

The McCarthy Red Scare

Senior Individual Website
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I was stumped after a few dead ends on what to research when my dad suggested I look into Joseph McCarthy. The topic piqued my interests because my family is related to President Eisenhower through marriage, and I thought I should learn more about him and his time in office. I did some preliminary research and decided that it was a very interesting time in history that I hadn't yet learned much about. McCarthy and the Red Scare relates to Debate and Diplomacy not only because of the countless trials McCarthy held investigating alleged communists, but the conflict between McCarthy and other figures, all coming to a peak during the Army vs. McCarthy hearings and McCarthy's censure, when people finally debated his claims and fought back.

I started my research with some secondary sources that gave a general overview of the events that took place. It was a lot to grasp at first, so I decided to watch the PBS documentary "McCarthy" to get a more concrete idea of what I wanted to focus on in my project. From there, I began looking for primary sources in more specific areas.

After taking notes on my resources, I planned out how I could organize my ideas within the website. I wrote my plan, with all the quotes and text I'd use, before realizing it was almost 800 words over the limit (I then proceeded to gut my writing to the bone). Eventually, I began formatting the writing, images, quotes, and multimedia into the website. It was frustrating at first, but the software became easier to use the more I worked on it. After some finishing touches with formatting, I was done.

Historical Argument: Few times has there been a US Senator who has captured the public eye or taken as much power. During the time he served as the senator of Wisconsin from 1947 to his death in 1957, Joseph McCarthy single-handedly used smear tactics and fear mongering to spread baseless lies and accusations throughout the country and create mass hysteria about the communist infiltration of the US. All Joseph McCarthy did was turn a bad situation worse. Only when those brave enough to **debate** him took action was he finally defeated.

McCarthyism is a phenomenon that has and will repeat itself. McCarthy took a scared, vulnerable country, and instead of asking, 'how can I improve this?', asked, 'how can I take advantage of this?'. The Red Scare stayed in the public eye for far longer than it should've. Many lost their livelihoods, and McCarthy's accusations just worsened existing stigmas. McCarthy is a prime example of someone who will do whatever they can to get ahead and stay ahead, with no regard to who they harm in the process. Sometimes we forget that people like this exist, but it is important to remember so that we can spot McCarthys in our own lives, nation, and world.