Overview:

Students will briefly research countries that have a communist government today and compare them to how communism was conceived and implemented in the interwar period.

Length:

Two-three classes.

Materials:

- “What Are the Origins of Communism?” (World101)
- Arts materials, or graphics software such as Piktochart or Venngage
- “Regions of the World” (World101)
- Internet or library access for research

Instructional Plan

1. Have students read “What Are the Origins of Communism?” paying particular attention to the distinctions between Karl Marx’s vision of communism and the Soviet Union’s implementation, as well as to the discussion at the end about other communist countries.
2. Assign each student a country that is communist today: China, Cuba, Laos, North Korea, or Vietnam. Ask them to research their country using “Regions of the World” as well as other reference sources, paying attention to the ways in which their country aligns with or departs from both Marx’s vision and the Soviet implementation of communism.
3. Assign students to create an infographic illustrating the ways in which their chosen country hews to or departs from Marx’s vision and Soviet implementation, citing specific examples from history and from the present day. You will probably find it helpful to review some sample infographics together and discuss what makes them effective.
4. Have students share their work and discuss: Are there trends? Do communist countries today look more like Marx’s vision or Soviet history? What aspects of communism seem most often to have fallen by the wayside?