

## THE BEAR AND THE EAGLE

The U.S. and the Soviet Union linked arms in the fight against Nazi Germany. Then once the fighting cooled, so did the relationship between the giant allies. One source of friction was Eastern Europe. Soviet troops had fought courageously to drive the German conquerors from Eastern Europe, but then, after the war ended in 1945, the Soviet troops stayed on. The U.S. wanted Eastern Europeans to choose their own governments after the war, but Soviet dictator Josef Stalin wanted to ensure that communists came to power instead. Soon the U.S. and the Soviet Union were engaged in a "cold war"—fighting with everything except weapons.

Cartoonists have long used the American eagle to symbolize the United States and the Russian bear to represent the Soviet Union. In the cartoon on the other sheet of this lesson, the Soviet bear and the American eagle face off. This cartoon by Bruce Russell won the Pulitzer Prize in 1946.

### A. Recognizing the Symbols

1. How can you tell the eagle is a symbol of the United States?
2. How can you tell that this bear is a symbol for the Soviet Union?
3. What separates the two nations?
4. Can you tell who is responsible for the "irresponsible statements" and "deepening suspicions"?
5. Why do you think a dark storm cloud hangs in the air?
6. What do you think is meant by the caption "Time to Bridge That Gulch"?

### B. The Bear and the Eagle Today

7. Think about what you know of U.S.–Soviet relations. Did the bear and eagle ever make an effort to "bridge that gulch?" When?
8. How would the Soviet bear and American eagle regard each other now? Describe changes you might make to this cartoon today.

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### A. Recognizing the Symbols

1. How can you tell the eagle is a symbol of the United States?  
*The eagle is draped with the stars of the American flag.*
2. How can you tell that this bear is a symbol for the Soviet Union?  
*The bear is marked with the Soviet symbol—the sickle and hammer.*
3. What separates the two nations?  
*a deep ravine, or gulch*
4. Can you tell who is responsible for the "irresponsible statements" and "deepening suspicions"?  
*The cartoonist doesn't make clear which side is the source of the "irresponsible statements" or "deepening suspicions."*
5. Why do you think a dark storm cloud hangs in the air?  
*The storm cloud casts an air of forboding over the scene, suggesting perhaps the U.S. and the Soviet Union could soon be at war.*
6. What do you think is meant by the caption "Time to Bridge That Gulch"?  
*The two nations should find ways to overcome their differences.*

### B. The Bear and the Eagle Today

7. Think about what you know of U.S.–Soviet relations. Did the bear and eagle ever make an effort to "bridge that gulch?" When?  
*Though this cartoon was drawn in 1946, the U.S. and the Soviet Union did little to improve relations until détente in the 1970s, and again in the late 1980s.*
8. How would the Soviet bear and American eagle regard each other now? Describe changes you might make to this cartoon today.  
*Answers will vary, but the two might be shown forming a tentative friendship or constructing a bridge over the gulch.*

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(continued)



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