

We Didn't Start the Fire

Teacher Guide: Billy Joel's song, "We Didn't Start the Fire," debuted in 1989 on the album *Storm Front*. It was one of the singer's biggest hits and provided an interesting chronology of the Cold War. Joel later explained that he wrote the song the year he turned 40 to chronicle the major events that had occurred in his lifetime beginning with Harry Truman.

- Play the Billy Joel song for the class. Preferably, use the DVD so the students can see the video and the lyrics.
- Assign the students one or more of the topics in the lyrics below.
- Have them prepare a 5 x 7 inch index card with the following information
 - The individual, event, place, or topic
 - The date in reference to the song (use circa for approximations)
 - A graphic, picture, or illustration
 - A concise 75 word or letter explanation
- Have the students read their cards to the class
- Create a timeline of the Cold War using the cards on the bulletin board

Note: Since there are so many topics, you may want to eliminate the more obscure issues or divide them between two or more classes.

Individuals appear in **Bold**; plays, books, and movies are in *Italics*. (Note: Davy Crockett is not listed as an individual because it refers to the fad rather than the actual person)

Harry Truman	Doris Day	Red China
Johnny Ray	South Pacific	Walter Winchell
Joe DiMaggio	Joe McCarthy	Richard Nixon
Studebaker	Television	North Korea
South Korea	Marilyn Monroe	Rosenbergs
H-Bomb	Sugar Ray	Panmunjom
Brando	<i>The King and I</i>	<i>The Catcher in the Rye</i>
Eisenhower	Vaccine	England's Got a New Queen
Maciano	Liberace	Santayana goodbye
Joseph Stalin	Malenkov	Nasser
Prokofiev	Rockefeller	Campanella
Communist Bloc	Roy Cohn	Jaun Peron
Toscanini	Dancron	Dien Bien Phu falls
<i>Rock around the Clock</i>	Einstein	James Dean
Brooklyn's got a winning team	Davy Crockett	Peter Pan
Elvis Presley	Disneyland	Bardot

Budapest	Alabama	Khrushchev
Princess Grace	<i>Peyton Place</i>	Trouble in the Suez
Little Rock	Pasternak	Mickey Mantle
Kerouac	Sputnik	Chou En-Lai
<i>Bridge on the River Kwai</i>	Lebanon	Charles de Gaulle
California baseball	Starkweather homicide	Children of Thalidomide
Buddy Holly	<i>Ben Hur</i>	Space Monkey
Mafia	Hula hoops	Castro
Edsel is a no-go	U2	Syngman Rhee
Payola	Kennedy	Chubby Checker
<i>Psycho</i>	Belgians in the Congo	Hemingway
Eichman	<i>Stranger in a Strange Land</i>	Dylan
Berlin	Bay of Pigs invasion	<i>Lawrence of Arabia</i>
British Beatlemania	Ole Miss	John Glenn
Liston beats Patterson	Pope Paul	Malcolm X
British politician sex	JFK blown away	Birth control
Ho Chi Minh	Richard Nixon back again	Moonshot
Watergate	Punk rock	Begin
Reagan	Palestine	Terror on the airline
Ayatollah's in Iran	Russians in Afghanistan	Wheel of Fortune
Sally Ride	Heavy metal suicide	Foreign debts
Homeless vets	AIDS	Crack
Bernie Goetz	Hypodermics on the shores	China's under martial law
Rock and Roller	Cola wars	