

The Cuban Missile Crisis (B2)

A – Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.

1. What do you know about the Cuban Missile Crisis?
2. Which countries were involved in it, besides Cuba?
3. Can you name any of the heads of state that had important roles in the crisis?

B – Listen and answer

Read these statements. Then listen (without reading) and write T (true) or F (false).

1. The crisis began when US spies operating in Cuba saw Soviet nuclear missile sites there.
2. The Cold War had influenced J. F. Kennedy's election campaign.
3. In 1961, an attempt was made to depose Fidel Castro, with the help of the United States.
4. Kennedy refused to meet the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev that year.
5. The crisis got worse when a Soviet plane was shot down while flying over Cuba.
6. Both countries were forced to compromise to avoid a nuclear war.

C – Read and answer

Read the article and answer the questions.

1. Why is the Cuban missile crisis considered a historically important moment?
2. What had Kennedy's election campaign been based on?
3. What happened in Cuba as a result of the failed attempt to depose Fidel Castro?
4. What steps taken by the Soviet Union and the United States led to the missile crisis?
5. How did the United States react to the discovery of Soviet missile sites on Cuba?
6. What events almost led to the firing of a nuclear-armed torpedo?
7. What did the US do in return for the removal of Soviet missiles from Cuba?
8. What was done after the missile crisis to reduce the risk of nuclear war?

D – Learn it! Use it!

Complete these sentences with words from the glossary. (You may have to adapt the expression in some way; e.g. change the verb tense, or change from plural to singular.)

1. Once I forgot to pay my gas bill and the company _____ my gas supply.
2. In the UK, it's illegal to sell knives or any other _____ to anyone under the age of 18.
3. This safety device _____ the machine from overturning.
4. The country's _____ with the United Kingdom has increased in recent years.
5. One of this government's _____ is to reduce unemployment.
6. This is the _____ where the new shopping centre is going to be built.

E – Ready for the B2 FIRST Certificate in English? (Reading and Use of English, Part 2)

Read the text and think of the word which best fits each gap. Use only one word for each gap.

Cuba, which is ¹ _____ just 90 miles from the coast of Florida, had enjoyed a close relationship with the United States until 1959, when its right-wing dictator General Batista was overthrown in a revolution led ² _____ Fidel Castro. At the time of the revolution, most of Cuba's businesses, banks and sugar and tobacco plantations ³ _____ to Americans and a large part of its sugar and tobacco was exported to the United States. Fidel Castro ⁴ _____ have liked Cuba to continue to have close ties with the USA. However, when the US government refused to have ⁵ _____ kind of dealings with him, Castro turned to the Soviet Union ⁶ _____ support. He also nationalised

the American-owned companies in Cuba ⁷ _____ paying any compensation, so the United States banned the importation of all Cuban goods. This ⁸ _____ Cuba to turn increasingly to the Soviet Union as an export market and for defence.

F – Write about it

Write about a moment of crisis in your country's history. Mention:

- what the crisis consisted of;
- when/where the events happened;
- how the crisis developed;
- who/what was responsible for it;
- how it was resolved.

Answers

B – Listen and answer

1. F – The sites were photographed by an American spy plane, not seen by spies in Cuba. 2. T
3. T 4. F – The two leaders met that year. 5. F – A US plane was shot down over Cuba. 6. T

C – Read and answer

1. Because the world came close to a nuclear war. 2. It had been based on promises of a tough opposition to the Soviet Union and international communism. 3. The country became more militarily and economically dependent on the Soviet Union. 4. The Soviet Union threatened to cut off access to West Berlin and ordered the building of the Berlin Wall. The United States increased its intercontinental ballistic missiles and installed them in Western Europe and Turkey, ready to be fired at the Soviet Union. In response, the Soviet Union sent missiles to Cuba. 5. The United States placed a ring of ships around Cuba to prevent military supplies from arriving. 6. A US plane was shot down. Then the US Navy forced a Soviet submarine to surface. The submarine was about to fire a nuclear-armed torpedo, but decided not to. 7. They removed their missiles from Turkey. 8. An international treaty was signed limiting nuclear weapons testing and a hotline was set up between the Kremlin and the White House to improve communications.

D – Learn it! Use it!

1. cut off 2. weapons 3. prevents 4. trade 5. goals 6. site

E – Ready for the B2 FIRST Certificate in English?

1. located/situated 2. by 3. belonged 4. would 5. any 6. for 7. without 8. caused/led