

The Artios Home Companion Series

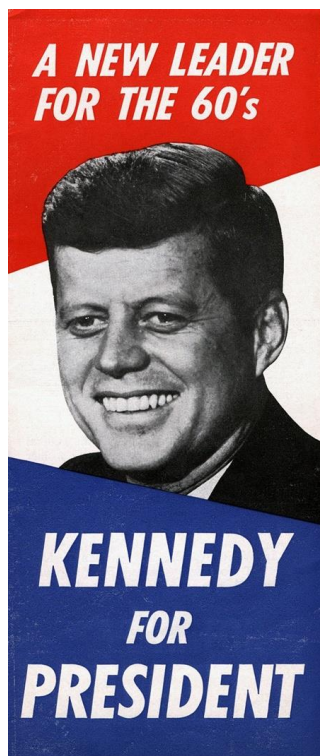
Unit 24a: Politics from Camelot to Triangular Diplomacy

Teacher Overview

When John F. Kennedy defeated Richard Nixon in 1960, the United States was at the apex of its postwar optimism. The 1950s economy raised the American standard of living to a level second to none. Although communism was a threat, the rebuilt nations of Western Europe proved to be solid Cold War allies.

The Soviet Union had the technology to send a nuclear missile across the North Pole, but the United States maintained a superiority that could obliterate any nation who dared such an attack. Across the world, newly independent nations looked to the United States for assistance and guidance. Few Americans would have believed that by the end of the decade the nation would be weakened abroad and divided against itself.

Kennedy embodied that early ebullience. The youthful president and his wife evoked parallels to the magical time of King Arthur and Camelot. His New Frontier program asked the nation's talented and fortunate to work to eliminate poverty and injustice at home while projecting confidence overseas. Although Congress blocked many of his programs, his self-assurance was contagious, and the shock of his untimely death was nothing less than devastating.



John F. Kennedy's youthful good looks helped him win the White House in 1960 and usher in an era of American politics remembered as "Camelot." The dream turned to a nightmare in 1963 when Kennedy was cut down by an assassin's bullet.

Leading Ideas

The Bible provides the ethics upon which to judge people and nations.

— Exodus 20:1-17

God is sovereign over the affairs of men.

From one man He made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.

— Acts 17:26

Vocabulary

Lesson 1:
ebullience
obliterate

Lesson 4:
indelible

Lesson 2:
none

Lesson 5:
exacerbate

Lesson 3:
none

Reading and Assignments

In this unit, students will:

- Complete five lessons in which they will learn about **the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon presidencies**, journaling and answering discussion questions as they read.
- Define vocabulary words.
- Conduct research on the **Cuban Missile Crisis**.
- Visit www.ArtiosHCS.com for additional resources.

Key People, Places, and Events

President John F. Kennedy
President Richard M. Nixon
Peace Corps
First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy
Premier Nikita Khrushchev
Yuri Gagarin
Alan Shepherd
John Glenn
Neil Armstrong
Peace Corps
Alliance for Progress
Sputnik
The Cuban Missile Crisis
Lee Harvey Oswald
Governor John Connally
National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Jack Ruby
Chief Justice Earl Warren
Robert Kennedy
Medicare
The Warren Court
Hubert Humphrey
Sirhan Sirhan
Martin Luther King, Jr.
Governor George Wallace
Mao Zedong
Leonid Brezhnev
President Lyndon Baines Johnson
Secretary of State Henry Kissinger
Economic Opportunity Act of 1964
Office of Economic Opportunity



Helicopter picking up Alan Shepard inside the space capsule, 1961

Lesson One

History Overview and Assignments

The Election of 1960

The election of 1960 was one of the closest elections in American history. However, when the votes were tallied in November, Kennedy received only about 100,000 more votes than Nixon out of over 68 million votes cast. The Electoral College awarded the election to Kennedy by a 303-219 margin, despite Nixon winning more states than Kennedy.



Coming into the first televised presidential debate, John F. Kennedy had spent time relaxing in Florida while Richard Nixon maintained a hectic campaign schedule. As a result, Kennedy appeared tan and relaxed during the debate while Nixon seemed a bit worn down. Radio listeners proclaimed Nixon the better debater, while those who watched on television made Kennedy their choice.

Reading and Assignments

- Review the discussion questions and vocabulary, then read the article: *The Election of 1960*.
- Narrate about today's reading using the appropriate notebook page. Be sure to answer the discussion questions and include key people, events, and dates within the narration.
- Define the vocabulary words in the context of the reading and put the word and its definition in the vocabulary section of your history notebook.
- Visit www.ArtiosHCS.com for additional resources.

Vocabulary

ebullience obliterate

Key People, Places, and Events

President John F. Kennedy

President Richard M. Nixon

Discussion Questions

1. What were some of the challenges that Kennedy faced in the 1960 election?
2. What were some of the challenges that Nixon faced in the 1960 election?
3. How did Kennedy overcome his challenges?
4. How did Nixon try to overcome his challenges?
5. What do many people believe was the decisive battle in the campaign?
6. What were the results of the 1960 election?

U.S. History Online Textbook

source: ushistory.org

The Election of 1960

It was one of the closest elections in American history.

The Republican insider was Richard Nixon of California, relatively young but experienced as the nation's vice president for 8 years under Dwight Eisenhower. The Democratic newcomer was John F. Kennedy, senator from Massachusetts, who at the age of 43 could become the youngest person ever to be elected president. Regardless of the outcome, the United States would for the first time have a leader born in the 20th century.

Age was not the only factor in the election. Kennedy was also Roman Catholic, and no Catholic had ever been elected president before. This raised serious questions about the electability of a Catholic candidate, particularly in the largely Protestant South. Questions were also raised about Kennedy's ability to place national interests above the wishes of his pope.

To mollify these concerns, Kennedy addressed a group of Protestant ministers. He pledged a solid commitment to separation of church and state. Despite his assurances, his faith cost him an estimated 1.5 million votes in November 1960. Nixon decided to leave religious issues out of the campaign and hammer the perception that Kennedy was too inexperienced to sit in the Oval Office.

Nixon stressed his steadfast commitment to fighting communism and the record of his 8 years as vice president. The Soviet Union and China were always

pressing concerns, and America could ill afford a president who had to learn on the job.

Kennedy stressed his character, assisted by those in the press who reported stories about his World War II heroism. While he was serving in the South Pacific aboard the *PT109*, a Japanese destroyer rammed his ship and snapped it in two. Kennedy rescued several of his crewmates from certain death. Then he swam from island to island until he found a group of friendly natives who delivered a distress message Kennedy had carved into a coconut to an American naval base. Courage and character became the major themes of Kennedy's campaign.



The combination of New Englander John F. Kennedy and Texan Lyndon B. Johnson created what some called a "Boston-Austin connection" that helped balance the 1960 Democratic ticket geographically.

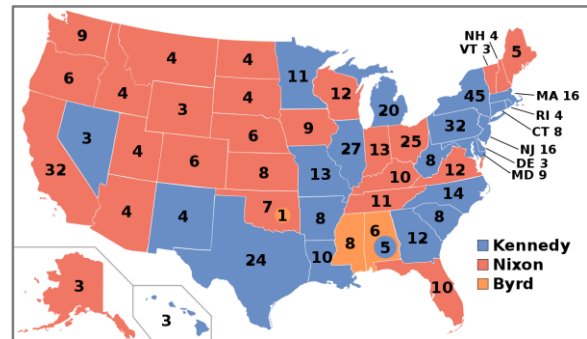
Although both candidates were seen as moderates on nearly every policy issue of the time, they hailed from different backgrounds. Kennedy was from a wealthy background and graduated from Harvard

University. Nixon painted himself the average American, growing up poor in California and working his way through Whittier College.

In such a close contest, every event matters. Many analysts suggest that the decisive battle in the campaign was waged during the televised presidential debates. Kennedy arrived for the debates well-tanned and well-rested from Florida, while Nixon was recovering from a knee injury he suffered in a tiresome whistle-stop campaign. The Democrat was extremely “telegenic” and comfortable before the camera. The Republican was nervous, sweated profusely under the hot lights, and could not seem to find a makeup artist who could hide his five o’clock shadow.

Radio listeners of the first debate narrowly awarded Nixon a victory, while the larger television audience believed Kennedy

won by a wide margin. When the votes were tallied in November, Kennedy received only about 100,000 more votes than Nixon out of over 68 million votes cast. The Electoral College awarded the election to Kennedy by a 303-219 margin, despite Nixon winning more states than Kennedy.



The presidential election of 1960 was one of the closest in American history. John F. Kennedy won the popular vote by a slim margin of approximately 100,000 votes.

Richard Nixon won more individual states than Kennedy, but it was Kennedy who prevailed by winning key states with many electoral votes.

Lesson Two

History Overview and Assignments

Kennedy's New Frontier

Proclaiming that the “torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans,” Kennedy, young and good-looking, boldly and proudly assumed office. The nation was united, positive, and forward-looking. No frontier was too distant.



John F. Kennedy's youthful looks, cheerful family, and charming demeanor captured the American imagination like few presidents had ever done.

Hyannisport Weekend: President Kennedy, John F. Kennedy Jr., Mrs. Kennedy, Caroline Kennedy. Dogs: Clipper (standing), Charlie (with Caroline), Wolf (reclining), Shannon (with John Jr.), two of Pushinka's puppies (with Mrs. Kennedy)

Reading and Assignments

- Review the discussion then read the article: *Kennedy's New Frontier*.
- Narrate about today's reading using the appropriate notebook page. Be sure to answer the discussion questions and include key people, events, and dates within the narration.
- Visit www.ArtiosHCS.com for additional resources.

Key People, Places, and Events

President John F. Kennedy
Sputnik
John Glenn
National Aeronautics and Space Administration

First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy
Yuri Gagarin
Neil Armstrong

Peace Corps
Alan Shepherd

Discussion Questions

1. Why was the Kennedy administration compared to Camelot?
2. During his inauguration speech, Kennedy said: “*Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.*” What did Kennedy mean?
3. What strides had the Soviet Union made in space exploration by the time Kennedy took office?
4. What challenge did Kennedy give to the American people and government regarding space exploration?

U.S. History Online Textbook

source: ushistory.org

Kennedy's New Frontier

They called it Camelot.

Like King Arthur and Guinevere, a dynamic young leader and his beautiful bride led the nation. The White House was their home, America their kingdom. They were John F. and Jacqueline Kennedy.

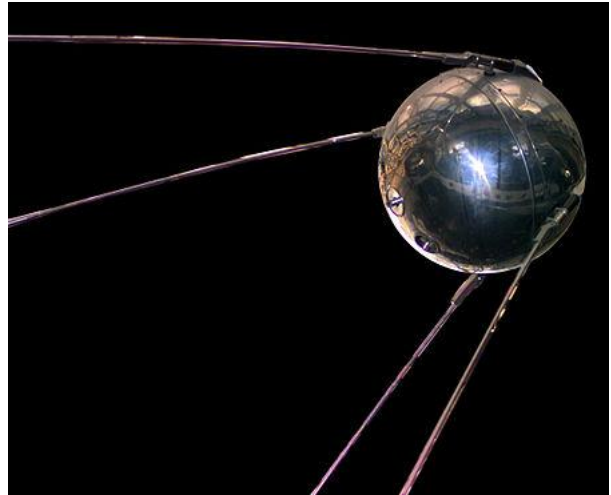
Kennedy set forth new challenges for the United States. In his inauguration speech, he challenged his fellow Americans to “Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.”

Proclaiming that the “torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans,” Kennedy, young and good-looking, boldly and proudly assumed office with a bravado. Many Americans responded to his call by joining the newly formed Peace Corps or volunteering in America to work toward social justice. The nation was united, positive, and forward-looking. No frontier was too distant.

The newest frontier was space. In 1957, the Soviet Union shocked Americans by launching *Sputnik*, the first man-made satellite to be placed in orbit. Congress responded by creating the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) under President Eisenhower. When Kennedy took office, the United States fell farther behind. The Soviets had already placed a dog in space (“*mutnik*,” to the press), and in Kennedy’s first year, Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first human being to orbit the earth.

Kennedy challenged the American people and government to put a man on the moon by the end of the decade. Congress

responded enthusiastically by appropriating billions of dollars for the effort. During Kennedy’s administration Alan Shepherd became the first American to enter space, and John Glenn became the first American to orbit the earth. In 1969, many recalled President Kennedy’s challenge when Neil Armstrong became the first human to set foot on the moon.



Weighing in at just 184 pounds, *Sputnik* was the world’s first man-made satellite. Its launch by Russia in 1957 resulted in the almost immediate formation of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in the United States. The “space race” was on.

Domestically, Kennedy continued in the tradition of liberal Democrats Roosevelt and Truman to some extent. He signed legislation raising the minimum wage and increasing Social Security benefits. He raised money for research into mental illness and allocated funds to develop impoverished rural areas. He showed approval for the Civil Rights Movement by supporting James Meredith’s attempt to enroll at the University of Mississippi and

by ordering his brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, to protect the freedom riders in the South.

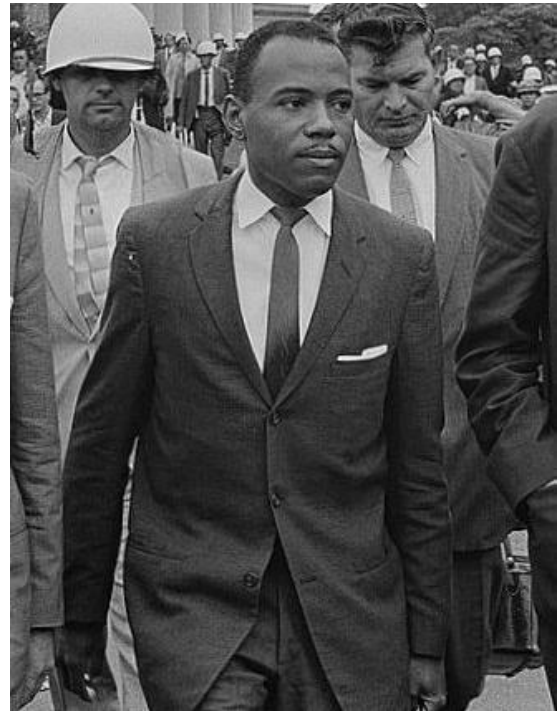


Earth's place in the universe was seen from a dramatic new perspective when American astronauts reached the Moon in the late 1960s. While the first landing on the Moon's surface would not take place until 1969, this photograph of an "earthrise" was taken during the 1968 Apollo 8 data collection mission.

This signed photo was auctioned for \$16,730.

However, most of Kennedy's more revolutionary proposals were rejected by Congress, which was dominated by Republicans and conservative Southern Democrats who did not wish to expand the government's role any further.

In his abbreviated presidency, Kennedy failed to accomplish all he wanted domestically. But the ideas and proposals he supported survived his assassination, and many became part of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society.



John F. Kennedy backed the Civil Rights Movement and supported James Meredith's enrollment in the University of Mississippi. Fear that violent opposition to his attendance could erupt at any moment led to the decision to have Meredith escorted to class by U.S. marshals.

Lesson Three

History Overview and Assignments Kennedy's Global Challenges

President Kennedy faced a confident Soviet Union. Fears of Communist expansion plagued American foreign policy in places as distant as Vietnam and as close as Cuba. Like his predecessors, Kennedy made containment his chief foreign policy goal. Kennedy expanded defense spending. The United States, in his opinion, needed a “flexible response” capability.



Cuba became a hot spot for the Kennedy administration for two reasons during the early 1960s. The failed Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961 was an attempt to incite a popular uprising against Fidel Castro. One year later, the Cuban Missile Crisis saw Kennedy demand an end to Russia's plan to store nuclear arms just 90 miles from U.S. soil.

Reading and Assignments

- Review the discussion questions then read the article: *Kennedy's Global Challenges*.
- Narrate about today's reading using the appropriate notebook page. Be sure to answer the discussion questions and include key people, events, and dates within the narration.
- Do additional research and be prepared to share with the class.
- Visit www.ArtiosHCS.com for additional resources.

Key People, Places, and Events

President John F. Kennedy
Nikita Khrushchev

Peace Corps
The Cuban Missile Crisis

Alliance for Progress

Discussion Questions

1. What differences did Kennedy have regarding military preparation as opposed to his predecessor?
2. What was the Peace Corps?
3. How was the Peace Corps also a foreign policy PR organization?
4. What was the Alliance for Progress program?
5. Describe both Kennedy's greatest foreign policy failure and his greatest foreign policy success with Cuba.
6. Detail the events of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

U.S. History Online Textbook

source: ushistory.org

Kennedy's Global Challenges

The Cold War raged on during the 1960s.

President Kennedy faced a confident Soviet Union, who saw him as young and inexperienced, as well as a sleeping giant in the People's Republic of China (which had become Communist in 1949). Fears of Communist expansion plagued American foreign policy in places as distant as Vietnam and as close as Cuba.

Like his predecessors, Kennedy made containment his chief foreign policy goal. Abandoning Dwight Eisenhower's heavy reliance on nuclear deterrence, Kennedy expanded defense spending. The United States, in his opinion, needed a "flexible response" capability.

To Kennedy, this meant a variety of military options depending upon the specific conditions. Conventional forces were upgraded. Included in this program was the establishment of special forces units. Despite the expense, Kennedy believed communism was a menace that required maximal preparation.

One of Kennedy's most popular foreign policy initiatives was the Peace Corps, a federal program designed to send skilled volunteers overseas for two-year terms of service to assist underdeveloped nations. The initiative was designed to promote goodwill around the world, and it was hoped that countries which received Peace Corps volunteers would be less likely to submit to a Communist revolution.

Relations with Latin America had gone sour since the days of Franklin Roosevelt's

Good Neighbor Policy. Latin American nations complained bitterly about U.S. support of dictatorial military regimes. In response, Kennedy proposed the Alliance for Progress program. Development funds were granted to nations of the Western Hemisphere who were dedicated to fighting communism. After Kennedy's death, funds for the Alliance for Progress were largely diverted to Vietnam, and the initiative was deemed a failure by the end of the decade due to poor economic growth and the rise of more U.S.-backed military regimes.



Logo of the United States Peace Corps

In 1961, the citizens of West Berlin felt completely isolated when the Soviet Union built the Berlin Wall around the city. Kennedy did not respond with force but visited West Berlin in the summer of 1963. In an attempt to show solidarity between West Berlin and the United States, he ended his rousing speech with the infamous words: "*Ich bin ein Berliner.*" In essence,

Kennedy was saying, “I am a citizen of West Berlin.” The visit and the speech endeared him to the people of West Berlin and all of Western Europe.



John F. Kennedy’s stirring address to the people of West Berlin in 1963 illustrated that the U.S. was committed to working for freedom throughout the region and the world. Kennedy ended his speech by stating: *“Ich bin ein Berliner”* (I am a citizen of Berlin).

Kennedy’s greatest foreign policy failure and greatest foreign policy success both involved one nation—Cuba. In 1961, CIA-trained Cuban exiles landed in Cuba at the Bay of Pigs, hoping to ignite a popular uprising that would oust Communist Fidel

Castro from power. When the revolution failed to occur, Castro’s troops moved in. The exiles believed air support would come from the United States, but Kennedy refused. Many of the rebels were shot, and the rest were arrested. The incident was an embarrassment to the United States and a great victory for Fidel Castro.

Apparently the Soviet Union perceived Kennedy’s refusal to deploy sufficient military force as a sign of weakness. In October 1962, the U.S. learned that the Soviet Union was about to install nuclear missiles in Cuba. Kennedy found this unacceptable. He ordered a naval “quarantine” of the island and ordered Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev to turn his missile-carrying boats back to the USSR. Any Soviet attempt to penetrate the American blockade would be met with an immediate military response. The world watched this spine-chilling game of “nuclear chicken” unfold. Finally, Khrushchev acceded to Kennedy’s demands in exchange for U.S. agreement to respect Cuba’s territory, and the world remained safe from global confrontation.

The Cuban Missile Crisis marked the closest the United States and the Soviet Union came to direct confrontation during the entire Cold War.

Lesson Four

History Overview and Assignments

Kennedy Assassination

On November 22, 1963, a wave of shock and grief swept the United States. President Kennedy was killed by an assassin's bullet. As the president waved to the crowds in Dallas while his motorcade moved from the airport through the city, gunshots tore through the midday air. Kennedy was rushed to the hospital, but to no avail.



November 22, 1963, was a sunny day in Dallas, Texas, and for this reason the convertible presidential limousine went through the afternoon parade with the top down. The president and his wife are seated in the back of the car, while Texas governor John Connally is seated directly in front of the president.

Vocabulary

indelible

Key People, Places, and Events

President John F. Kennedy
Lee Harvey Oswald
Governor John Connally
Jack Ruby
Chief Justice Earl Warren

Reading and Assignments

- Review the discussion questions and vocabulary, then read the article: *Kennedy Assassination*.
- Narrate about today's reading using the appropriate notebook page. Be sure to answer the discussion questions and include key people, events, and dates within the narration.
- Define the vocabulary word in the context of the reading and put the word and its definition in the vocabulary section of your history notebook.
- Be sure to visit www.ArtiosHCS.com for additional resources.

Discussion Questions

1. Describe the events surrounding the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.
2. What conspiracy theories surround his assassination?

U.S. History Online Textbook

source: ushistory.org

Kennedy Assassination

Ask any American who was over the age of 8 in 1963 the question: “Where were you when President Kennedy was shot?” and a complete, detailed story is likely to follow.

On November 22, 1963, a wave of shock and grief swept the United States. While visiting Dallas, President Kennedy was killed by an assassin’s bullet. Millions of Americans had indelible images burned into their memories. The bloodstained dress of Jacqueline Kennedy, a mournful Vice President Johnson swearing the presidential oath of office, and dozens and dozens of unanswered questions.

President Kennedy was scheduled to speak at a luncheon in Dallas on November 22. The weather was bright and clear, and the president wished to wave to the crowds as his motorcade moved from the airport through the city.

As the procession moved through Dealey Plaza, gunshots tore through the midday air. Within minutes President Kennedy was dead, and John Connally, the Texas governor, was badly wounded. Kennedy was rushed to the hospital, but to no avail. The news rang out through the nation. Businesses and schools closed so grief-stricken Americans could watch the unfolding events.

Lee Harvey Oswald was arrested for the murder. Oswald was an avowed Communist who had spent three years living in the Soviet Union. He allegedly shot the president from a window in the Texas School Book Depository in Dealey Plaza. Two days later, while Oswald was being

transferred between prison facilities, a nightclub owner named Jack Ruby stepped out of the crowd and fired a bullet into Oswald at point blank range, killing the prisoner. Oswald’s murder was captured on live television.



Dealey Plaza in Dallas, Texas was the site of the assassination. The large brick building directly in the center of this photo is the Texas School Book Depository, from where Lee Harvey Oswald allegedly shot President Kennedy. To the left is the “grassy knoll” where many conspiracy theorists believe a different gunman assassinated Kennedy.

Oswald’s death left many unanswered, searing questions. Among them, “Did Oswald actually assassinate Kennedy?” and, “Did he act alone?”

A committee headed by Chief Justice Earl Warren studied the events surrounding the assassination and declared that Oswald was Kennedy’s killer—and that he acted alone.



Following John F. Kennedy's assassination, Lyndon B. Johnson assumed the presidency of the United States. With the slain president's wife Jacqueline looking on mournfully, Johnson took the Oath of Office while on board the presidential airplane, *Air Force One*.

Critics of the Warren Commission cited irregularities in the findings. Questions surrounded the ability of any sharpshooter to fire the number of bullets Oswald supposedly fired, from such a great

distance, with any degree of accuracy. Witnesses testified that shots were also fired at the president from another direction—the infamous “grassy knoll”—suggesting the presence of a second shooter.

One theory suggests the possibility of a killer firing from a sewer grate along the road. Conspiracy talk flourished—and continues to flourish. Groups as diverse as the Cubans, the Russians, the CIA, and organized crime have been rumored Oswald cohorts.

Flaws in Kennedy's autopsy report suggest the possibility of a cover-up. The president's brain, a very important piece of forensic evidence, simply disappeared.

After decades of study, no conclusive evidence has been presented to disprove the findings of the Warren Commission, but the same questions remain:

Did Oswald kill Kennedy?

Did he act alone?

Lesson Five

History Overview and Assignments From the Great Society to the Great Wall

The spread of communism and the war in Vietnam were overarching issues faced by President Lyndon Johnson and President Richard Nixon. While President Johnson desired to focus on domestic issues, President Nixon wished to distinguish himself in the area of foreign policy.



The Great Wall of China at Jinshanling

Reading and Assignments

- Review the discussion questions and vocabulary, then read the article: *From the Great Society to the Great Wall*.
- Narrate about today's reading using the appropriate notebook page. Be sure to answer the discussion questions and include key people, events, and dates within the narration.
- Define the vocabulary word in the context of the reading and put the word and its definition in the vocabulary section of your history notebook.
- Visit www.ArtiosHCS.com for additional resources.

Vocabulary

exacerbate

Key People, Places, and Events

President Lyndon Baines Johnson
Vice President Hubert Humphrey
Secretary of State Henry Kissinger
Economic Opportunity Act of 1964
Office of Economic Opportunity

Medicare
Sirhan Sirhan
Mao Zedong
Leonid Brezhnev
Attorney General Robert Kennedy

President Richard Nixon
Martin Luther King, Jr.
Governor George Wallace
The Warren Court

Discussion Questions

1. What two very important pieces of legislation were passed during the first few months of President Johnson's administration?
2. What did each of these two pieces of legislation do?
3. Who was the Republican nominee for president who ran against Lyndon Johnson?
4. What overshadowed Johnson's hopes of leaving a legacy of domestic reform?
5. How did the judicial branch of government expand during this time?
6. What happened in Vietnam that crushed Johnson's hope of a second term?
7. What was the fate of Robert Kennedy?
8. Who ran for president against Richard Nixon?

9. Who was George Wallace?
10. Besides Watergate, what is Richard Nixon known for?

11. Describe triangular diplomacy and how Richard Nixon used it to the advantage of the U.S. and its relations with China and the Soviet Union?

Adapted for High School from the book:

U.S. History Online Textbook

source: ushistory.org

From the Great Society to the Great Wall

Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society"

Lyndon Baines Johnson moved quickly to establish himself in the office of the presidency. Despite his conservative voting record in the Senate, Johnson soon reacquainted himself with his liberal roots. Firm in his belief that the U.S. government had both the responsibility and the resources to end poverty, LBJ sponsored the largest reform agenda since Roosevelt's New Deal.

The aftershock of Kennedy's assassination provided a climate for Johnson to complete the unfinished work of JFK's New Frontier. He had eleven months before the election of 1964 to prove to American voters that he deserved a chance to be president in his own right.

Two very important pieces of legislation were passed. First, the civil rights bill that JFK had promised to sign was passed into law. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 banned discrimination based on race and gender in employment and ended segregation in all public facilities.

Johnson also signed the omnibus Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. The law created the Office of Economic Opportunity aimed at attacking American poverty. A Job Corps was established to provide valuable vocational training, and Head Start, a preschool program designed to help

disadvantaged students arrive at kindergarten ready to learn, was put into place. As he campaigned in 1964, Johnson declared a "war on poverty." He challenged Americans to build a "Great Society" that eliminated the troubles of the poor.

Johnson won a decisive victory over his archconservative Republican opponent, Barry Goldwater of Arizona, who believed the nation would be best served with smaller government but frightened the public by threatening possible use of nuclear weapons in Vietnam.



Republican Barry Goldwater attempted to unseat Lyndon Johnson in the 1964 election but was soundly defeated. This bumper sticker combines the chemical symbols for "gold" (Au) and "water" (H₂O) to create a whimsical and memorable campaign slogan.

Johnson was an accomplished legislator, skilled at using his connections in Congress and forceful personality to pass his agenda. During the first session of Congress after his inauguration, he succeeded in pushing 89 bills through the legislature, including Medicare and increases in education funding.



The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was part of Lyndon B. Johnson's "Great Society" reform package—the largest social improvement agenda by a president since FDR's "New Deal." Here Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Among the guests behind him is Martin Luther King, Jr.

By 1966, Johnson was pleased with the progress he had made. But soon events in Southeast Asia began to overshadow his domestic achievements. Funds he had envisioned to fight his war on poverty were now diverted to the war in Vietnam. Not wishing to raise taxes, he found himself maligned by conservatives over his growing budget deficits and by liberals for his determination to achieve victory in Vietnam at the cost of anti-poverty programs.

By 1968, President Johnson's hopes of leaving a legacy of domestic reform were in serious jeopardy, and the nation was even more divided in many ways than it had been beforehand. Liberals today argue that more should have been spent on poverty-elimination efforts, while conservatives contend that the abundance of federal programs and regulations generated during this period proved incapable of solving society's ills, often exacerbating the problems while creating a huge federal debt leading to inflation.

The Warren court

During this era, the judicial branch of government also expanded its role by pursuing a policy of judicial activism. The Supreme Court under Chief Justice Earl Warren favored interpretation of the law in such a way as to address societal issues. During the 1950s and 60s the Supreme Court reached decisions concerning every area of life, from the famous *Brown v. the Board of Education* in 1954 to *Engel v. Vitale* in 1962, which banned state-sponsored prayer in public schools. While civil rights injustices were indeed addressed, serious concerns were raised. In a dissenting opinion on a case involving legislative redistricting, Justice John Harlan charged that the Supreme Court should not be "thought of as a general haven for reform movements," warning against allowing the judiciary to exceed its authority, even when patience is unsatisfied with "the slow workings of the political process."

1968: Year of unraveling

The turbulent 1960s reached a boiling point in 1968.

When the year began, President Johnson hoped to win the war in Vietnam and then cruise to a second term to finish building his Great Society. But events began to spiral out of his control.

In February, the Tet Offensive in Vietnam brought a downward shift in American public opinion toward the war and low approval ratings for the president. Sensing vulnerability, Eugene McCarthy challenged Johnson for his own party's nomination. When the Democratic primary votes were tallied in New Hampshire, McCarthy scored a remarkable 42 percent

of the vote against an incumbent president. Johnson knew that in addition to fighting a bitter campaign against the Republicans he would have to fight to win support of the Democrats as well. His hopes darkened when NY senator Robert Kennedy entered the race in mid-March.

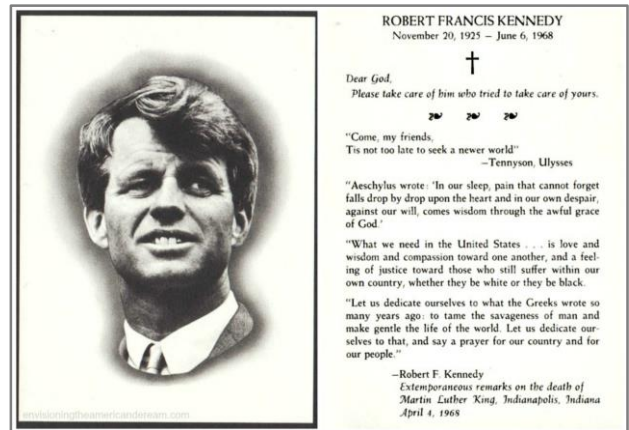
On March 31, 1968, Johnson surprised the nation by announcing he would not seek a second term. His vice president Hubert Humphrey entered the election to carry out Johnson's programs.



Lyndon B. Johnson's popularity had plummeted, and members of his own party were challenging him for the nomination. In March 1968, he made the stunning announcement that he would not seek another term in office.

Feverish political turmoil bloomed in the spring of '68. Humphrey was popular among party elites who chose delegates in many states. But Kennedy was mounting an impressive campaign among the people. His effort touched an emotional nerve in America—the desire to return to the Camelot days of his brother. Kennedy received much support from the poorer classes and from African-Americans who believed Kennedy would continue the struggle for civil rights. Both Kennedy and McCarthy were critical of Humphrey's hawkish stance on Vietnam.

On April 4, Martin Luther King's assassination led to another wave of grief. Then waves of rioting swept America. Two months later, shortly after Robert Kennedy spoke to a crowd cheering his sweep in the California primary, a Palestinian nationalist named Sirhan Sirhan fired a revolver, ending Kennedy's life in in opposition to Kennedy's support of Israel. The nation was numb.



Just as Robert F. Kennedy's campaign for the White House was gaining steam, he was assassinated after delivering his California primary victory speech. Fresh on the heels of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination just months before, the nation once again mourned the loss of a leader committed to civil rights. The card seen above was distributed at Kennedy's funeral.

All eyes were focused on the Democratic Convention in Chicago that August. With Kennedy out of the race, the nomination of Hubert Humphrey was all but certain. Antiwar protesters flocked to Chicago to prevent the inevitable Humphrey nomination, or at least to pressure the party into softening its stance on Vietnam.

Mayor Richard Daley ordered the Chicago police to take a tough stance with the demonstrators. As the crowds chanted, "The whole world is watching," the police bloodied the activists with clubs and released tear gas into the streets. The party nominated Humphrey, but the nation began

to sense that the Democrats were a party of disorder.



The assassination of Robert F. Kennedy virtually assured Vice President Hubert Humphrey the Democratic nomination in 1968. When the party met for their convention in Chicago, thousands of anti-war protesters converged on the city and clashed with police who had been ordered by Chicago Mayor Richard Daley to take a tough stance with the demonstrators.

The Republicans had a comparatively smooth campaign, nominating former vice president Richard Nixon as their candidate. Nixon spoke for the “Silent Majority” of Americans who supported the effort in Vietnam and desired peace and order. Alabama governor George Wallace provided a complication, running on the American Independent Party ticket. Campaigning for “segregation now, segregation forever,” Wallace appealed to those who were disturbed by the violence of the civil rights movement. His running mate, air force general Curtis LeMay, suggested that the United States bomb Vietnam “back to the Stone Age.”

When the votes were tallied in November, Nixon cruised to an electoral vote landslide while winning only 43.4 percent of the popular vote.

Triangular diplomacy: U.S., USSR, and China

Unlike his predecessor, Richard Nixon longed to be known for his expertise in foreign policy. Although occupied with the Vietnam War and inflation brought on by

the rising budget deficits, Nixon also initiated several new trends in American diplomatic relations. Nixon contended that the Communist world consisted of two rival powers—the Soviet Union and China. Given the long history of animosity between those two nations, Nixon and his national security advisor Henry Kissinger decided to exploit that rivalry to win advantages for the United States. That policy became known as triangular diplomacy.



As part of the Cold War’s temporary thaw during the 1970s, Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev agreed to import American wheat into the Soviet Union. The two countries would also agree to a joint space exploration program dubbed Apollo-Soyuz.

The United States had much to offer China. Since Mao Zedong’s takeover in 1949, the United States had refused recognition to the Communist government. Instead, the Americans pledged support to the Chinese Nationalist government in Taiwan as the legitimate government of China. The People’s Republic of China was blocked from admission to the United Nations by the American veto, and Taiwan held China’s seat on the Security Council.

In June 1971 Kissinger traveled secretly to China to make preparations for a presidential visit. After Kissinger’s return, Nixon surprised everyone by announcing that he would travel to China and meet with

Mao Zedong. In February 1972, Nixon toured the Great Wall and drank toasts with Chinese leaders. Soon after, the United States dropped its opposition to Chinese entry in the United Nations and groundwork was laid for the eventual establishment of diplomatic relations.



After his takeover in 1949, Mao Zedong's China went unrecognized for years by the United States. China was also barred from the United Nations by an American veto. Instead, the U.S. supported the Chinese Nationalist government in Taiwan.

As expected, this maneuver caused concern in the Soviet Union. Nixon hoped to establish a *détente*, or an easing of tensions, with the USSR. In May 1972, Nixon made an equally significant trip to Moscow to support a nuclear arms agreement. The product of this visit was the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I). The United States and the Soviet Union pledged to limit the number of intercontinental ballistic missiles each side would build and to prevent the development of anti-ballistic missile systems.



As President Nixon's national security advisor, Henry Kissinger made a secret trip to arrange the first-ever presidential visit to China in 1972. He would become Nixon's secretary of state the next year.

Nixon and his Soviet counterpart, Leonid Brezhnev, also agreed to a trade deal involving American grain being shipped to the USSR. The two nations entered into a joint venture in space exploration known as Apollo-Soyuz.

Arguably, Nixon may have been the only president who could have accomplished this arrangement. Anticommunism was raging in the United States. Americans would view with great suspicion any attempts to make peace with either the Soviet Union or China, but no one would challenge Nixon's anticommunist credentials, given his reputation as a staunch red-baiter in his early career. His overtures were on the whole accepted by the American public. Although the Cold War still burned hotly across the globe, the efforts of Nixon and Kissinger led to a temporary thaw.