

Example by StudyDriver

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A Film about Cold War for Kids Example

How did the Duck and Cover PSA impact America?

American kids during the Cold War had experiences that kids before and after would not and did not have. They watched the adults around them react to the perceived threat to America and its way of life by the Soviets and the Cold War. Kids during this time would learn to fear this threat and its impact on their future, the threat of nuclear weapons had increased after Soviet Russia acquired them giving more reasons to fear for their future. The Government realized that they needed to teach kids, parents, and educators how to prepare for the event of nuclear war, and in turn prepare the kids to protect the future.

The Federal Civil Defense Administration made a short film designed to help teach kids how to protect themselves from an atomic bomb attack. Duck and Cover was their answer, it was produced in January 1952 by Archer Productions, an Advertising Firm.

This was the introduction of Bert the Turtle to kids across the nation and their change in mentality that would last a life time and impact future generations.

Duck and cover starts with Bert walking upright past a tree where his nemesis a monkey appears with a stick of dynamite and tries to blow Bert up. Bert protects himself by practicing Duck and Cover, he ducks down to the ground and covers himself with his shell. It goes on to show footage films of school children in Queens, New York, the kids were told how to protect themselves and shown the clip of Bert. Duck and Cover was designed for school children, as seen by its main character, Burt the Turtle and a song that is easy for them to sing and follow along with, the song taught children to act as Bert did to protect themselves.

Part of what the film stressed to kids is to listen to authority figures that they could keep them safe and would know what to do. The teacher in the film is calm as she explains and answers questions lending to the thought the adults would know what to do, and that parents would have a safe place for them at home that was well prepared. The film to put and emphasis on finding an adult if you were alone when the bomb hit or siren went off, and that if older children were around then they would be in charge. The film shows a child hiding against a wall until a Civil Defense worker comes to get him, when he dusts himself off instead of following the worker the narrator reprimands him for not following the adult to safety, further pushing the point that adult and old children would be how they could be safe and that they must obey them. While stressing the importance of listening to those older than them for safety, the film then pushes that when the bomb hits there may not be adults around, or left and that it is up to the children to take care of themselves and the Country.

Due to the children being exposed to the film and drills that followed it, they were taught to have the thought that not only was nuclear war a threat it was going to happen imminently. This message and narrative is what millions of children across America heard regarding the Cold War. Their present was dangerous and perilous, and their future was dim and dismal. In response to the threat of nuclear war, and the children learning what to do in case the government in many areas begun to issue dog tags to students, so parents could identify them in case an attack occurred or to help them reconnect. Some 2.5 million tags had been given to children across the nation, the heat resistant metal given to the children helped to form their psyche. In the 1950s a sixth-grade student, Albert Furtwangler got dressed daily with the dog tag given to him by the Parent- Teacher Association, it had his name and address on it. Mr. Furtwangler recalled his story of how his childhood was in the wake of the Duck and

Cover and Cold War culture.

In the 1960s University Professor set about interviewing children from middle and high schools, he interviewed over a thousand students. Students responses all said they worried on rather there would be a war, and if anything would be left afterwards; if anyone would be alive. Some students even said they would cry at night over the worry and fear. The early Baby Boomers were raised with Duck and Cover, with stories of nuclear annihilation, and were raised to think that the world would end at any moment.

They had been taught as children and throughout their childhood that they could take action to save themselves, as they grew older the mentality from the Duck and Cover era stayed with them. They protested wrongs they perceived, like the Vietnam War; and they fought against racism.

Their paths to be revolutionaries and activist at such young ages were led by their childhood being steeped in the Duck and Cover films, drills, and warnings about a nuclear bomb going off and flashes in the sky. They grew up being told to duck, cover, and hide while praying their world would be intact when it was over, as teens and adults they would grow to decide that hiding and hoping was not enough and action would be needed. The children who grew up with these drills and films would later change the nation from the militarism during the Cold War to one of thought before military action, while they did not do this alone; their ideals as they grew impacted the world around them.

Dennis Hill grew up in a small country town in Springfield, Louisiana during the 1950s, while the campaign of Duck and Cover made to his small town, the teachers and school he attended did not follow the path other across the Nation did.

I remember hearing about duck and cover while I was child, we saw the papers they gave out, but we were never shown the film you just showed me * I showed him the Duck and Cover film to see if he remembered it. *. Kids back then knew that if a bomb hit here ducking under our desk or bed wouldn't do any good. Our homes were all wood and had been around since our Grand Parents, they would not stand up to it. -Dennis Hill, 2018

The children of the 50's had been raised on Duck and Cover and its mentality, with the thoughts that their lives could and would end or least how they knew their lives to be at that time. This mentality stayed with them throughout their lives and changed how they interacted with the actions of that time. Their changes impacted future generations and still does, their ability to stand up and fight against a war they did not believe in, to fight against a culture that was leading to nuclear war gave future generations the encouragement and strength to stand for what they feel is right and against what they see as wrong.

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