Example Student Essays for:
Assess the reasons for the Breakdown of the Grand Alliance

Table of Contents
1. Student Essay 1 ......................................................................................................................... 2
2. Student Essay 2 ......................................................................................................................... 5
3. Student Essay 3 ......................................................................................................................... 8

Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-2</th>
<th>3-4</th>
<th>5-6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demands of the Question</td>
<td>Question is somewhat understood</td>
<td>Question is generally understood</td>
<td>The question is understood, but not all factors are included/analyzed</td>
<td>Answer is balanced and clearly focused on the demands of the question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Knowledge</td>
<td>Present a narrative Some info is correct and somewhat relevant</td>
<td>Presents a narrative Most of the info is correct and mostly relevant</td>
<td>Presents an argument All the info presented is relevant and strong</td>
<td>Analyzes the evidence, supporting a specific argument All info is specific, relevant and strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Question is partially addressed</td>
<td>A chronological or thematic structure is attempted</td>
<td>Answer is successfully structured</td>
<td>Answer is clearly structured and focused</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
History Essay
Access the reasons for the breakdown of the Grand Alliance.

The Grand Alliance was created during World War 2, and it involved Britain, the US, and the USSR, as its goal was to defeat Nazi Germany. The alliance reached its goal and succeeded until it broke down in 1947. Ideology was the main reason for which the Grand Alliance broke down because the US was democratic, while the USSR was communist, so they had different methods in governing Europe, which didn’t relate. Also, the American and English presidents were changed after the war, which caused misunderstandings between them and Stalin, as they all had very different personalities. Nuclear weapons also caused conflicts between the powers, but they caused the beginning of the Cold War rather than the breakdown of the Alliance. The most important reasons for the Breakdown of the Grand Alliance were the different ideologies and personalities and misunderstandings, while nuclear weapons were not as meaningful, yet they had its significance.

The main reason for the breakdown of the Grand alliance is ideology. USA and USSR had completely different ideologies regarding governments, economies, and human rights. The US is democratic, which is proven by the constitution,

“we the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

The USSR, instead, was communist and they wanted a one-party dictatorship under Stalin, which is shown by Stalin killing the other politicians, like Trotsky so that he could be the only one to have power. Also, the US gave a lot of importance to individual human rights, as stated in the Atlantic Charger, an agreement signed by Roosevelt and Churchill in 1942.

“Third, they respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them;”

This shows how individual rights were significant for the US. The USSR, instead, thought that order and stability were much more important than individual rights, as the five-year plan demonstrates because Stalin wanted to transform the Soviet Union from a peasant society into an industrial superpower, but by doing this he killed many innocent people as they didn’t obey Stalin’s orders, and spread famine throughout the population. Finally, ideology
was the main reason for the breakdown of the Grand Alliance because with different
governments and ideas, the US and USSR could not use the same methods to govern Europe,
and this caused a lot of conflicts between them, while different personalities relates only to
the presidents and not to the whole state.

Another reason for the breakdown of the Grand Alliance is personalities and
misunderstandings. After the war, Clement Attlee replaced Churchill, and Roosevelt died, so
Truman replaced him. This caused many misunderstandings between them, because all the
agreements done before, were not valid anymore as the new presidents were not aware of
the existence of them. The percentage agreement, for example, was an agreement between
Churchill and Stalin that they did when they were drunk, and it contained the division of
Europe and the percentages of control of those countries by Britain, the US and USSR. When
Roosevelt was replaced, this caused problems because President Truman didn’t know
anything about the percentage agreement. Also, President Truman has a different
personality from Roosevelt’s, and he doesn’t know Stalin. In fact, he tries to intimidate him
by hinting that America has a nuclear bomb, but Stalin has spies so he already knows. Also,
the Iron Curtain speech done by Churchill, which claims that Europe is divided in two, shows
Churchill’s personality and how he changes his mind, since the percentage agreement was
made during the war and the presidents changed so it is not valuable anymore. In
conclusion, personalities and misunderstandings caused the breakdown of the Grand
Alliance because with the change of the presidents, the agreements done before caused only
misunderstandings, and their personalities are different so they don’t agree with each other.

Nuclear Weapons were also significant for the breakdown of the Grand Alliance, but
they caused the Cold war, while ideology and personalities and misunderstandings caused
the actual breakdown of the alliance. Still, they were important because they caused a race
of nuclear weapons between countries, which provoked conflicts. The Grand Alliance, in fact,
broke down in 1947, and the first nuclear bomb of the USSR was in 1949. This shows that
the alliance broke down before the real race of nuclear weapons actually began. Ideology,
instead, began from before WW2, as the constitution was completed in 1788, and the
Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) was created in 1917. Misunderstandings
started right after the end of the Second World War, in 1945. This shows that both ideology
and personalities and misunderstandings started before the breakdown of the Grand
Alliance, and they also caused it, while the nuclear weapon race started in 1949, when the Grand Alliance was already broken, even though there was the Baruch Plan in 1947, but it didn’t start a nuclear arm race yet.

The Grand Alliance broke down in 1947, due mostly to different ideologies and personalities and misunderstandings, while nuclear weapons caused the beginning of the Cold War, but were still significant for the breakdown of the alliance. Ideology is the most important reason for the breakdown of the alliance since the US was democratic and the USSR communist, so they had different governments that both wanted to govern Europe, but in completely opposite ways. Also, the contrasting personalities of the new presidents cause conflicts between them, and there are a lot of misunderstandings because of the agreements taken during the war with the previous presidents. Nuclear weapons are also significant as they cause a race between the powers, but the race begins in 1949, while the alliance breaks down in 1947, so they didn’t cause the breakdown of the Grand Alliance, but the beginning of the Cold War. In conclusion, The Grand Alliance broke down in 1947 because of the different ideas and types of governments of the US and USSR and because of the personalities of the different presidents.
Assess the Reasons for the Breakdown of the Grand Alliance

The Grand Alliance was an alliance between America, Soviet Union and Britain that was created in WW2 to fight Nazi Germany. Everything went really well between them during war, then, from post-war, their relationship started getting worst until the complete breakdown in 1949. Many factors led to the breakdown, the main one being nuclear weapons because since America had them, Russia wanted them too, and this caused conflicts between them. Another great problem that contributed to the breakdown of the Grand Alliance is ideology because America has very different beliefs from the USSR and since they split Europe, problems were inevitable. The problem that instead least contributed to the breakdown of the alliance is personalities and misunderstandings as there were no misunderstandings. Therefore, the most important reasons for the breakdown of the Grand Alliance were nuclear weapons and ideology, while personalities and misunderstandings only had a minimal role.

The most important reason for the breakdown of the Grand Alliance was nuclear weapons. A main fact to show this is the Baruch plan, which the US proposed to the UN in 1946. The Baruch plan consisted in America having nuclear weapons and other countries having none. The Soviets rejected the Baruch plan because they thought it wasn’t fair that only America could have bombs and when they proposed a counterproposal for a ban on all nuclear weapons, America rejected it as they wanted nuclear bombs. All this increased tensions between these states as they didn’t find an agreement and short after the nuclear arms race began. After war, the only state owning nuclear weapons was America. Then, on August 29th, 1949, the Soviet Union tested the first atomic bomb, ending America’s monopoly over atomic weapons. A nuclear arms race started and tensions grew until the Grand Alliance was definitely broken down.

Another very important reason for the breakdown of the Grand Alliance was ideology. The Soviet Union was a communist state and we know this because of the revolution of 1917 and because there is no democracy, as Stalin was their leader. Stalin didn’t rise to power in a legal way; he lied on his relationship with Lenin and killed opposition such as Trotsky. Instead, America is a capitalist state and we know this because it is a democracy, people can vote for their leader and there is a constitution. After war, Europe was divided, half was American half was Russian and having completely different ideologies close to each other meant problems were inevitable. The fact that Europe was
split is also known because of Winston Churchill’s famous speech about the “iron curtain”, saying that there was an iron curtain splitting Europe. People are also treated very differently in these two states. As previously stated, in America people had freedom and they could vote. In Russia instead, people could do only what the state would tell them to do and Stalin set up a secret police that would arrest their opponents and murder non-communists. For example, in 1945 the non-communists won the elections and Zoltan Tildy became president. However, a communist leader, Rakosi, became head of the secret police and killed and arrested opponents. By 1948, Rakosi was leader of Hungary and Tildy was forced to resign. All these differences close to each other only harmed the Grand Alliance’s relationship and contributed to its fall.

Some people may say that personalities and misunderstandings was the main problem with the breakdown of the Grand Alliance, although these people are terribly wrong. First of all, the relationship between Churchill and Stalin wasn’t a misunderstanding. On October 1944, Stalin and Churchill created the percentage agreement, saying what percentages of European states would Britain and Russia get. At this point, things are going well between Stalin and Churchill: they’ve come up with an agreement. Then, on March 1946 Churchill gave the “iron curtain” speech, saying Stalin shouldn’t have all that land. This shows that there was no misunderstanding, Churchill simply changed his mind. Also, some people may say that the Potsdam Conference was a misunderstanding. The Potsdam Conference was a conference in which Truman hinted Stalin about a new weapon, although he didn’t know Stalin already knew about the weapon. It wasn’t a misunderstanding because Stalin had spies that told him about the bomb, he already knew everything. Personalities and misunderstandings didn’t lead to the breakdown of the Grand Alliance as there were no misunderstandings.

All the above to show that the most important reasons for the breakdown of the Grand Alliance were nuclear weapons and ideology, while personalities and misunderstandings only had a minimal role. Nuclear weapons were the greatest reason for the breakdown of the Grand Alliance. The Baruch Plan and the nuclear arms race increased tensions until, in 1949 (when the Soviets did their bomb) the Grand Alliance was broken down. Another great problem that contributed to the fall of the Grand Alliance is ideology. Having two completely different ideologies splitting Europe means having two completely different governments and ways of living (people) close to each other. These differences in ideology contributed in the fall of the alliance between America and The Soviet Union.
Personalities and misunderstandings weren’t actually a problem, as there were no misunderstandings. As previously stated, in one example Churchill simply changed his mind and in the other Stalin had spies, so he already knew America had nuclear weapons. Also, nuclear weapons and ideology were far more important as they involve the whole country while personalities and misunderstandings only leaders. In conclusion, the Grand Alliance would never have worked out after WW2.
Assess the reasons for the breakdown of the Grand Alliance

During the years that follow the end of World War II two allies, the Soviet Union and the United States, found themselves against one another, causing the breakdown of the Grand Alliance formed during the war. The Grand Alliance was formed by the United States (Roosevelt), the Soviet Union (Stalin) and the United Kingdom (Churchill), who were famously known as ‘The Big Three’. The alliance broke down because of different events that happened towards the conclusion of the war and the years that came after. The events that affected the least the breakdown of the Grand Alliance were the ones that liked with war experience, like the attempt of Stalin to secure the USSR from further attacks and USA’s response. Throughout those years there was the nuclear arms race, which placed the USSR and the US one against each other because of the decision of the US to be the only country possessing nuclear weapons. The most important reason for the breakdown of the Grand Alliance was the difference in ideology, in numerous occasions, including the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine, both countries expressed their despise for one another because of idealistic differences. The three reasons that broke down the Grand Alliance were, most important, the different ideologies the Soviet Union and the US shared, than the battle of nuclear weapons between the two countries, and least important the war experience that brought the USSR to invade most of Eastern Europe.

The least important reason for the breakdown of the Great Alliance was the decision of the USSR to secure themselves by conquering all of Eastern Europe. Stalin decided to put at plan the Iron Curtain, which consisted in creating a barrier, using countries, between the Soviet Union and Germany. They decided to build up this defense because in both wars the USSR was attacked by Germany twice while the US and Britain never endured it. The Soviet Union decided to conquer all countries between Germany and itself (including eastern Germany) except Greece and Yugoslavia. As shown on the map (1) the Soviet Union created a ‘curtain’ of countries to create a thickness between them and Western Europe. While the USSR decided to convert all of Eastern Europe into communist countries the US and Britain (specifically Churchill) were against it because they feared the spread of communism. Even though the Soviet Union was the country that most suffered from World War II, having 22 times more of number of losses than US and UK, both countries didn’t accept this type of spread. During the Iron Curtain Truman decided to ask Churchill to deliver a speech at Westminster College and the former Prime Minister declared, “The President has told you that it is his wish, as I am sure it is yours, that I should have full liberty to give my true and faithful counsel in these anxious and baffling times.” The quote above states not only the position held by Churchill on the matter but also the approval of the President on what he was going to say. Even if the events that the Soviet Union’s war experience were important it’s the least important reason because the two powers only made
a speech showing on which side they were but didn’t do anything to stop him. This shows that the decision of Stalin to secure the Soviet Union from further attacks wasn’t the most important reason because it only led to a ‘speech’ dispute between the three allies.

The fight between the Soviet Union and the United States on nuclear weapons was an important reason for the breakdown of the Grand Alliance since the USSR wanted nuclear bombs while the US had already bombed two of them. In the years that came after the end of war the US decided to pass the Baruch Plan, which consisted in the abolition of any nuclear weapons that were being constructed. Even though the production of nuclear weapons was being seized the US, which already had nuclear bombs, could keep theirs. When the procedures to start the new law the Soviet Union demanded the USA to get rid of their bomb before any decisions were made. As explained from Cold War: An Illustrated History by Jeremy Issacs, Taylor Downing, Jeremy Isaacs, Jeremy Asaacs the Soviet Union tried to inflict veto powers, which cancel or suspend any decision from one branch of the government, but they weren’t successful. Even if they weren’t successful when the vote was held both Poland and the Soviet Union abstained from the vote while other countries voted in favor. This shows that the Soviet Union didn’t believe the Baruch Plan to be completely honest and this created tensions between the allies. In 1949 the USSR decided to do the first testing of their nuclear bomb (the first ones to do a testing after the US) even though the Baruch Plan had passed. From a video (2) there is the evidence that both the Soviet Union and the US tested a large number of nuclear bombs. The Grand Alliance also broke down because of these numerous testing that initiated rivalry between the countries since one was always trying to exceed the other by testing more bombs. The production of nuclear weapons became a threat to the Grand Alliance since it was the phenomena that brought these two countries against military.

The reason that influenced the breakdown of the Grand Alliance was the different ideology that the Soviet Union and the United States had. The USSR was a communist country while the US was a democratic country. Even though these two countries functioned very well during World War II, because they both wanted to defeat Nazism, once the war was over they found themselves parting for their own ideology. Both the Soviet Union and the United States went against what the other did because of their thoughts on under which type of government all European countries should go for. For example when Truman introduced the Marshall Plan, which favored for US economy, Stalin forbid all countries under his domain to adopt Truman’s system. The Marshall Plan consisted in aiding European countries that needed help to rebuild the damages that the war caused. As shown from the map (3) all Western European countries benefitted from the Marshall Plan, but all countries that were currently under the Soviet’s domain didn’t even adopt the plan. Because of the plan the Soviet Union believed that the United States wanted to eradicate their roots in the Communist government. Even though public declarations
were never emitted by a US governor in 1947 all changed since Truman publicly spoke while America was making plans to secure the spread of communism. During the Truman Doctrine in March 1947, Truman declared, “I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.” In his speech Truman means that the US is going to do everything to stop (create a policy) to secure people who are going against minorities (communists in the US) and outsiders (the influence of the Soviet Union). This speech showed the position that Truman held against the political position of what was one of US’s allies during World War II. The Soviet Union followed communist ideologies that went against what was believed in the USA. While the US believed their ideologies were the right ones even the Soviets believed their system was the one that functioned the best. During elections in 1946 Stalin delivered a speech (February 9) to the voters remembering that that the Soviets ideologies were the ones who worked the best, as shown by the success at war. Stalin declared, “Now the issue is that the Soviet social system has proved to be more viable and stable than the non-Soviet social system, that the Soviet social system is a better form of organization of society than any non-Soviet social system.” This shows that Stalin truly believed the USSR system was the best and he made it his political propaganda during re-elections. All the facts above show that even though ideology wasn’t directly an event that brought to the breakdown of the Grand Alliance, it was the motivation that made countries decide what their leaders would do to ensure their political opinions.

In conclusion, the Grand Alliance broke down because of three main reasons, the most important one was the ideology of the countries which consisted it, then the race to nuclear weapons that occurred between the Soviets and Americans and the least important reason was the decisions that the Soviet Union made based on their war experience. Since the Soviet Union endured a great loss of soldiers and civilians during the war they decided to adopt a system that would secure them from future attacks. Although, this system wasn’t well received by the United States since it became the converting of half European countries in communist countries. The race between the two countries to get nuclear weapons was also a conflict that influence the breakdown of the alliance. Overall the most important reason for the breakdown of the Grand Alliance was because of their ideologies. All the events that succeeded the breakdown happened because they viewed things in different ways. The breakdown of the Grand Alliance occurred because of events that happened from the end of the war until the end of the 1940s.
Appendix

1: Map that shows the countries that the Soviet Union managed to put under communist control.

2: A Time-Lapse Map of Every Nuclear Explosion Since 1945 - by Isao Hashimoto
3: Map showing the amount of help that the US gave to countries in Europe. All countries received help except those which were under communist government.