

The Wall Street Crash

By the 1920s, New York had become one of the world's major financial centres with an important stock market situated on Wall Street. Then, in 1929, the value of shares on Wall Street unexpectedly "crashed". Thousands of banks and companies were ruined, and America's economy entered a period of crisis. Millions of people also lost their jobs in the decade that followed. This period in American history is called "the Great Depression."

stock market: where shares are bought and sold

value: prize



naval base: military harbour
devastate: destroy

World War Two

In December 1941 America entered world War Two after Japan attacked its naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. Two years later, a team of US scientists led by Robert Oppenheimer developed the first atomic bomb. At the command of President Harry S. Truman, this devastating new weapon was dropped first on the Japanese city of Hiroshima on 6 August 1945 and on Nagasaki three days later on 9 August 1945, ending Japan's involvement in the war.

to involve: to engage

The Korean War

In 1950 the Communist government of North Korea invaded its non-Communist neighbour, South Korea. America sent troops to help the South in a brutal war which lasted for three years with no clear victory for either side.



The Cuban Missile Crisis

In 1960 American spy planes photographed Soviet missiles on the Caribbean island of Cuba. The US government, led by President

Kennedy, demanded their removal. The Soviet Union refused and the most serious crisis of the "Cold War" began, lasting for several weeks. It could have ended in nuclear destruction for both super-powers. Finally, though the Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, agreed to remove all the Russian missiles from Cuba.

spy: an enemy agent
missile: rocket, bullet

to remove: to take away
destruction: demolition



Multiple Choice:

Address of the most important stock market:

- Downing Street, London
- Wall Street, New York
- Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles

Ten decades make

- another year.
- a century.
- a light year.

A period of unemployment and financial crisis:

- impression
- depression
- compression

After the Japanese raid to Pearl Harbor

- America went to war.
- the Cold War began.
- Germany surrendered.

Korea is a country of

- Africa.

Asia.

Europe.

The atomic bomb was first developed

in the USA.

in Russia.

in Germany.

The most serious crisis in the Cold War was

the Watergate scandal.

the Cuban missile crisis.

St Valentine Day's Massacre.

World War Two lasted for

two years.

four years.

six years.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki are two

Japanese towns.

American war heroes.

leaders of the peace movement.