

# Rebuilding Europe/Marshall Plan

## Background:

Harry Truman was a soldier in World War I and was happy when it ended with the Treaty of Versailles on June 28, 1919.

After WWI Germany was forced to “accept the responsibility” of the war damages and pay a huge sum of money many Germans were angry and felt like this was a punishment. Their economy was left in ruins and many people were starving. Their government was in chaos and other European countries too. Many people were out of work and struggling to survive. Some leaders wanted to take over new lands and grow their empires. This led to World War II.

Harry Truman was a senator and Vice President during WWII but on April 12, 1945, President Roosevelt died. Then Harry became President Truman! He knew the leader of Germany, Hitler, had joined with the leaders of Japan and Italy. The US joined with Great Britain, China and the Soviet Union. The war was fought in many countries across Europe where many of their cities were destroyed. Millions of people were left without homes, food, water, clothing, and other basic needs. After years of war, the official end came about 5 months after Harry became president. September 2, 1945.

After the war, President Truman made a lot of decisions about the economy to make it stronger in the United States. The Soviet Union had suffered horrific losses. They're businesses were ruined and a staggering 27 million people had been killed. Their leader, Stalin was creating communist governments throughout Eastern Europe. They took people and resources from Germany and other nations as repayment for the damages they had caused. They believed in Communism where the government owned all resources and gave their citizens what they needed. Many countries in Eastern Europe adopted Communism when they were provided food for their starving citizens. As Communism began to spread President Truman was worried about democracy. He believed the people should make choices and not the government. Capitalism was the economy in the U.S. and this gave people the freedom to make their own choices of where to work, what to buy and how to spend their money. Pres. Truman was worried that freedom may be taken away if countries went toward communism.

Pres. Truman wanted to help rebuild Europe and to help people get jobs, food and homes. He felt that hunger, want and misery would lead people to accept Communism which would take away their freedom. He worked with others to create a bill promoted by Secretary of State, George C. Marshall. It was approved by Congress. It was known as the Marshall Plan. It gave more than \$16 billion dollars from the U.S. to help these countries and their people. He felt this would prevent Communism from spreading and avoid more war. He was right! This plan succeeded in rebuilding Europe and created a bond between European nations. Today we still work together in peace with these nations and have not had another world war.

### **Standard:**

3a.Continuity and Change in history of US

5.I.Identify political, economic, and social causes and consequences of World War I and WWII on the United States.

4. Knowledge of economic concepts and principles A.3 Define economy. A.4 Compare and contrast saving and financial investment.

5.TS.7.B.b Create products such as maps, graphs, timelines, charts, models, diagrams, etc. to communicate information and understanding on social studies' topics.

### **Materials Needed:**

Map

Images of Post war Europe

Print graphic organizer (circles and graph)

Print money

Bag of candy

### **Vocabulary:**

Economy: the way money, materials and people of a country are used to create and use goods and services.

Resources: something that is ready to use if or when it is needed.

Capitalism: an economic system in which a country's businesses are controlled by private owners/people for money, and not by the government

Communism: an economic system where all property and work is public/government and people are given things they need by the government.

### **Procedure:**

1. Discuss background
2. Activity 1: Play game to discover differences between communism and capitalism
3. Activity 2: Complete chart for needs and wants.
4. Use the map to identify communist and capitalist countries in Europe and color chart.
5. Use images to discuss what kinds of things people need in Europe after the war..
6. Activity 3: Students will decide, sort and graph how they use money; spend, save and give just like Truman had to decide.

### **Assessment:**

Students will be able to define "economy" and identify the causes of WWII. They will use money and graphic organizers to make decisions in regards to spending money thus understanding President Truman's decision to use the Marshall Plan as a way to help people and governments in Europe..

**Activity 1:**

**Rock, Paper, Scissors Game**

Game is designed to illustrate to students the differences between communism and capitalism. The teacher will divide the whole class into groups of two and give them different amounts of candy. The teacher will explain that having one piece of candy is the minimum for survival and anything more than that provides more resources to do with as they wish. Explain that some students can and will start with different amounts of candy. This represents different levels of money that people have depending on types of work, spending habits, investments and/or families. The group will play rock/paper/scissors for those pieces of candy. Each time a player wins in a r/p/s game they get a piece of candy from their opponent. After a couple of minutes the teacher will tell the students to stop and count their candy. Sometimes the student who had the most candy before the game will still have the most candy and some who started with a very little amount of candy will end up with more after the game. This part of the game is an attempt to demonstrate capitalism where people can start out with different amounts of candy but opportunities, decisions and situations can change how much candy they end with. This can be repeated in another round to see if or how it changed. Next, the teacher will take the candy away from the students. When they are unhappy about losing their candy the teacher will ask the students what would keep them happy. The students respond by asking for their candy back. So the teacher gives them just as much as they need to survive, one. This part of the activity demonstrates communism.

**Activity 2:**

1. Ask students what kind of things their family might buy if they were given money. Discuss and make a T chart to differentiate between needs and wants.

| Needs | Wants |
|-------|-------|
|       |       |

2. Use the map below to identify countries in green as capitalist and countries in red as communist after World War II. Then color the needs section of their list red and the wants section green.

3. Using the map and images below explain how President Truman wanted to help these countries to prevent more war and the spread of communism. Discuss what kind of help do you think they need? (food, roads, transportation, jobs, clothing, medical aid, monetary aid)

## Map of Europe, Post WWII





<https://www.wbur.org/npr/204538728/after-wwii-europe-was-a-savage-continent-of-devastation>



<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/dec/17/where-world-most-war-damaged-city#img-4>



[https://www.fasttrackteaching.com/ffap/Unit\\_11\\_Cold\\_War/U11\\_Europe\\_After\\_WW\\_II.html](https://www.fasttrackteaching.com/ffap/Unit_11_Cold_War/U11_Europe_After_WW_II.html)

### Activity 3:

1. Read an excerpt from President Truman in a letter to his wife, Bess.

“To feed France and Italy this winter will cost 580 million, the Marshall Plan 16.5 billion. But you know in October and November 1945 I canceled 63 billion in appropriations --55 billion at one crack. Our war cost that year was set at 105 billion. The 16.5 is for a four-year period and is for peace. A Russian war would cost us 400 billion and untold lives, mostly civilian. So I must do what I can. “,

This quote is an example of a most important decision Pres. Truman had to think about when managing the United States economy. He had to think about how much money the U.S. had, how much could he spend, how much could he save and how much could he give to help these people?

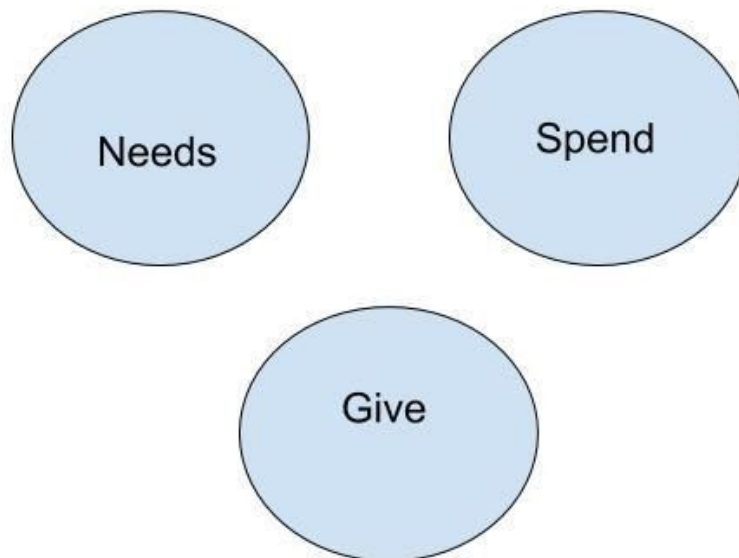
2. Now ask students to think about their lives and their family then look at their list in activity one. Tell them you are going to give them \$100 and they will need to decide how they can

spend this money. Discuss ways to use this money: spend, save and give. Sometimes they may not have enough money to buy more expensive items in their wants column of the list. So it may be necessary to save until they will have enough. Ask students if there is a time when they may give money away, how much and who would they give it to?

3. In partners, give students \$100 and tell them to decide together how to use their money by splitting it into 3 piles. President Truman had to work with others too in order to decide how to use the money that belonged to the United States of America. They will count their money in each pile and color their graph.

4. Conclude with asking 1 or 2 students to present their graph and explain the ways they chose to use their money and why. Ask students how they think these countries feel about the United States today after the Marshall Plan gave them over 16 billion dollars to feed their people and help rebuild their countries?

Optional: Ask students to write a thank you letter to someone who has helped them and tell them how it made them feel?





# Save - Spend - Give

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| <b>Save</b>  |  |
|              |  |
| <b>Spend</b> |  |
|              |  |
| <b>Give</b>  |  |
|              |  |

\$10 \$20 \$30 \$40 \$50 \$60 \$70 \$80 \$90 \$100