Chapter 28

The Liberal Consensus: Flaming Out
1960–1968

Teaching Resources

Chapter Instructional Objectives

After you have taught this chapter, your students should be able to answer the following questions:

1. What were the main aspects of President John F. Kennedy's domestic and foreign policy agenda?
2. What were the most important parts of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s Great Society program?
3. How and why did America enter the war in Vietnam?
4. What was the relationship between American domestic affairs and the conduct of the Vietnam War?
5. Why is 1968 considered a watershed year in modern American history?
6. Why does the term *counterculture* describe the behavior of many baby boomers during the late 1960s?

Chapter Annotated Outline

I. John F. Kennedy and the Politics of Expectation
   A. The New Politics
      1. With his New Frontier program, Kennedy promised to “get America moving again” through vigorous governmental activism at home and abroad.
      2. Kennedy campaigned on the issues of civil rights legislation, health care for the elderly, aid to education, urban renewal, expanded military and space programs, and containment of communism abroad.
      3. Poised to become the youngest man ever elected to the presidency and the nation’s first Catholic chief executive, Kennedy practiced what became known as the “new politics,” an approach that emphasized youthful charisma, style, and personality more than issues and platforms.
      4. A series of four televised debates between Kennedy and Nixon showed how important television was becoming to political life; voters who listened to the 1960 presidential debates on the radio concluded that Nixon had won, and those who watched it on TV felt that Kennedy had won.
   5. Kennedy won only the narrowest of electoral victories, receiving 49.7 percent of the popular vote to Nixon's 49.5 percent; a shift of a few thousand votes in key states would have reversed the outcome.
   B. The Kennedy Administration
      1. Kennedy could not mobilize public or congressional support for his New Frontier agenda; he managed to push through legislation raising the minimum wage and expanding Social Security benefits, but a conservative coalition of southern Democrats and western and midwestern Republicans effectively stalled most liberal initiatives.
   2. The Bay of Pigs incident nearly derailed the Kennedy administration. In January of 1961, the two nations began a nuclear standoff near Cuba that lasted two months and nearly brought the world into a third world war.
   3. Funding for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and its Mercury program won support; on May 5, 1961, Alan Shepard became the first American in space, and, in 1962, John
Glenn manned the first U.S. space mission to orbit the earth.

4. After Kennedy’s assassination, the Tax Reduction Act (the Kennedy-Johnson tax cut, 1964) marked a milestone in the use of fiscal policy to encourage economic growth.

C. The Civil Rights Movement Stirs
1. One of the most notable failures of the Kennedy administration was its reluctance to act on civil rights.
2. After the Woolworth’s lunch counter sit-in, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference helped to organize the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee in order to facilitate sit-ins by blacks demanding an end to segregation.
3. The Congress of Racial Equality organized freedom rides on bus lines in the South to call attention to segregation on public transportation; the activists were attacked by white mobs.
4. Attorney General Robert Kennedy sent federal marshals to Alabama to restore order; most southern communities quietly acceded to the Interstate Commerce Commission’s prohibition of segregated interstate vehicles and facilities.
5. When thousands of black demonstrators, organized by Martin Luther King Jr., marched to picket Birmingham, Alabama’s department stores, television cameras captured the severe methods used against them by Bull Connors.
6. President Kennedy responded to the incident on June 11, 1963, when he went on television to promise major legislation banning discrimination in public accommodations and empowering the Justice Department to enforce desegregation.
7. Black leaders hailed Kennedy’s speech as the “Second Emancipation Proclamation,” yet on the evening of the address, Medgar Evers, the president of the Mississippi chapter of the NAACP, was shot and killed.
8. To rouse the conscience of the nation and to marshal support for Kennedy’s bill, civil rights leaders launched a massive civil rights march on Washington in 1963, which culminated in King’s “I Have a Dream” speech.
9. King’s eloquence and the sight of blacks and whites marching together did more than any thing else to make the civil rights movement acceptable to white Americans; it also marked the high point of the civil rights movement and confirmed King’s position as the leading speaker for the black cause.
10. Some civil rights activists were more radical than King; during the next few years, there were conflicts among the black activists over tactics and goals that were to transform the movement.
11. Southern senators blocked the civil rights legislation, and there was an outbreak of violence by white extremists; four black Sunday school students were killed when a Birmingham, Alabama, church was bombed.

D. Kennedy, Cold Warrior
1. A resolute cold warrior, Kennedy proposed a new policy of flexible response measures designed to deter direct attacks by the Soviet Union, which resulted in the defense budget reaching its highest level as a percentage of total federal expenditures in the Cold War era and greatly expanding the military-industrial complex.
2. Kennedy adopted a new military doctrine of counterinsurgency; soon the Green Berets of the U.S. Army’s Special Forces were being trained to repel guerrilla warfare.
3. The Peace Corps, the Agency for International Development, and the Alliance for Progress provided food and other aid to Third World countries, bringing them into the American orbit and away from Communist influence.
5. Isolated by the United States, Cuba turned to the Soviet Union for economic and military support.
6. In early 1961, Kennedy attempted to foster an anti-Castro uprising; the CIA-trained invaders were crushed by Castro’s troops after landing at Cuba’s Bay of Pigs on April 17.
7. U.S.-Soviet relations further deteriorated when the Soviets built the Berlin Wall in order to stop the exodus of East Germans; the Berlin Wall remained a symbol of the Cold War until 1989.
8. The climactic confrontation of the Cold War, the Cuban missile crisis, occurred in October 1962, when American reconnaissance planes flying over Cuba photographed Soviet-built bases for ICBMs, which could reach U.S. targets as far as 2,200 miles away.

9. In a televised address, Kennedy confronted the Soviet Union and announced that the United States would impose a “quarantine on all offensive military equipment” intended for Cuba.

10. After a week of tense negotiations, both Kennedy and Khrushchev made concessions: the United States would not invade Cuba, and the Soviets would dismantle the missile bases.

11. After the Cuban missile crisis, Kennedy softened his Cold War rhetoric and began to strive for peaceful coexistence; in 1963, the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union agreed to stop testing nuclear weapons in the atmosphere, in space, and under water; underground testing would continue.

12. A new Washington-Moscow telecommunications “hot line” was established so that leaders could contact each other quickly during potential crises.

13. Despite efforts at peaceful coexistence, the preoccupation with the Soviet military threat to American security remained a cornerstone of U.S. policy; the Cold War, and the escalating arms race that accompanied it, would continue for another twenty-five years.


15. The Army was training U.S. Special Forces, called Green Berets for their distinctive headgear, to engage in unconventional, small-group warfare. Kennedy and his advisors wanted to try out the Green Berets in the Vietnamese jungles.

16. Despite American aid, the corrupt and repressive Diem regime installed by Eisenhower in 1954 in South Vietnam was losing ground to domestic critics and North Vietnamese insurgents.

17. Losing patience with Diem, Kennedy let it be known in Saigon that the United States would support a military coup. On November 1, 1963, Diem was overthrown and assassinated—a result evidently not anticipated by Kennedy. At that point, there were about 16,000 American “advisors” in Vietnam.

18. The United States was now engaged in a global war against communism. Giving up in Vietnam would be weakening America's “credibility” in that struggle. And, under the prevailing “domino theory,” other pro-American states would topple after Vietnam's loss.

E. The Kennedy Assassination

1. On November 22, 1963, in Dallas, Texas, President Kennedy was assassinated by Lee Harvey Oswald; Lyndon Johnson was sworn in as president.

2. Kennedy's youthful image, the trauma of his assassination, and the sense that Americans had been robbed of a promising leader contributed to a powerful mystique that continues today.

3. This romantic aura of “Camelot” overshadows Kennedy's mixed record of accomplishments; he exercised leadership in foreign affairs, but some remain critical of his belligerent stance toward the Soviet Union and lack of attention to domestic issues.

II. Lyndon B. Johnson and the Great Society

A. The Momentum for Civil Rights

1. Johnson won the 1964 election in a landslide and used his energy and genius for compromise to bring to fruition many of Kennedy's stalled programs as well as many of his own.

2. Those legislative accomplishments—Johnson's “Great Society”—fulfilled and in many cases surpassed the New Deal liberal agenda of the 1930s.

3. On assuming the presidency, Johnson promptly pushed the passage of civil rights to appeal to a broad national audience and to achieve an impressive legislative accomplishment, which he hoped would place his mark on the presidency.

4. The Civil Rights Act passed in June 1964; its keystone, Title VII, outlawed discrimination in employment on the basis of race, religion, national origin, or sex.

5. The Civil Rights Act forced desegregation of public facilities throughout the South, yet obstacles to black voting remained.

6. To meet this challenge, civil rights activists mounted a major civil rights campaign in Mississippi known as “Freedom Summer,”
which established freedom schools, conducted a voter registration drive, and organized the Mississippi Freedom Democratic party.

7. The reaction of white southerners to Freedom Summer was swift and violent; fifteen civil rights workers were murdered, and only 1,200 black voters were registered.

8. To protest these murders, King and other civil rights activists staged a march from Selma to Montgomery in March 1965; the marchers were attacked by mounted state troopers with tear gas and clubs, all of which was shown on national television.

9. Calling the episode “an American tragedy,” President Johnson redoubled his efforts to persuade Congress to pass the pending voting-rights legislation.

10. On August 6, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which suspended the literacy tests and other measures most southern states used to prevent blacks from registering to vote.

11. The Twenty-fourth Amendment’s outlawing of the federal poll tax, combined with the Voting Rights Act, allowed millions of blacks to register to vote for the first time.

12. In 1960 in the South only 20 percent of blacks of voting age had been registered to vote; by 1964 the figure had risen to 39 percent, and by 1971 it was 62 percent.

B. Enacting the Liberal Agenda

1. When Johnson defeated Republican senator Barry Goldwater for the presidency in 1964, he won in a landslide, providing a mandate for his administration.

2. Johnson used this mandate not only to promote the civil rights agenda but also to bring to fruition what he called the “Great Society.”

3. Wherever he acted, Johnson pursued an ambitious goal of putting “an end to poverty in our time”; the “War on Poverty” expanded long-established social insurance programs, welfare programs (like Aid to Families with Dependent Children and Food Stamps), and public works programs.

4. The Office of Economic Opportunity, established by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, created programs such as Head Start, the Job Corps, Upward Bound, Volunteers in Service to America, and the Community Action Program.

5. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 authorized $1 billion in federal funds to benefit impoverished children; the Higher Education Act provided the first federal scholarships for college students.

6. Federal health insurance legislation was enacted; the result was Medicare for the elderly and Medicaid for the poor.

7. The creation of the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities in 1965 supported artists and historians in their efforts to understand and interpret the nation’s cultural and historical heritage.

8. Another aspect of public welfare addressed by the Great Society was the environment; Johnson pressed for expansion of the national parks system, improvement of the nation’s air and water, and increased land-use planning.

9. At the insistence of his wife, Lady Bird, President Johnson promoted the Highway Beautification Act of 1965.

10. Liberal Democrats brought about significant changes in immigration policy with the passage of the Immigration Act of 1965, which abandoned the quota system of the 1920s.

11. By the end of 1965, the Johnson administration had compiled the most impressive legislative record of liberal reforms since the New Deal; it had put issues of poverty, justice, and access at the center of national political life, and it expanded the federal government’s role in protecting citizens’ welfare.

12. By the end of the decade, many of its programs were under attack; limits that confronted it were the political necessity of bowing to pressure from various interest groups and limited funding for its programs.

13. The results of the War on Poverty were that the poor were better off in an absolute sense, but they remained far behind the middle class in a relative sense.

14. Democratic support for further governmental activism was hampered by a growing conservative backlash against the expansion of civil rights and social welfare programs.

15. After 1965, the Vietnam War siphoned funding away from domestic programs; in
1966, the government spent $22 billion on the war and only $1.2 billion on the War on Poverty. As Martin Luther King put it, the Great Society was “shot down on the battlefields of Vietnam.”

III. Into the Quagmire, 1963–1968

A. Escalation

1. When Johnson became president, he continued and accelerated U.S. involvement in Vietnam to prevent charges of being soft on communism.

2. Johnson knew that he needed congressional support or a declaration of war to commit U.S. troops to an offensive strategy, so he told the nation that North Vietnamese torpedo boats had fired on American destroyers in international waters in response to South Vietnamese amphibious attacks.

3. On August 7, 1964, Congress authorized the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which allowed Johnson to “take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression.”

4. The Johnson administration moved toward the Americanization of the war with Operation Rolling Thunder, a protracted bombing campaign that by 1968 had dropped a million tons of bombs on North Vietnam.

5. Operation Rolling Thunder intensified the North Vietnamese’s will to fight; the flow of their troops and supplies continued to the south unabated as the Communists rebuilt roads and bridges, moved munitions underground, and built networks of tunnels and shelters.

6. A week after the launch of Operation Rolling Thunder, the United States sent its first ground troops into combat; by 1968, more than 536,000 American soldiers were stationed in Vietnam.

7. Vietnam’s countryside was threatened with destruction; the massive bombardment plus a defoliation campaign seriously damaged agricultural production and thus the economy.

8. The dramatically increased American presence in Vietnam failed to turn the tide of the war; yet, hoping to win a war of attrition, the Johnson administration assumed that American superiority in personnel and weaponry would ultimately triumph.

B. Public Opinion on Vietnam

1. By the late 1960s, public opinion began to turn against the war in Vietnam; television had much to do with these attitudes as Vietnam was the first televised war.

2. Despite glowing statements made on television, by 1967, many administration officials privately reached a more pessimistic conclusion regarding the war.

3. The administration was accused of suffering from a “credibility gap”; 1966 televised hearings by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee raised further questions about U.S. policy.

4. Economic developments put Johnson and his advisors even more on the defensive; the costs of the war became evident as the growing federal deficit nudged the inflation rate upward, beginning the inflationary spiral that plagued the U.S. economy throughout the 1970s.

5. After the escalation in the spring of 1965, various antiwar coalitions organized several mass demonstrations in Washington; participants shared a common skepticism about the means and aims of U.S. policy and argued that the war was antithetical to American ideals.

C. Student Activism

1. Youth were among the key protestors of the era.

2. In their manifesto, the Port Huron Statement, the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) expressed their disillusionment with the consumer culture and the gulf between the prosperous and the poor and rejected Cold War ideology and foreign policy.

3. The founders of SDS referred to themselves as the “New Left” to distinguish themselves from the “Old Left” of Communists and socialists of the 1930s and 1940s.

4. At the University of California at Berkeley, the Free Speech Movement organized a sit-in in response to administrators’ attempts to ban political activity on campus.

5. Many protests centered on the draft, especially after the Selective Service system abolished automatic student deferments in January 1966; in public demonstrations of civil disobedience, opponents of the war burned their draft cards, closed down induction centers, and broke into Selective Service offices and destroyed records.
6. Much of the universities' research budget came from Defense Department contracts; students demanded that the Reserve Officer Training Corps be removed from college campuses.

7. The Johnson administration had to face the reality of large-scale opposition to the war with protests like "Stop the Draft Week" and the "siege on the Pentagon."

IV. Coming Apart

A. The Counterculture
1. The "hippie" symbolized the new counterculture, a youthful movement that glorified liberation from traditional social strictures.
2. Popular music by Pete Seeger, Joan Baez, and Bob Dylan expressed political idealism, protest, and loss of patience with the war and was an important part of the counterculture.
3. Beatlemania helped to deepen the generational divide and paved the way for the more rebellious, angrier music of other British groups, notably the Rolling Stones.
4. Drugs and sex intertwined with music as a crucial element of the youth culture as celebrated at the 1969 Woodstock Music and Art Fair, which attracted 400,000 young people.
5. In 1967, at the "world's first Human Be-In" at San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, Timothy Leary urged gatherers to "turn on, tune in, and drop out"; 1967 was also the "Summer of Love," in which city neighborhoods swelled with young dropouts, drifters, and teenage runaways dubbed "flower children."
6. Many young people stayed out of the counterculture and the antiwar movement, yet media coverage made it seem that all of America's youth were rejecting political, social, and cultural norms.

B. Beyond Civil Rights
1. Among young blacks, knocking the mainstream meant something else. It meant rejecting the established, civil rights leadership, with its faith in the courts and legislative change.
2. It meant an eye-for-an-eye, not Martin Luther King's non-violence. It meant wondering why blacks wanted to be integrated with whites anyway. Above all, it expressed fury at the poverty of blacks and at white racism that was beyond the reach of civil rights laws.
3. Black rage had expressed itself historically in demands for racial separation, espoused in the late nineteenth century by the back-to-Africa movement and in the 1920s by Marcus Garvey.
4. Black separatism was revived by a religious group known as the Black Muslims, an organization that stressed black pride, unity, and self-help and was hostile to whites.
5. The Black Muslims' most charismatic figure, Malcolm X, advocated militant protest and separatism, although he-condoned the use of violence only for self-defense.
6. Malcolm X eventually broke with the Nation of Islam and was assassinated by three Black Muslims while delivering a speech in Harlem in 1965.
7. A more secular black nationalist movement calling for black self-reliance and racial pride emerged in 1966 under the banner of "Black Power"; the same year, the Black Panthers organization was founded to protect blacks from police violence.
8. Among the most significant legacies of black power was the assertion of racial pride, as exhibited by many blacks insisting on the usage of Afro-American rather than Negro and the adoption of African clothing and hairstyles to awaken interest in black history, art, and literature.
9. Support for civil rights by white Americans began to erode when blacks began demanding immediate access to higher-paying jobs, housing, and education, along with increased political power, and when a wave of race riots began in 1964, primarily over the issue of police brutality.
10. The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (the Kerner Commission) released a 1968 report on the riots and warned that the nation was moving toward two separate and unequal societies: one black, one white.
11. On April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, setting off an explosion of urban rioting in more than one hundred cities; with his assassination, the civil rights movement lost the leader best able to stir the conscience of white America.
12. The legacies of the civil rights movement were that segregation was overturned, federal legislation ensured protection of black
Americans’ civil rights, southern blacks were enfranchised, and black candidates entered the political arena, yet more entrenched forms of segregation and discrimination persisted.
13. The black civil rights movement provided an innovative model for other groups seeking to expand their rights.
14. The situation of Mexican Americans changed when the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA) mobilized support for Kennedy and worked with other groups to elect Mexican American candidates to Congress.
15. Younger Mexican Americans rejected the assimilationist approach of their elders; in 1969, 1,500 students met in Denver to hammer out a new nationalist political and cultural agenda. They coined the term “Chicano” and organized a new political party, La Raza Unida (The United Race), to promote Chicano political interests.
16. Chicano strategists also pursued economic objectives; César Chávez organized the United Farm Workers (UFW), the first union to represent migrant workers successfully.
17. More than 800,000 North American Indians suffered the highest levels of unemployment and poverty, the most inadequate housing, and the least access to education.
18. Some Indian groups became more assertive, taking the new label of Native Americans, embracing the concept of “Red Power,” and organizing protests and demonstrations. In 1968, the militant American Indian Movement (AIM) was organized.
20. In February 1973, AIM activists began an occupation of Wounded Knee, South Dakota, the site of an army massacre of the Sioux in 1890. The seventy-one-day siege, in which the FBI killed one protestor and wounded another, alienated many whites, but it spurred government action on tribal issues.

V. 1968: A Year of Shocks
A. The Politics of Vietnam
1. The Johnson administration’s hopes for Vietnam evaporated when the Viet Cong unleashed a massive assault, known as the Tet offensive, on major urban areas in South Vietnam.
2. The attack made a mockery of official pronouncements that the United States was winning the war and swung public opinion more strongly against the conflict.
3. Antiwar Senator Eugene J. McCarthy’s strong showing in the presidential primaries reflected profound public dissatisfaction with the course of the war and propelled Senator Robert F. Kennedy into the race on an antiwar platform.
4. On March 31, 1968, Johnson stunned the nation by announcing that he would not seek reelection; he vowed to devote his remaining months in office to the search for peace, and peace talks began in May 1968.
5. 1968 also witnessed the assassination of Martin Luther King and its ensuing riots; student occupation of several buildings at Columbia University; a strike by students and labor that toppled the French government; and the assassination of Robert Kennedy, which shattered the dreams of those hoping for social change through political action.
6. The Democratic party never fully recovered from Johnson’s withdrawal and Robert Kennedy’s assassination.
7. At the Democratic Convention, the political divisions generated by the war consumed the party; outside the convention “yippies” demonstrated, diverting attention from the more serious and numerous activists who came to Chicago as delegates or volunteers.
8. The Democratic mayor of Chicago, Richard J. Daley, called out the police to break up the demonstrations. In what was later described as a “police riot,” policemen attacked protestors at the convention with mace, tear gas, and clubs as TV viewers watched, which only cemented a popular impression of the Democrats as the party of disorder.
9. Democrats dispiritedly nominated Hubert H. Humphrey and Edmund S. Muskie and approved a platform that endorsed continued fighting in Vietnam while diplomatic means to an end were explored.

B. Backlash
1. The turmoil surrounding the civil rights and antiwar movements strengthened
support for “law and order”; many Americans were fed up with protest and dissent.

2. George Wallace, a third-party candidate, skillfully combined attacks on liberal intellectuals and government elites with denunciations of school segregation and forced busing.

3. Richard Nixon tapped the increasingly conservative mood of the electorate in an amazing political comeback, winning the 1968 Republican presidential nomination and courting the “silent majority” of law-abiding Americans.

4. On October 31, 1968, Johnson announced a complete halt to the bombing of North Vietnam; Nixon countered by intimating that he had a plan for the end of the war, although he did not.

5. On election day, Nixon received 43.4 percent of the vote to Humphrey’s 42.7 percent, defeating him by only 510,000 votes out of the 73 million that were cast, and Wallace finished with 13.5 percent of the popular vote.

6. The closeness of the 1968 election suggested how polarized American society had become.

Key Term

**fiscal policy** The range of decisions involving the finances of the federal government. These decisions include how much to tax, how much to spend, and what level of resulting deficit or surplus is acceptable. Such decisions—fiscal policy—have a big effect on a nation’s allocation of economic resources, the distribution of income, and the level of economic activity. (864)

Lecture Strategies

1. The election of 1960 saw the advent of the “new politics,” bringing about several changes in the way presidential campaigns were managed. Students should be shown the contrast in campaigning before and after television became the most important way to reach the public. What impact did the television debates between Kennedy and Nixon have on that campaign?

2. Involvement with Cuba became an obsession in Kennedy’s administration. The failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion disillusioned some cold warriors in the CIA about Kennedy’s promise of an activist foreign policy. The Cuban missile crisis, by contrast, portrayed him as a cool hand at the tiller of foreign policy. Students should understand the reasons for the missile crisis, the process of decision making in the administration, and the danger of a nuclear exchange in this confrontation. Much new information about the crisis has become available on film and in books since the breakup of the Soviet Union.

3. Write a lecture analyzing the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Tell students what we do know and what we definitely do not. Various scenarios can be presented without coming to a conclusion. Why do so many people refuse to believe the Warren Commission report? Why does the assassination of a relatively ineffective president obsess some segments of the public? Perhaps a word should be said about the enhancement of the “Camelot” mystique after Kennedy’s death.

4. Compose a lecture to give students a glimpse of the larger-than-life qualities of Lyndon Johnson. A survey of his political career will help students to understand the relish with which Johnson took command after Kennedy’s death. Johnson’s overbearing but effective personal style should be noted. The conflicts between his egomania and his genuine humanitarianism have to be understood to properly assess this complex politician.

5. The “War on Poverty” provides a perfect lecture for our students. There is much disagreement among scholars about its historical potential and effectiveness. Although almost everyone agrees that it lost out economically to the war in Vietnam, there is still much controversy about its potential for eliminating poverty or even reducing it significantly. To explore this issue, the instructor must evaluate the programs of the Office of Economic Opportunity that challenged the traditional federal structure of American politics. For example, never before had funds gone directly from the federal government to neighborhood associations. The poor were to be empowered by the Community Action Program, a prospect that local politicians did not look on with favor.

6. Create a lecture explaining how the Cold War policy of containment created the conditions that led to the Vietnam War. The Vietnamese struggle for independence against the Japanese and then the French provides the backdrop for increasing U.S. involvement in Indochina. The implications of establishing an independent non-Communist South Vietnam, whose safety would be guaranteed by American power, need to be pointed out. The failures of successive South Vietnamese governments to win the allegiance of the people meant that the
United States had to supply more force to overcome resistance in the countryside. Explore the reasons that Johnson sharply escalated the war after his election to a full term as president in 1964.

7. Write a lecture that examines how the student movement emerged in the 1960s out of the "silent generation." Note the influence of the civil rights movement from which some student leaders emerged. Which developments in the Vietnam War energized the protest movement on campuses? Why did a segment of the student movement turn to violence in order to achieve its goals?

8. Students often confuse activist movements of the 1960s with the counterculture that emerged during this period. Write a lecture that evaluates the ethos of the counterculture and show how distinct it was from movements such as the Students for a Democratic Society. Demonstrate how one movement embraced political action while the other rejected it outright.

9. Draft a lecture analyzing these questions: What gave rise to the urban riots of the mid-1960s? Why did they occur so soon after the federal government had passed civil rights and voting rights acts? Note that the major riots were triggered by real or perceived episodes of police brutality. Mention the role of civil and military authorities in suppressing the uprisings. What did the Commission on Civil Disorders conclude about the direction of race relations in urban America? Why did the rioters burn down their own neighborhoods?

10. Why was 1968 a critical year in American history? Students should be led through the decisive events of that year—the Tet offensive, the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy, the Democratic Convention in Chicago—and shown the impact of these events on domestic and foreign policy.

**Reviewing the Text**

These questions are from the textbook and follow each main section of the narrative. They are provided in the Computerized Test Bank with suggested responses, for your convenience.

**John F. Kennedy and the Politics of Expectation (pp. 862–871)**

1. Why was Kennedy an effective politician?
   - Kennedy was a young, Harvard-educated, charismatic, handsome, engaging, activist-orientated politician who used the national media, particularly television, to great advantage.

2. Why did civil rights become a big issue during the Kennedy years?
   - Kennedy was cautious about pushing civil rights, but public protest forced him to act by sending in federal troops and marshals to support African American attempts to achieve equality in the southern states.
   - Kennedy would also become outraged at the violence he saw on television and in the print media by whites against African American protesters.

3. What were the results of Kennedy's foreign policy?
   - JFK was an ardent cold warrior, and his foreign policy reflected a virulent anti-communist and containment thrust, leading to U.S. military involvement in Vietnam, the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, and the near disaster of the Cuban Missile Crisis.
   - Kennedy's fears of the domino theory pushed the nation closer to nuclear war with the Soviet Union, and also created “hot spots” of U.S. military engagement abroad.

**Lyndon B. Johnson and the Great Society (pp. 871–877)**

1. Why, after years of resistance, did Congress pass the great civil rights acts of 1964 and 1965?
   - President Johnson pushed Congress hard for civil rights as a personal and political goal, individual acts of heroism by African Americans and violence during the civil rights movement forced Congress to act, and the sweeping mandate Johnson received during his 1964 election helped to push Congress to pass civil rights legislation.

2. What were the key components of the Great Society?
   - Key components of an expanded social welfare agenda included civil rights legislation, improved health care legislation, the “war on poverty,” better housing and community development programs, an increase in educational programs, acts to clean up the environment, and reductions in taxation and restrictive immigration laws.

3. What factors limited the success of the War on Poverty?
   - Problems with the War on Poverty included limited funding, the difficulty of holding together a
diverse political coalition, conflicting group interests, the rise of a conservative backlash, the Vietnam War, and Democratic Party disillusionment.

**Into the Quagmire, 1963–1968 (pp. 877–884)**

1. What difficulties did the United States face in fighting a war against North Vietnam and the Vietcong in South Vietnam?
   - Difficulties included fighting in a jungle environment, fighting a determined enemy, discerning friend from foe within the civil war context of Vietnamese society, domestic antifascist sentiment which included draft resistance, low troop morale, Johnson’s fears of the “credibility gap,” and the failure of Congress to officially declare a war in Vietnam.

2. Why did President Johnson suffer a “credibility gap” over Vietnam?
   - The credibility gap stemmed from Johnson’s unwillingness to level with the American public regarding the escalation of violence in Vietnam. He did not want to endanger his ambitious domestic agenda.
   - The absence of firm proof for the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, the lack of an official war declared by Congress, and the generation gap between baby boomers in college and their parents who ran the nation only widened Johnson’s credibility gap.

3. What was the student role in the antiwar movement? How can we explain students’ willingness to protest the war?
   - The antiwar movement fed from the large numbers of young baby boomers in college and high school during the 1960s who were raised to conform to conservative American values but rejected that ethos despite privileged class backgrounds.
   - Students were willing to protest the war because it was young men who were being drafted. They were also influenced by the countercultural movement of the 1960s which emphasized nonviolence, and many students were inspired by the civil rights protests led by African American people and white supporters.

**Coming Apart (pp. 844–888)**

1. What are the elements in the counterculture of the 1960s?
   - Sensory experimentation through music, sex, and recreational drug use, nonconformity, nonviolence, appreciation for cultural diversity, and a belief in socialism and communism as alternative government systems to exploitative capitalism.

2. How do you account for the Black Power movement?
   - The Black Power movement arose in response to feelings of alienation on the part of the youth leaders of the civil rights movement. They felt that only by asking black people to rely on racial pride and other blacks for help would true equality be achieved in America. White assistance was not welcome in this new departure.
   - The movement also arose in response to violence on the west coast against African American youth, prompting the rise of a militant response in the form of armed Black Panthers.
   - The movement further rose in response to the need for black-run organizations to address issues of poverty in major American cities.

3. How do you explain the spillover of the black civil rights struggle into the Mexican American and Native American communities?
   - Both groups shared similar experiences of racial discrimination as African Americans, the visible and public struggles of blacks gave hope to other oppressed peoples, and many civil rights leaders of the black community reached out across ethnic lines to embrace alternative struggles for social justice. Major leaders like César Chavez received inspiration from Martin Luther King Jr., and emulated his tactics.

**1968: A Year of Shocks (pp. 888–892)**

1. What were the critical events of 1968 that have led historians to describe it as a “watershed year”?
   - Major riots in urban cities, violent protests on student campuses, the Chicago Democratic convention riot, the election of president Nixon, the Tet offensive in Vietnam, and the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr., and Bobby Kennedy.

2. Why did the Democrats lose their grip as the majority party in the late 1960s?
   - The Democrats lost power in part due to a conservative backlash led by blue-collar white workers, many of whom would leave and join the Republican Party, against an enlargement of the welfare state and an increase in integration in
communities across the nation during the civil rights movement. These same interest groups rejected the countercultural revolution and student protest against the Vietnam War.

Chapter Writing Assignments

These questions appear at the end of Chapter 28 in the textbook. They are provided in the Computerized Test Bank with suggested responses, for your convenience.

1. How do you explain the preeminence of civil rights in the politics of the 1960s?
   - The participation of African American men in World War II increased black demands for freedom during the postwar era. The rise in prosperity among the black middle class created the economic conditions for a protest movement to take place.
   - The baby boom since 1945 had filled colleges with young and increasingly anti-conformist students who rejected the racist status quo of the United States and joined the civil rights movement to help America.
   - Finally, the civil rights movement was part of a general antipoverty campaign embraced by Presidents and Congress during the 1960s to uplift society and achieve re-election to office. Negative publicity stemming from civil rights protests compelled American politicians to address the civil rights protests of illustrious leaders like Martin Luther King Jr.

2. What are the differences between Kennedy’s New Frontier and Johnson’s Great Society?
   - New Frontier: Increased expenditures in science and space exploration, an active government to solve social problems at home, containment of communism abroad, support for issues of social justice such as civil rights, the Peace Corps to get young people involved in shaping America’s future, and deficit spending to accompany a reduction in income taxes.
   - Great Society: More ambitious in terms of broadening the scope of bureaucracy and attacking the problem of social injustice, the Great Society also focused on the War on Poverty, civil rights legislation, an expansion in educational expenditures by the federal government, improvements in health, housing, and human welfare programs, and an expansion in environmental protective legislation.

3. Why is the United States’ involvement in the Vietnam War so often called a “quagmire”?
   - A quagmire refers to a situation that gets worse as one struggles against it. U.S. involvement in Vietnam increased over time to the point where American politicians could not effectively remove American troops without feeling that they had lost the fight against communism.
   - Conditions for U.S. troops and politicians engaged in the war worsened as the North Vietnamese and Vietcong increased resistance against the South Vietnamese and American alliance. Although the number of troops increased over time, more soldiers failed to bring more American victories, necessitating more troops, and resulting in more losses and casualties. Some politicians complained that the United States was not doing enough militarily to win the war.

Class Discussion Starters

1. What were the results of Kennedy’s foreign policy?
   - Possible answers
     a. He was unable to dislodge Fidel Castro, but he forced the Soviets to remove their missiles from Cuba.
     b. The military policies of flexible response and counterinsurgency that were intended to make the United States more effective in the Cold War would later fail in Vietnam.
     c. The Peace Corps and the Agency for International Development helped to build goodwill for the United States in portions of the Third World.
     d. Conflict with Khrushchev over the future of Berlin caused the Soviets and East Germans to build the Berlin Wall, heightening tensions in Western Europe.
     e. In the aftermath of the Cuban missile crisis, at Kennedy’s urging, the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union agreed to ban open-air nuclear tests.

2. What factors constrained Kennedy’s effectiveness in domestic policy?
   - Possible answers
     a. His slim margin of victory in 1960 left him without a mandate among the general population.
     b. His need for southern Democratic support in the 1964 election inhibited him from taking
decisive action on the most important domestic issue of the 1960s—civil rights.

c. In general, he lacked interest in domestic affairs, except for the space race, and he failed to formulate persuasive policies.

d. Conservative southern Democrats and Republicans were able to defeat most liberal reforms sent to Congress.

3. What developments in American society helped to make the racial revolution of the 1950s and 1960s possible?

Possible answers

a. Internal migration made race relations a national rather than a regional issue.

b. Returning black veterans were determined to achieve the “Double V.”

c. A series of decisions by the Supreme Court led inexorably to Brown v. Board of Education.

d. America’s attempts to win the support of Third World nations in the Cold War required that something be done about racial discrimination.

e. An expanding economy benefited blacks without depriving whites.

f. Televised broadcasts of racial violence accelerated calls for change.

4. Why did nonviolence prove to be a successful strategy for confronting segregation?

Possible answers

a. It allowed the civil rights movement to gain the moral high ground.

b. It deflected whites’ arguments about racial inferiority.

c. It clearly demonstrated that whites needed to use violence in order to maintain segregation.

d. The television pictures of white violence turned many viewers against the practice of segregation.

e. It forced the federal government to intervene on behalf of citizens being violently abused.

5. What actions did the federal government undertake in support of racial change?

Possible answers

a. The Supreme Court continued to dismantle laws supporting racial discrimination.

b. White violence forced Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy to intervene in support of school desegregation.

c. Freedom rides led the Justice Department to enforce the rulings of the Interstate Commerce Commission.

d. Kennedy proposed a civil rights bill that was passed after his death.

e. Congress passed the Twenty-fourth Amendment, which outlawed the poll tax in federal elections, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which outlawed literacy tests and other measures that prevented southern blacks from voting.

6. What changes in American society were achieved by the social reform movements of the 1960s and 1970s?

Possible answers

a. De jure racial segregation ended, and de facto segregation was challenged.

b. The inaction of the “silent generation” of college students gave way to widespread student activism that changed the rules at colleges and helped to end American participation in the Vietnam War.

c. The counterculture led to new forms of popular music, alterations in sexual behavior, and a relaxation of clothing styles.

d. Feminism began to challenge patterns of patriarchy, and women began to play a more important role in education, business, and politics.

e. Many oppressed groups (Mexican Americans, Native Americans, and homosexuals, for example) became organized in the process of challenging their status in American society.

7. What accounts for the emergence of student activism in the 1960s?

Possible answers

a. A feeling of alienation from the federal government’s Cold War policies.

b. The increasingly bureaucratic nature of the large “multiversities” they attended.
c. The lack of participatory democracy in managing the affairs of the nation.
d. Their growing awareness of the possibility of social change exemplified by the civil rights movement.
e. Opposition to the draft and the escalation of the Vietnam War.

8. How did the counterculture manifest itself?

Possible answers

a. Hippies dressed in unconventional styles and let their hair grow.
b. Traditional folk music developed into psychedelic rock.
c. Hallucinogenic drugs were widely used to expand people's consciousness.
d. Many in the counterculture “dropped out” of middle-class society by forming rural and urban communes.
e. A sexual revolution took place in which young people challenged middle-class morality.

Classroom Activity

1. Have the class form two groups to debate the morality of U.S. escalation of the conflict in Vietnam. After students have read the text section “Into the Quagmire,” have them write a series of talking points justifying either U.S. intervention or U.S. pullout from Southeast Asia. During the debate you may wish to show a series of film clips and ask students to respond to the images that they see in relation to their debate perspective.

Oral History Exercise

• Studying late-twentieth-century U.S. history enables students to talk to many participants of this era. Ask students to find an older adult who lived through the era. Then ask them to select a theme from the textbook chapter and connect the theme to the life of the person they are interviewing. For example, the student could interview a participant regarding the Vietnam conflict, the civil rights movement, or the counterculture. Have students work their raw data into an analytical paper.

Working with Documents

COMPARING AMERICAN VOICES

The Toll of War (p. 880)

1. Why did these four young people end up in Vietnam?
   • Drafted by the federal government, sacrificing abroad for freedom at home, defeat communism, to help soldiers in distress, and escape poverty through service in the armed forces.

2. How would you describe their experiences there?
   • They saw a lot of violence, wounded soldiers, and a vastly different cultural and geographical landscape that forced them to compare U.S. to Vietnamese society.

3. How were they changed by the war? What do their reflections suggest about the war’s impact on American society?
   • The war increased racial divisions at home and abroad, heightened the anger of individual soldiers toward the Vietnamese and American governments, and provided intense violence that rapidly matured young soldiers.
   • The war politically divided American society, angering many who felt that political concerns limited military victory in Vietnam, and compelling others to blame the U.S. government for an unjust war in Southeast Asia.

VOICES FROM ABROAD

Che Guevara: Vietnam and the World Freedom Struggle (p. 883)

1. Guevara was a Latin American. He had never been to Southeast Asia. So why was he interested in Vietnam?
   • Vietnam represented to Guevara the modern class struggle of capitalism against the poor and communism. Vietnam was isolated and needed assistance in this struggle, compelling Guevara to want to help.

2. How does Guevara define the struggle going on in Vietnam? How does he describe the two warring sides? Can you see, on the basis of that description,
why he was confident that the United States couldn't win the Vietnam War?

- He defines the struggle as one between rich versus poor people. The United States represents the side of rich capitalists attempting to spread exploitation to poor areas of the world by making poor nations dependent on American goods and material consumption.
- Based on his explanation, the United States could never win because it was fighting the entire Third World, a unified Vietnam, and its own population awakening to class exploitation by its own government abroad.

3. Why would Guevara have bothered to speak about Johnson's Great Society program?

- Other critics in and outside of the United States were arguing that Johnson was wasting money in fighting in Vietnam—money that could have been used to strengthen the Great Society program. Fighting a war against poor people abroad while paying lip service to feeding them at home appeared to be a blatant contradiction to leftist critics like Guevara.

4. Can you explain, based on this document, why Guevara was an inspirational figure to many student antiwar protesters?

- Most students are relatively poor like Che, who was also a student, and identified with Guevara's support of oppressed people. Most students are younger people who also identify more with Guevara's protest-orientated generation than with President Johnson's generation.

Reading American Pictures


1. Given the political climate of the late 1960s, how do you think this image of carnage (“America's Longest War”) and others like it affected viewers’ feelings toward the war? What does “America's Longest War” reveal about how the war was fought and experienced by ordinary soldiers?

- Images of carnage on the battlefield brought home directly to viewers the horrors of war and the individual suffering of young soldiers in combat. Americans could identify more personally with the war after it was depicted on television; some even recognized soldiers on television.

- In terms of controlling U.S. domestic opinion during warfare abroad, it makes much sense to limit the number of visual images of U.S. soldiers in combat. The television era made possible an expansion of the print media's ability to cover a war with visual imagery, but photographs existed before the war as well, though they were easier for the government to control as a news source.

2. Why are the veterans embracing in front of the memorial? What is the significance of the clothing and items they are wearing?

- The veterans are embracing as part of remembering fallen comrades and the intense cooperation and personal bonds formed during combat.
- The clothing and items they wear symbolize their ongoing support of American troops in combat, the sacrifice of U.S. vets during a “forgotten” war, and the desire to heal the psychological wounds of fighting an unpopular and brutal conflict abroad.

3. Traditionally, war memorials featured statues of combatants or generals in heroic poses; this one has only the names of those killed in combat. Yet the Vietnam memorial is widely seen as being emotionally evocative. What does this suggest about the American view of the Vietnam War? See www.nps.gov/vive for more information about the memorial.

- The American view of the war suggested by the memorial includes divisions over the morality of U.S. participation in the conflict, the emotional physical loss stemming from more than 50,000 killed and several thousand wounded, and the need to remember the deaths of so many killed in a war never declared official by Congress.

Electronic Media

Web Sites

- The Sixties Project
  http://lists.village.virginia.edu/sixties
  Hosted by the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, this site offers personal narratives, special exhibits, and a bibliography of articles published in Vietnam Generation.

- Civil Rights in Mississippi
  http://www.lib.usm.edu/~spcol/crda/oh/index.html
  This site is maintained by the University of Southern Mississippi Center for Oral History. It
offers 150 oral histories relating to the civil rights movement in Mississippi. Audio clips are also included, as are short biographies, photographs, newsletters, FBI documents, and arrest records.

Films

- *The Fog of War* (2003, 120 min)
  A fascinating film focusing on Robert S. McNamara and his attempt to recount why he led the United States deeper into Vietnam as secretary of defense.

- *The History of Rock and Roll* (1995, 578 min)
  Produced by Warner Home Video, this series examines the influence of American culture on music between the 1950s and 1980s.

Literature

  Co-written with Alex Haley, Malcolm X provides insight into black struggle in this famous autobiography.

  In this autobiography, Mary Crow Dog recounts her experiences as a Native American activist.

  The former secretary of defense offers an insider’s view and belated apologia for escalating the Vietnam conflict under two presidents.

Additional Bedford/St. Martin’s Resources for Chapter 28

**FOR INSTRUCTORS**

Transparencies

The following maps and images from Chapter 28 are available as full-color acetates:

- Peace Demonstrators
- Map 28.2 The Civil Rights Struggle, 1954–1965
- Map 28.3 The United States and Cuba, 1961–1963
- Map 28.4 Black Voter Registration in the South, 1964 and 1975
- Map 28.5 Presidential Election of 1964
- Map 28.6 The Vietnam War, 1968
- America’s Longest War
- The Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial
- Map 28.7 Presidential Election of 1968

Instructor’s Resource CD-ROM

The following maps, figures, and images from Chapter 28, as well as a chapter outline, are available on disc in both PowerPoint and jpeg formats:

- Map 28.2 The Civil Rights Struggle, 1954–1965
- Map 28.3 The United States and Cuba, 1961–1963
- Map 28.4 Black Voter Registration in the South, 1964–1975
- Map 28.5 Presidential Election of 1964
- Map 28.6 The Vietnam War, 1968
- Map 28.7 Presidential Election of 1968
- Figure 28.1 Americans in Poverty, 1959–2000
- Figure 28.2 U.S. Troops in Vietnam, 1960–1973
- Peace Demonstrators
- America’s Longest War
- The Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial

Using the Bedford Series with *America’s History*, Sixth Edition

Available online at bedfordstmartins.com/usingseries, this guide offers practical suggestions for incorporating volumes from the Bedford Series in History and Culture into the U.S. History Survey. Relevant titles for Chapter 28 include

- *César Chavez: A Biography with Documents*, Edited with an Introduction by Richard W. Etulian, *University of New Mexico*
- *Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and the Civil Rights Struggle of the 1950s and 1960s: A Brief History with Documents*, by David Howard-Pitney, *De Anza College*
- *My Lai: A Brief History with Documents*, by James S. Olson, *Sam Houston State University*, and Randy Roberts, *Purdue University*
FOR STUDENTS

Documents to Accompany America’s History

The following documents and illustrations are available in Chapter 28 of the companion reader by Kevin J. Fernlund, University of Missouri–St. Louis:

2. John F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address (1961)
4. Barry Goldwater, Acceptance Speech at the Republican National Convention (1964)
5. Lyndon B. Johnson, Address at the University of Michigan (1964)
6. The Wilderness Act (1964)
7. The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution (1964)
8. Lyndon B. Johnson, Peace without Conquest (1965)
10. Malcolm X and Yusef Iman, Black Nationalism (1964)
11. Ines Hernadez, Para Teresa
12. DRUMS Committee of the Menominee, The Consequences of the Termination for the Menominee of Wisconsin (1971)

Online Study Guide at bedfordstmartins.com/henretta

The Online Study Guide helps students synthesize the material from the text as well as practice the skills historians use to make sense of the past. The following map, visual, and documents activities are available for Chapter 28:

Map Activity

• Map 28.1 Decolonization and the Third World, 1943–1990

Visual Activity


Reading Historical Documents Activities

• Comparing American Voices: The Toll of War
• Voices From Abroad: Che Guevara: Vietnam and the World Freedom Struggle

Critical Thinking Modules at bedfordstmartins.com/historymodules

These online modules invite students to interpret maps and audio, visual, and textual sources centered on events covered in the U.S. History Survey. Relevant modules for Chapter 28 include:

• The Rise of the Republican Party in the Sunbelt and the South, 1960–1980
• The My Lai Massacre: Photos from Life Magazine