

The 1960s in Historical Perspective

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Introduction:

The purpose of this one-day workshop is to explore some of the controversies and legacies from a turbulent time in U.S. history. The first presentation will focus on the Vietnam War and the enduring questions that remain more than three decades after it ended. The second presentation will focus on the civil rights movements and the issues of interpretation that remain at the center of American politics and society.

Presentations:

The Vietnam War: Controversies and Legacies

Civil Rights and Historical Wrongs

Contents:

1. *The Humphrey-Nixon Debates*
2. *The Admissions Game*
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The Humphrey-Nixon Debates

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During the 1968 presidential campaign, Vice President Hubert Humphrey and former Vice President Richard Nixon met in a series of debates that may have determined the election's outcome. The debates focused in part on the quality of Democratic leadership during the 1960s, a topic we too will examine when we reenact (in modified form) those legendary confrontations beginning on _____ (see syllabus).

THE RESOLUTIONS AND THE ROLES:

- I. *Resolved: The economic and social programs of JFK and LBJ were ill-conceived and counter-productive.*

Hubert Humphrey

Source: see list below

Richard Nixon

Source: see list below

Barry Goldwater

Source: Before the Storm by Rick Perlstein

Source: Barry Goldwater by Robert Alan Goldberg

Ronald Reagan

Source: The Right Moment by Matthew Dallek

Daniel Patrick Moynihan

Source: Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding

John Kennedy

Source: see list below

Lyndon Johnson

Source: see list below

Sargent Shriver

Source: Sarge by Scott Stossel

- II. *Resolved: The policies and programs of JFK and LBJ failed to promote the rights or meet the needs of black Americans.*

Hubert Humphrey

Source: see list below

Richard Nixon

Source: see list below

Strom Thurmond

Source: Ol' Strom by Jack Bass and Marilyn Thompson

George Wallace

Source: The Politics of Rage by Dan Carter

Source: George Wallace by Stephen Leshner

Malcolm X

Source: The Life and Death of Malcolm X by Peter Goldman

Source: The Autobiography of Malcolm X edited by Alex Haley

Stokely Carmichael

Source: Black Power by Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Source: From Civil Rights to Human Rights by Thomas Jackson

Source: Bearing the Cross by David Garrow

Robert Kennedy

Source: Robert Kennedy and His Times by Arthur Schlesinger Jr.

John Kennedy

Source: see list below

Lyndon Johnson

Source: see list below

III. *Resolved: The foreign policies of JFK and LBJ lowered American prestige overseas and damaged national security in both the short- and long-term.*

Hubert Humphrey

Source: see list below

Richard Nixon

Source: see list below

Fidel Castro

Source: Fidel Castro by Robert Quirk

Nikita Khrushchev

Source: Kennedy and Khrushchev by Michael Beschloss

Ho Chi Minh

Source: Ho Chi Minh: A Life by William Duiker

William Fulbright

Source: The Arrogance of Power by William Fulbright

Source: Fulbright: A Biography by Randall Woods

Robert McNamara

Source: In Retrospect by Robert McNamara

Source: Promise and Power by Deborah Shapley

Dean Rusk

Source: As I Saw It by Dean Rusk

Source: Dean Rusk by Warren Cohen

John Kennedy

Source: see list below

Lyndon Johnson

Source: see list below

FORMAT:

1. Nixon attacks the Democratic record (4 minutes).
2. Humphrey defends the Democratic record (4 minutes).
3. The panelists introduce themselves (2 minutes each).
4. The panelists question each other and the candidates.
5. The audience asks questions.
6. The class analyzes the debate and picks the winners.
7. The debriefing takes place.

GUIDELINES:

1. Locate the **suggested source (s)** as soon as possible. If necessary or desirable, check also the *American National Biography* or the *Dictionary of American Biography*. Do not delay and do not make use of Wikipedia!
2. Submit an **issue précis** on _____ (see syllabus). The précis (250 words) should summarize the views of the witness on the issue in question.
3. Prepare a research paper of around **1000 words** (four typed, double-spaced pages with standard margins).
4. Employ the following **structure**: In the first paragraph, provide historical background for the issue by consulting the course texts and general accounts. In the second paragraph, introduce the witness and outline his or her political viewpoint on the issue by examining the suggested source (s). Infer from the historical record if necessary. In the third paragraph, offer personal information about the witness. What were the most important events or accomplishments in his or her life? In the following paragraphs, analyze the issue and examine the beliefs of the witness in greater detail. In the final paragraph (s), assess whether the witness brings a valuable perspective to the issue despite his or her bias. Then consider the validity of his or her viewpoint. Do you agree with it? Why or why not?
5. Give the source for all direct quotations and factual information that is not general knowledge. Use footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical **citations** (e.g. Dallek, p. 139) from at least one suggested source, one reserve reading, and one course text. Provide a bibliography as well as page numbers and a title page.
6. Design a one-page **resume** (see attached example) outlining the career highlights of your witness and the main points of your testimony. Submit it with the paper (but unstapled so that I can photocopy and distribute it).
7. As a **witness**, first identify who you are and explain what position you take on the issue (two minutes). Be clear, concise, and coherent. Use notecards if necessary but do not read to the class. Then participate actively and appropriately in the debate. As a witness, always try to relate your point to a point made by another speaker (either in support or rebuttal). As an observer, pay attention, ask questions, and take notes.
8. Compose an analytical essay of around **1000 words** on an issue other than the focus of your research paper. Write it from your own perspective and use specific evidence from the witnesses and readings. The essay is due one week after the end of the simulation unless otherwise specified.

General Accounts

Debating the 1960s by Michael Flamm and David Steigerwald
America Divided by Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin
The Age of Great Dreams by David Farber
Grand Expectations by James Patterson
The Unraveling of America by Allen Matusow
Coming Apart by William O'Neill
America in Our Time by Godfrey Hodgson
More: The Politics of Economic Growth in Postwar America by Robert Collins
The Making of the President, 1968 by Theodore White
Parting the Waters (civil rights) by Taylor Branch
The Struggle for Black Equality by Harvard Sitkoff
The Rise to Globalism by Stephen Ambrose
The Diplomacy of the Crucial Decade edited by Diane Kunz
The Vietnam Wars by Marilyn Young
America's Longest War by George Herring
Vietnam: An American Ordeal by George Moss
Vietnam by Stanley Karnow
Essence of Decision (Cuban Missile Crisis) by Graham Allison

John Kennedy

John Kennedy by Robert Dallek
A Question of Character by Thomas Reeves
JFK and LBJ by Tom Wicker
A Thousand Days by Arthur Schlesinger Jr.

Lyndon Johnson

Flawed Giant by Robert Dallek
LBJ: Architect of American Ambition by Randall Woods
JFK and LBJ by Tom Wicker
Vantage Point by Lyndon Johnson

Hubert Humphrey

Hubert Humphrey: A Biography by Carl Solberg
Hubert Humphrey and the African American Freedom Struggle by Timothy Thurber
Education of a Public Man by Hubert Humphrey

Richard Nixon

President Nixon: Alone in the White House by Thomas Reeves
Richard Nixon: The Triumph of a Politician by Stephen Ambrose
RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon by Richard Nixon

The Admissions Game

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Ah, the joys of teaching! Two students have asked you to write a recommendation for them to United States University (U.S.U.), a prestigious and selective institution.¹ You have known each of them since 1960. It is now 1975.

The Procedures:

1. One week from today, both recommendations (500 words each) will be due at the admissions office. The students have waived the right to see what you will write.
2. Two weeks from today, all of you will transmogrify into members of the admissions staff at U.S.U. Each of you will “present” two applicants (the same two for whom you wrote recommendations) to the admissions board for consideration in a four- to five-minute talk accompanied by PowerPoint. Discussion will follow.
3. One week after the presentations conclude, each member of the admissions staff will write a paper (1500 words) recommending eight students for admission (this is, after all, a competitive school) and, if you wish, two for the waiting list. The paper should justify your decisions including some commentary on those you wish to send thin envelopes. You may cluster applicants in any way you wish to avoid a “shopping list” approach.
4. The Director of Admissions (yours truly) will total the responses and report back the results to the admissions board. A final (and immediate) in-class assignment will be to make roommate assignments and to explain the rationale for your actions.

The Applicants:

Bob Dylan / Betty Friedan / Michael Harrington / Rachel Carson / Bob Moses (SNCC) / John Lewis / James Meredith / Medgar Evers / George Wallace / Stokely Carmichael / Timothy Leary / Jerry Rubin / Abbie Hoffman / Helen Gurley Brown / Paul McCartney and John Lennon / Jim Morrison / Mick Jagger and Keith Richards / Eugene McCarthy / Tom Hayden / Mary King / Phyllis Schlafly / Janis Joplin / William Westmoreland / Jack Ruby / Lee Harvey Oswald / Mario Savio / Mark Ruud / Ronald Reagan / Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward / Dr. Spock / Muhammad Ali / Dean Rusk / Robert McNamara / Spiro Agnew / Ho Chi Minh / Ngo Dinh Diem / Henry Kissinger / Nguyen Van Thieu / Cesar Chavez / Madame Nhu / Henry Cabot Lodge / William Fulbright / John Kennedy / Robert Kennedy / Lyndon Johnson / Hubert Humphrey / Richard Nixon / Barry Goldwater / Martin Luther King, Jr. / Malcolm X / Elvis Presley / Gloria Steinem / Walter Cronkite

¹ Mr. Eric Rothschild of Scarsdale High School originally designed this simulation.

Presentation Pointers

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Multimedia presentations, when used properly, enhance student attention and retention. Below are some suggestions that you may find helpful if you plan to use PowerPoint or other programs. Please note that you should always respect copyright restrictions unless you are using the materials solely for non-profit educational purposes in a classroom setting, in which case it is my belief that the “fair use” doctrine applies. But always determine what the policy of your school or district is before you proceed. Better safe than sued!

Principles:

1. **It is a tool.** Presentation programs like PowerPoint should supplement – not supplant – the lecture or lesson you already use. Do not substitute a slideshow for a lecture. Prepare the lesson first – then look for complementary and illustrative images to display with it.
2. **Less is more.** Fewer words will mean more note-taking and less copying. Fewer images, carefully selected, will motivate rather than distract students.
3. **Keep it simple.** Avoid the “bells and whistles” that delight software designers but often clutter multimedia presentations and confuse the intended audience.
4. **Resist perfection.** Design a presentation, use it, and then revise it. Add, delete, or rearrange images after you see how the presentation works.
5. **Get organized.** Plan in advance to store the images you collect in folders arranged by topic or period – it will make preparing presentations far easier and faster.

Sources:

1. **The Internet:** The possibilities are limitless. For a quick search, try Google (www.google.com) – select the images setting before you start.
2. **History textbooks:** Many now come with CDs that contain visual and audio clips. But you can also easily scan images such as maps, charts, and graphs from them.
3. **Illustrated works:** Both *The Century* by Peter Jennings and *The American Century* by Harold Evans contain a wealth of wonderful photographs. The *Time-Life* series is also an excellent source, particularly since quality scanners cost so little and digital cameras are so easy to use.
4. **Packaged CDs:** Most are of poor quality or limited use. But an excellent exception is *The American History CD-ROM* produced by the Instructional Resources Corporation (www.irclink.com). It contains more than two thousand photos, drawings, illustrations, cartoons, and maps as well as video clips. For audio clips I recommend *Great Speeches of the 20th Century* (4 CDs) and *Great Moments in the 20th Century* (3 CDs). Both are available from Rhino Word Beat (www.amazon.com). I also recommend Audacity, an audio-editing program that you can download for free from the Internet.
5. **Student projects:** Have the students gather images as part of a research project or oral presentation. Require that the students submit the images to you on a CD. Vary the projects from class to class or year to year – soon you will have a complete collection!

Simulation Suggestions

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Most of us probably rely on the traditional lecture-discussion model of presentation, which has many merits. But other forms of instruction have their place as well. In particular, classroom simulations can significantly enhance student learning if designed and executed properly.¹ They can also promote active learning – in place of passive listening – and encourage student ownership of the learning process. And they can offer a form of alternative assessment – students with strong verbal skills will now have their opportunity to shine. Finally, historical simulations can provide a welcome break from the daily routine for students and instructors. Here are some principles to consider:

Basic Principles:

1. **Plan ahead.** Decide when to use a simulation as soon as possible. Consult with the librarian (school or local) to see what historical resources are available and what the reserve policy is. Make sure that the materials are accessible. Use other assignments to help students develop research and writing skills in advance. Allot the roles based on interest and ability, but bear in mind the need to promote creativity, responsibility, and hilarity.
2. **Create checkpoints.** Make sure that students are prepared BEFORE the simulation begins. Design discrete tasks to monitor individual progress. Require submission of a written, pre-simulation assignment – and build in time to evaluate and return it in case it warrants major revisions. If necessary or desirable, form small groups and give them class time for peer review and simulation preparation.
3. **Engage Students.** Emphasize the need for students to pay attention and take notes even when they are not “on stage.” Make a significant portion of their oral or participation grade dependent on what they do when they are in the audience. Reward students who show respect for their peers by asking questions and offering comments. Underline the importance of the closure assignment.
4. **Emphasize Closure.** Always give students an opportunity to express their own ideas and evaluate the arguments of others after the simulation. Assign an in-class essay (open note) or take-home paper. Try an alternative assessment, such as a video editorial. But by all means require that students, perhaps in groups, analyze and apply the information presented.
5. **Stress legitimacy.** Do not re-teach the unit later in a more traditional manner. Demonstrate to students that simulations are a valuable way of learning history by not repeating what they have already covered. Inform them in advance that you will hold them accountable for what they should have learned on their own, both in and out of class. Never give students the impression that simulations are “merely games” and not “real history.”
6. **Start Slowly.** Begin with a small simulation in a single class. If it goes well, use it in several classes. Perhaps try a different simulation next semester. But always evaluate immediately what worked well and what worked less well. Then make appropriate adjustments. Consider keeping a journal as you observe the students. Remember that a good simulation is forever a work-in-progress, no matter how many times you have used it.

¹ Mr. Eric Rothschild of Scarsdale High School introduced me to the world of simulations and taught me most of what I know. I am deeply and permanently in his debt.