action*, published by the Constitutional Rights Foundation, Los Angeles. (ISSN: 1534-9799)

## Primary Resources from the Library of Congress

[Can he block it?](#) [1947?] 1 drawing. Marcus, Edwin, 1885-1961, artist.  
CD 1 - Marcus, no. 34 (B size) <P&P> LC-USZ62-53093(b&w film copy neg.)  
Library of Congress. Prints and Photographs Division. Prints and Photographs on-line Catalog.

*For European Recovery: the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Marshall Plan.* Library of Congress. Exhibit. July 11, 2005.

["It's the same thing without mechanical problems"](#) 1949 January 26. 1 drawing on layered paper. Block, Herbert, 1909-2001, artist. Unprocessed [item]  
LC-DIG-ppmsc-03386(digital file from original drawing) Library of Congress.  
Prints and Photographs Division. Prints and Photographs on-line Catalog.

[The voice of the people](#) [1947 July?] 1 drawing. Marcus, Edwin, 1885-1961, artist. CD 1 - Marcus, no. 148 (A size) <P&P> Library of Congress. Prints and Photographs Division. Prints and Photographs on-line Catalog.

[While the shadow lengthens](#) 1948 Mar. 14. 1 drawing. Marcus, Edwin, 1885-1961, artist. CD 1 - Marcus, no. 163 (B size) <P&P> LC-USZ62-86602(b&w film copy neg.) Library of Congress. Prints and Photographs Division. Prints and Photographs on-line Catalog.

## Additional Sources

Secretary of State George C. Marshall. Commencement Address at Harvard University. Cambridge, MA. June 5, 1947. USAID from the American People. (June 27, 2002)  
Online <http://www.usaid.gov/multimedia/video/marshall/maarspeech.html>.  
Accessed August 18, 2009.

"The Marshall Plan for Rebuilding Western Europe." *Bill of Rights in Action*, published by the Constitutional Rights Foundation, Los Angeles. Summer, 2004.  
(ISSN: 1534-9799)

*Truman and the Marshall Plan.* Harry S. Truman Library and Museum. Online. [http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/marshall/large/index.php?action=photos](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/marshall/large/index.php?action=photos).  
Accessed August 6, 2009.

<b>Rubric</b>
<b>Photograph and Cartoon Analysis Rubric</b>

	Most main ideas as well as details noted and recorded	Some main ideas and details noted and recorded	Only main ideas noted and recorded	Few if any main ideas noted and recorded
Observations of details in photograph or editorial cartoon				
Drawing meaning from the observations				
Connecting details to historic period				
Evaluating the source and/or bias				

<b>Rubric for Marshall Plan Poster</b>
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CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Graphics - clarity	Graphics are clear and content is easily viewed from a distance	Most graphics are clear and most of the content is easily viewed from a distance.	Most graphics are clear but the content must be seen fairly close (3-4 ft.)	Many graphics are not clear or are too small to be easily seen.
Graphics - originality	Several graphics used on the poster reflect an exceptional degree of creativity in their creation and/or display.	One or two of the graphics used on the poster reflect student creativity in their creation and/or display.	The graphics are made by the student, but are based on the designs or ideas of others.	No graphics made by the student are included.
Attractiveness of poster	The poster is exceptionally attractive in terms of design layout, and neatness.	The poster is attractive in terms of design, layout and neatness.	The poster is acceptably attractive though it may be a bit messy.	The poster is distractingly messy or very poorly designed. It is not attractive.
Content – historic accuracy	A least 4 accurate facts are displayed on the poster.	3 accurate facts are displayed on the poster.	2 accurate facts are displayed on the poster.	Fewer than 2 accurate facts are displayed on the poster.

## Handouts

### Photograph Analysis Sheet

Name of photograph:

Photographer:

Date:

Source and URL:

Photograph observations:

Photograph questions:

Value – what is learned from this photograph?

Possible bias or viewpoint of photographer:

## **Editorial Cartoon Analysis Sheet**

Name of editorial cartoon:

Cartoonist and publication:

Date:

Source and URL:

Cartoon observations:

Physical qualities

Cartoon questions:

Value – what is learned from this cartoon?

Possible bias or viewpoint of cartoonist or publication: