

CHAPTER 30

The Tumultuous Sixties, 1960–1968

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After you have studied Chapter 30 in your textbook and worked through this study guide chapter, you should be able to:

1. Discuss John F. Kennedy's personal and political background; examine the domestic goals and accomplishments of the Kennedy administration; and evaluate the legacy of the Kennedy presidency.
2. Examine, evaluate, and discuss the consequences of the defense and foreign policy views, goals, and actions of the Kennedy administration.
3. Discuss Cuban-American relations from 1959 to October 1962; explain the causes, outcome, and consequences of the Cuban missile crisis; and evaluate President John Kennedy's handling of the crisis.
4. Discuss the accomplishments and failures of the African American search for equality during the 1960s; explain the transformation of the civil rights movement into the black power movement; and discuss the impact of black activism on American society.
5. Discuss Lyndon B. Johnson's personal and political background; examine the domestic goals and accomplishments of the Johnson administration; and evaluate the legacy of the Johnson presidency.
6. Discuss the issues and personalities and explain the outcome of the 1964 congressional and presidential elections.
7. Examine, evaluate, and discuss the consequences of the defense and foreign policy views, goals, and actions of the Johnson administration.
8. Examine and evaluate the events and decisions that led to deepening U.S. involvement in Vietnam from 1961 to 1969.
9. Discuss the nature of the Vietnam War, the characteristics of American soldiers who served in the war, and the war's impact on those soldiers.
10. Explain the factors that contributed to the emergence of anti-Vietnam War sentiment and protests within the United States.
11. Discuss the forces that gave rise to the New Left and the counterculture; examine the philosophy, goals, and actions of these two groups; and discuss their impact on American society.
12. Examine the crises that sent shock waves through American society in 1968.
13. Discuss the issues and personalities and explain the outcome of the 1968 presidential election.

THEMATIC GUIDE

In Chapter 30, we examine the impact of the tumultuous 1960s on American society. As can be seen in the discussion of U.S. foreign policy during this period, the containment doctrine, formulated during the Truman administration, continued to be the guiding force behind American foreign policy during the presidencies of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. Furthermore, the action-reaction relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union that was so much a part of the early Cold War persisted into the 1960s.

Kennedy's policies and actions in the field of foreign policy were shaped by his acceptance of the containment doctrine and his preference for a bold, interventionist foreign policy. In its quest for friends in the Third World and ultimate victory in the Cold War, the Kennedy administration adopted the goal of nation building, to be accomplished, for example, through the Alliance for Progress and the Peace Corps as well as through the concept of counterinsurgency. Such methods perpetuated an idea that had long been part of American foreign policy: that other people cannot solve their own problems and that the American economic and governmental model can be transferred intact to other societies. Historian William Appleman Williams believed that such thinking led to "the tragedy of American diplomacy," and historian Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., refers to it as "a ghastly illusion."

Although Kennedy's activist approach to foreign policy helped bring the world to the brink of nuclear disaster in the Cuban missile crisis, in the aftermath of that crisis steps were taken by both superpowers that served to lessen tension and hostility between them. However, the arms race accelerated during both the Kennedy and Johnson years, and the United States and the Soviet Union continued to vie for friends in the Third World.

On the domestic scene, young African Americans, through the sit-in movement begun in Greensboro, North Carolina, in early 1960, reinvigorated the civil rights movement. Although African American civil rights leaders were committed to the philosophy of nonviolence, violence began to have an impact on developments, as we see in the discussion of the Freedom Rides, the Freedom Summer of 1964, and the Birmingham Children's Crusade. At first, President Kennedy failed to press forward on civil rights issues. However, in the face of violent challenges from southern segregationists to an expanding black civil rights movement, the Kennedy administration gradually committed itself to a decisive stand in favor of black equality. However, only because of the March on Washington, continuing racial violence, and Kennedy's assassination did Congress finally pass civil rights legislation.

The section "Liberalism and the Great Society" covers the legislative accomplishments of the Johnson administration—the most sweeping reform legislation since 1935. This legislation comprised the Civil Rights Act of 1964, establishment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and legislation associated with Johnson's War on Poverty. We look closely at the legislation that constituted the War on Poverty and discuss the problems and successes of this program.

We then turn to a discussion of the course of American involvement in Vietnam from deepening U.S. involvement during the Kennedy administration to the escalation of and Americanization of the war during the Johnson administration. This discussion is based on the thesis that disaster befell the United States in Vietnam because of fear in the Johnson administration that America's credibility would suffer in the eyes of friends and foes around the world if the nation failed to achieve its stated goals in Southeast Asia.

As the three branches of the federal government slowly began to deal with such long-standing American problems as poverty and minority rights, frustrations that had built up over generations of inaction manifested themselves. Events convinced civil-rights activists in the South that the "power structure" in American society was not to be trusted. Northern blacks began to reach the same conclusions. Both the civil-rights movement and Johnson's antipoverty programs had offered African Americans hope for a better day in American society. However, as discussion of the social, economic,

13. the Freedom Summer of 1964

14. James Meredith

15. Medgar Evers

16. the March on Washington

17. the space program

18. the assassination of John Kennedy

19. Lyndon Johnson

20. the Great Society

21. the Civil Rights Act of 1964

22. Barry Goldwater

23. the Voting Rights Act of 1965

24. the War on Poverty

25. Medicare and Medicaid

26. the Tonkin Gulf incident and the Tonkin Gulf Resolution

27. the Watts race riot of 1965

28. Malcolm X

29. the Black Muslims

- 39. the Tet Offensive

- 40. the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.

- 41. the assassination of Robert Kennedy

- 42. the presidential election of 1968

IDEAS AND DETAILS

Objective 2

- 1. The concept of nation building was based on the idea that
 - a. the industrialized nations of the world should pool their resources to aid Third World nations.
 - b. the United States could win the friendship of Third World countries with aid to improve agriculture, transportation, and communications, thus helping them as they struggled through the infant stages of nationhood.
 - c. the European states should demonstrate their acceptance of self-determination by allowing their colonies to become independent nations.
 - d. a nation's social, political, and economic system must be based on its own unique historical experience.

Objective 2

- 2. When President Kennedy refused to consent to Soviet demands in the 1961 Berlin crisis, the Soviet Union
 - a. denied the Western powers access to their zones in the city of Berlin.
 - b. began installing tactical nuclear weapons in East Germany.
 - c. built the Berlin Wall.
 - d. cut off all trade with the United States, Great Britain, and France.

Objectives 2 and 3

- 3. In the aftermath of the Bay of Pigs invasion, President Kennedy
 - a. vowed to bring down the government of Fidel Castro.

- b. apologized to the Cuban people for infringing on their national sovereignty.
- c. reestablished trade with the Castro regime.
- d. restored diplomatic relations with Cuba.

Objectives 2 and 3

- 4. A beneficial effect of the Cuban missile crisis was
 - a. major improvements in the American civil-defense system.
 - b. public support for improving relations with Cuba.
 - c. installation of a Washington-Moscow hot line.
 - d. tighter control of the CIA by Congress.

Objective 4

- 5. When Martin Luther King, Jr., put children in the front lines of protest in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963, the city's police commissioner
 - a. allowed the march to proceed without incident.
 - b. called out the Alabama National Guard to prevent the march.
 - c. used powerful water guns and attack dogs against the protesters.
 - d. lined the route of the march with Birmingham police to protect the children from violence.

Objective 5

- 6. As a result of the Voting Rights Act of 1965,
 - a. the right to vote was extended to eighteen-year-olds.
 - b. the number of registered African American voters in the South dramatically increased.
 - c. literacy tests were required of all voters in federal elections.
 - d. eligible voters were legally required to register through federal registrars.

Objective 5

- 7. Which of the following is true of the War on Poverty?
 - a. It provided a guaranteed annual income to all Americans.
 - b. It especially benefited female-headed families.
 - c. It directly attacked the housing, health, and nutritional problems of the poor.
 - d. It alone was responsible for alleviating hunger in the United States.

Objectives 7 and 8

- 8. In the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, Congress
 - a. publicly questioned President Johnson's escalation of the Vietnam War.
 - b. gave virtually a free hand to President Johnson in conducting the war in Vietnam.
 - c. condemned the My Lai massacre.
 - d. declared war against North Vietnam.

Objectives 7 and 8

- 9. During the Johnson administration, the United States continued escalating its commitment to the Vietnam War because
 - a. all of the nation's European allies urged it to do so.
 - b. most members of the Johnson administration strongly believed it was inevitable that the United States would win the war.
 - c. the American public demanded victory.

- d. the administration feared that a failure in Vietnam would lead to a loss of respect for American power throughout the world.

Objective 9

- 10. America's reliance on such things as carpet bombing, napalm, and crop defoliants in the Vietnam War
 - a. caused Ho Chi Minh to abandon the Vietcong and concentrate his resources on the North Vietnamese army.
 - b. alienated many South Vietnamese, bringing new recruits to the Vietcong.
 - c. made South Vietnamese villages safer and more secure by destroying the Vietcong's ability to wage war.
 - d. led China to send troops and military materiel to aid the Vietcong.

Objective 4

- 11. The urban race riots of the 1960s and the emergence of black nationalism in the voices of Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael were the result of
 - a. the deterioration of the social and economic conditions of many northern African Americans.
 - b. communist infiltration of civil rights groups.
 - c. denial of the right to vote to northern African Americans.
 - d. a shift in the tactics of the SCLC from passive resistance to violent confrontation.

Objective 11

- 12. Which of the following was a major target of student protesters in the 1960s?
 - a. College fraternities and sororities
 - b. Sex discrimination in college-admission policies
 - c. The practice of granting tenure to college professors
 - d. The doctrine of *in loco parentis*

Objective 11

- 13. Which of the following was true of American popular culture in the late 1960s?
 - a. It was largely created by advertisers.
 - b. It was based almost exclusively on popular television shows like *Father Knows Best*.
 - c. It was primarily influenced by fears of a nuclear holocaust.
 - d. It was heavily influenced by the music and styles of young people.

Objectives 7, 8, 9, 12, and 13

- 14. As a result of the Tet Offensive,
 - a. the Soviet Union sent troops to Vietnam.
 - b. the Joint Chiefs of Staff advised American withdrawal from Vietnam.
 - c. the North Vietnamese were driven north of the Demilitarized Zone and requested peace negotiations.
 - d. President Johnson decided to open negotiations with the North.

Objectives 12 and 13

- 15. The 1968 Democratic presidential candidate killed by an assassin's bullet was
 - a. George Wallace.

- b. Robert Kennedy.
- c. Edmund Muskie.
- d. Eugene McCarthy.

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Objectives 2 and 3

1. Discuss the causes and consequences of the Cuban missile crisis and evaluate President John Kennedy's handling of the crisis.

Objective 5

2. Discuss the successes and failures of the War on Poverty.

Objectives 7, 8, and 9

3. Examine the course of the Vietnam War under President Johnson.

Objective 4

4. Examine the factors and forces that pushed the African American protest movement to more radical action in the mid-1960s. What forms did this action take? What were its results?

Objective 11

5. Discuss the characteristics of the youth culture that emerged during the 1960s.

Multiple-Choice Answers

1.
 - b. Correct. Nation building was undertaken with the belief that American capitalism and democracy could be transferred to the Third World. As aid was extended to improve agriculture, transportation, and communications, it was believed, Third World countries would be brought into the American orbit. Presidential adviser Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. later called this notion “a ghastly illusion.”
 - a. No. The concept of nation building did not include a collective effort by the industrialized nations of the world to aid the Third World.
 - c. No. The concept of nation building did not insist on decolonization by European countries.
 - d. No. Nation building did not pay much attention to the unique historical experiences of other nations.
2.
 - c. Correct. In 1961 the Soviets demanded an end to the Western occupation of West Berlin and the reunification of East and West Germany. When the Kennedy administration refused to consent to these demands, the Soviets built the Berlin Wall to physically separate East Berlin from West Berlin and stop the flight of East Germans to the more prosperous West.
 - a. No. The Soviets denied the Western powers land access to their zones in the divided city of Berlin in the Berlin crisis of 1948. In that crisis, the Soviets ultimately acquiesced after the effectiveness of the Berlin airlift.

- b. No. The Soviets did not install tactical nuclear weapons in East Germany as a result of the 1961 Berlin crisis.
 - d. No. The Soviet Union did not cut off all trade with the United States, Great Britain, and France as a result of the 1961 Berlin crisis.
- 3.
- a. Correct. After the failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion, Kennedy vowed to bring down the Castro government and authorized Operation Mongoose. Through this project, as well as programs of diplomatic and economic isolation, the U.S. government continued to work to overthrow the government of Fidel Castro.
 - b. No. Kennedy recognized the Bay of Pigs invasion as a mistake because it was a defeat, not because it infringed on Cuban sovereignty. The president never apologized to the Cuban people.
 - c. No. The United States continued its attempt to isolate Cuba economically.
 - d. No. The United States continued its attempt to isolate Cuba diplomatically and did not restore diplomatic relations.
- 4.
- c. Correct. As a result of the Cuban missile crisis, the two superpowers realized that it was important to make real-time communication possible in order to prevent the use of nuclear weapons as the result of misunderstanding or miscommunication during a crisis. Therefore, the Washington-Moscow hotline was installed. Contrary to popular belief, this was not a phone line, but a telegraph circuit. This telegraph circuit was not replaced with a telephone until the 1970s.
 - a. No. Although fallout shelters gained popularity in the 1950s and 1960s, the Cuban missile crisis did not lead to major improvements in the nation’s civil-defense system. In fact, in the aftermath of the crisis relations between the United States and the Soviet Union began to gradually thaw, and the public became less concerned about civil-defense preparedness and fallout shelters.
 - b. No. The public continued to see Cuba as a potential threat to the United States in the aftermath of the crisis, and the public did not generally support improved relations with the Castro regime.
 - d. No. There was no move after the Cuban missile crisis for Congress to have tighter control over the CIA.
- 5.
- c. Correct. “Bull” Connor, Birmingham’s police commissioner, used high-powered fire hoses (water guns), police dogs, and cattle prods against the protesters even though many of them were children.
 - a. No. The Birmingham police commissioner did not allow the march to take place without incident.
 - b. No. Birmingham’s police commissioner did not have the authority to call out the Alabama National Guard. Therefore, he did not try to prevent the march in that way.
 - d. No. Birmingham’s police commissioner did not try to protect the marchers, including many children, by lining the route of the march with police.
- 6.
- b. Correct. Whereas only 29 percent of the South’s black population was registered to vote in 1960, around 66 percent was registered by 1969.
 - a. No. The right to vote was extended to eighteen-year-olds by the Twenty-sixth Amendment, ratified in 1971.

- c. No. Literacy and other voter tests were suspended by the Voting Rights Act of 1965 in those states where such tests had been used to bar qualified people from the voting rolls and where less than half of the voting-age residents were registered.
- d. No. The act authorized federal supervision of voter registration in areas where less than half of the voting-age minority residents were registered, but it did not require all eligible voters to register through federal registrars.
7. c. Correct. The Model Cities program provided federal funds to improve housing and health in certain impoverished urban neighborhoods. Furthermore, the expansion of the Food Stamp program was directed toward the health and nutritional needs of the poor, while the Medicaid program guaranteed healthcare for the poor. Therefore, it can correctly be said that Johnson’s War on Poverty directly attacked the housing, health, and nutritional problems of the poor.
- a. No. The War on Poverty did not provide a guaranteed annual income to all Americans.
- b. No. The War on Poverty did not alleviate poverty in female-headed families. In fact, by the end of the 1960s the number of female-headed households in poverty was the same as it had been in 1963, 11 million.
- d. No. The War on Poverty was not the sole reason for the alleviation of hunger in the United States during the 1960s. Although the War on Poverty helped, economic growth during the 1960s was also a factor in the alleviation of hunger.
8. b. Correct. With only two dissenting votes, Congress authorized the president to “take all necessary measures” to defend American forces and “prevent further aggression.” In accepting the resolution, Congress, in effect, surrendered its foreign policy powers and gave President Johnson a free hand in conducting the war in Vietnam.
- a. No. Congress did not question Johnson’s escalation of the Vietnam War through the Tonkin Gulf Resolution.
- c. No. The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution was passed in 1964; the My Lai massacre occurred in March 1968 and was not made public until twenty months later.
- d. No. The Tonkin Gulf Resolution was not an official declaration of war.
9. d. Correct. Although some members of the Johnson administration saw little chance for success in Vietnam and warned against escalation, President Johnson and other members of his administration were afraid withdrawal would cause America’s allies to doubt the reliability of the United States and embolden America’s foes. As a result, the administration continued its escalation of the war.
- a. No. Almost all of America’s allies warned against escalation of the war.
- b. No. Some members of the administration opposed escalation. Among those who supported escalation, there was doubt that it would lead to success against North Vietnam and the Vietcong.
- c. No. Public discontent with the war grew as the Johnson administration Americanized the war. Although public opinion polls showed that a majority of Americans supported the war until 1969, it cannot be said that the Johnson administration continued to escalate the war because the public “demanded” victory.

10. b. Correct. The United States was not only fighting against North Vietnam, but against North Vietnamese supporters (the Vietcong) in the South. Therefore, since carpet bombing, napalm, and crop defoliant such as Agent Orange were used against the Vietcong in the South, their use adversely affected the inhabitants of South Vietnamese villages. As a result, America's reliance on these weapons in its "search-and-destroy" missions alienated South Vietnamese peasants who began to give more and more secret aid to the Vietcong.
- a. No. America's use of the stated weapons did not cause Ho Chi Minh to abandon the Vietcong, the North's supporters and guerilla fighters in South Vietnam.
- c. No. The United States was never able to destroy the Vietcong's ability to wage war in South Vietnam and its use of the stated weapons did not make South Vietnamese villages more secure.
- d. No. China did not send troops to help the Vietcong.
11. a. Correct. The civil rights movement had been largely southern in focus and did not deal with the deteriorating conditions of blacks in northern inner-city ghettos. Black frustration was expressed through urban riots and in the voices of black nationalism.
- b. No. There is no evidence to support the contention that there was "communist infiltration" of civil rights groups and that such infiltration caused the urban race riots of the 1960s and the emergence of black nationalism.
- c. No. Northern blacks had long had the right to vote and had long exercised that right.
- d. No. The SCLC, under the direction of Martin Luther King, Jr., continued to use the nonviolent tactic of passive resistance.
12. d. Correct. In the 1960s the doctrine of *in loco parentis* (in the place of parents) allowed colleges and universities to have a great deal of control over the non-academic lives of students, especially female students. Student protests of the 1960s were often targeted against this doctrine, and many student protesters demanded that full rights and responsibilities be extended to them as citizens in a democratic society.
- a. No. College fraternities and sororities were not a major target of student protesters in the 1960s.
- b. No. Although sexist practices were present in college-admission practices, this was not a major target of student protesters in the 1960s.
- c. No. The practice of granting tenure to college professors was not a major target of student protesters in the 1960s.
13. d. Correct. As the baby-boom generation came of age and became consumers in the 1960s, its music and its styles began to have a tremendous impact on American popular culture.
- a. No. Advertising clearly has an impact on popular culture, but American popular culture of the 1960s was not "created by advertisers." No. American popular culture of the 1960s was not based primarily or exclusively on television shows like *Father Knows Best*, which aired from 1954 to 1962.
- c. No. American popular culture of the 1960s was not influenced primarily by fear of a nuclear holocaust.
14. d. Correct. The Tet Offensive demonstrated that three years of search-and-destroy tactics had not destroyed the power of the Vietcong and North Vietnamese. As a result, Johnson announced an end to the bombing of most of the North and requested that Hanoi open peace negotiations.
- a. No. The Soviet Union did not send troops to Vietnam as a result of the Tet Offensive.

- b. No. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Earle Wheeler, reacted to the Tet Offensive by persuading General Westmoreland to request an additional 206,000 soldiers. Furthermore, he favored calling the army and marine reserves to active duty.
 - c. No. Although the Vietcong and North Vietnamese suffered heavy losses in the Tet Offensive, they still had not been defeated and did not retreat to North Vietnam.
15. b. Correct. With polls showing him as the leading presidential candidate among Democrats and having just won the California primary, Robert Kennedy was assassinated on June 5, 1968.
- a. No. George Wallace ran for president under the banner of the American Independent Party in 1968. In 1972 he was a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination and was seriously wounded by a would-be assassin.
 - c. No. Edmund Muskie was not a Democratic candidate for the presidency in 1968.
 - d. No. McCarthy challenged President Johnson's war policies in 1968, and his victory in the New Hampshire primary was a factor in Johnson's decision to withdraw as a candidate. But McCarthy was not assassinated.