

## Politics of the Early 1960's

### The Berlin Wall Worksheet

By the 1960s Berlin was still divided - the USSR controlled the East and the USA guaranteed freedom in the West. Thousands of refugees escaped to West Berlin each day - much to the embarrassment of the USSR - so in 1961 Khrushchev closed the border and ordered the construction of a wall to stop people leaving.

The problems in West Berlin

West Berlin was a worry and an embarrassment for the Soviet Union in 1961:

1. Nearly 2,000 refugees a day were fleeing to the West through West Berlin - hardly proof of the Soviet claim that the Communist way of life was better than capitalism!
2. Many of those leaving were skilled and qualified workers.
3. The Soviets believed (rightly) that West Berlin was a center for US espionage.

At the Vienna Summit of June 1961, therefore, Khrushchev demanded that the US leave West Berlin within six months. Kennedy refused and instead guaranteed West Berlin's freedom.

On 13 August, Khrushchev closed the border between East and West Berlin and started building the Berlin Wall. At first, the Russians regarded it as a propaganda success, but as time went on, it became a propaganda disaster - a symbol of all that was bad about Soviet rule.

Source A

A photograph of the Berlin Wall. The Berlin Wall shortly after its construction



## Source B

In 1963, President Kennedy visited West Berlin and made his famous 'I am a Berliner' speech next to the Berlin Wall:

There are many people in the world who really don't understand what is the great issue between the free world and the communist world - let them come to Berlin!

There are some who say in Europe and elsewhere we can work with the communists - let them come to Berlin!

All free men, wherever they may live, are citizens of Berlin. And, therefore, as a free man, I take pride in the words 'Ich bin ein Berliner' ['I am a Berliner']. President Kennedy, 1963

1. When was the Berlin Wall created? Why did Khrushchev have it constructed? What problems was he trying to deal with?
2. How was it a symbol of ideological division like the iron curtain?
3. What does the Berlin Wall tell us about the nature of the Cold War in the 1960s.
4. Looking at the picture from Source A – what are your thoughts on this time in our history?
5. JFK's famous speech was undoubtedly propaganda. From what you read in Source B – what was his main point? How effective was it?

### President Kennedy's Inaugural Address January 20, 1961

Vice President Johnson, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chief Justice, President Eisenhower, Vice President Nixon, President Truman, Reverend Clergy, fellow citizens:

We observe today not a victory of party, but a celebration of freedom -- symbolizing an end, as well as a beginning -- signifying renewal, as well as change. For I have sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn oath our forebears prescribed nearly a century and three-quarters ago.

The world is very different now. For man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life. And yet the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe -- the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state, but from the hand of God.

We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution. Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans -- born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage, and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world.

Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and the success of liberty.

This much we pledge -- and more.

To those old allies whose cultural and spiritual origins we share, we pledge the loyalty of faithful friends. United there is little we cannot do in a host of cooperative ventures. Divided there is little we can do -- for we dare not meet a powerful challenge at odds and split asunder.

To those new states whom we welcome to the ranks of the free, we pledge our word that one form of colonial control shall not have passed away merely to be replaced by a far more iron tyranny. We shall not always expect to find them supporting our view. But we shall always hope to find them strongly supporting their own freedom -- and to remember that, in the past, those who foolishly sought power by riding the back of the tiger ended up inside.

To those people in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves, for whatever period is required -- not because the Communists may be doing it, not because we seek their votes, but because it is right. If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.

To our sister republics south of our border, we offer a special pledge: to convert our good words into good deeds, in a new alliance for progress, to assist free men and free governments in casting off the chains of poverty. But this peaceful revolution of hope cannot become the prey of hostile powers. Let all our neighbors know that we shall join with them to oppose aggression or subversion anywhere in the Americas. And let every other power know that this hemisphere intends to remain the master of its own house.

To that world assembly of sovereign states, the United Nations, our last best hope in an age where the instruments of war have far outpaced the instruments of peace, we renew our pledge of support -- to prevent it from becoming merely a forum for invective, to strengthen its shield of the new and the weak, and to enlarge the area in which its writ may run.

Finally, to those nations who would make themselves our adversary, we offer not a pledge but a request: that both sides begin anew the quest for peace, before the dark powers of destruction unleashed by science engulf all humanity in planned or accidental self-destruction.

We dare not tempt them with weakness. For only when our arms are sufficient beyond doubt can we be certain beyond doubt that they will never be employed.

But neither can two great and powerful groups of nations take comfort from our present course -- both sides overburdened by the cost of modern weapons, both rightly alarmed by the steady spread of the deadly atom, yet both racing to alter that uncertain balance of terror that stays the hand of mankind's final war.

So let us begin anew -- remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof. Let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate.

Let both sides explore what problems unite us instead of belaboring those problems which divide us.

Let both sides, for the first time, formulate serious and precise proposals for the inspection and control of arms, and bring the absolute power to destroy other nations under the absolute control of all nations.

Let both sides seek to invoke the wonders of science instead of its terrors. Together let us explore the stars, conquer the deserts, eradicate disease, tap the ocean depths, and encourage the arts and commerce.

Let both sides unite to heed, in all corners of the earth, the command of Isaiah -- to "undo the heavy burdens, and [to] let the oppressed go free."

And, if a beachhead of cooperation may push back the jungle of suspicion, let both sides join in creating a new endeavor -- not a new balance of power, but a new world of law -- where the strong are just, and the weak secure, and the peace preserved.

All this will not be finished in the first one hundred days. Nor will it be finished in the first one thousand days; nor in the life of this Administration; nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin.

In your hands, my fellow citizens, more than mine, will rest the final success or failure of our course. Since this country was founded, each generation of Americans has been summoned to give testimony to its national loyalty. The graves of young Americans who answered the call to service surround the globe.

Now the trumpet summons us again -- not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need -- not as a call to battle, though embattled we are -- but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and year out, "rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation," a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself.

Can we forge against these enemies a grand and global alliance, North and South, East and West, that can assure a more fruitful life for all mankind? Will you join in that historic effort?

In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility -- I welcome it. I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it. And the glow from that fire can truly light the world.

And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.

My fellow citizens of the world, ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.

Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us here the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own.

### Questions

1. Kennedy was part of which political party?
2. What was Kennedy referring to when he says that men hold the power to abolish human life?
3. What concept does Kennedy claim that the U.S. will always support?
4. What do you believe Kennedy means when he says, "If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich"?
5. What region of the world does he pledge our assistance to in particular?
6. What role does Kennedy envision for the United Nations?
7. What does Kennedy want from potential and existing enemies?
8. Explain the following statements: "Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate."
9. What sorts of things does Kennedy believe science can do?
10. Does Kennedy believe that change in the world will be quick? How do you know?
11. Explain the "common enemies of man".
12. Why do you believe that Kennedy said "ask not what your country can do for you- ask what you can do for your country"?
13. Kennedy asserted that America would "pay any price" to defend liberty. What kind of foreign policy commitments might this have entailed?
14. What did Kennedy identify as the "common enemies of man"? To defeat these enemies, would government power have to be expanded? Why?

### 1960 Election Assignment

Document A :Campaign Commercials

<http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1960>

After viewing a few of the cartoons for each of the candidates, think about the following questions.

1. How did the commercial describe America during the time of the election?
2. Did the candidate suggest we need peace and stability or change? Why do you think that?
3. Did the candidate talk about his own policies or did he talk about the other candidates?
4. What was the intended purpose of this commercial?

Document B: Website Article:

#### THE KENNEDY-NIXON PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES, 1960

On 26 September 1960, 70 million U.S. viewers tuned in to watch Senator John Kennedy of Massachusetts and Vice President Richard Nixon in the first-ever televised presidential debate. It was the first of four televised "Great Debates" between Kennedy and Nixon. The first debate centered on domestic issues. The high point of the second debate, on 7 October, was disagreement over U.S. involvement in two small islands off the coast of China, and on 13 October, Nixon and Kennedy continued this dispute. On 21 October, the final debate, the candidates focused on American relations with Cuba.

The Great Debates marked television's grand entrance into presidential politics. They afforded the first real opportunity for voters to see their candidates in competition, and the visual contrast was dramatic. In August, Nixon had seriously injured his knee and spent two weeks in the hospital. By the time of the first debate he was still twenty pounds underweight, his pallor still poor. He arrived at the debate in an ill-fitting shirt, and refused make-up to improve his color and lighten his perpetual "5:00 o'clock shadow." Kennedy, by contrast, had spent early September campaigning in California. He was tan and confident and well-rested. "I had never seen him looking so fit," Nixon later wrote.

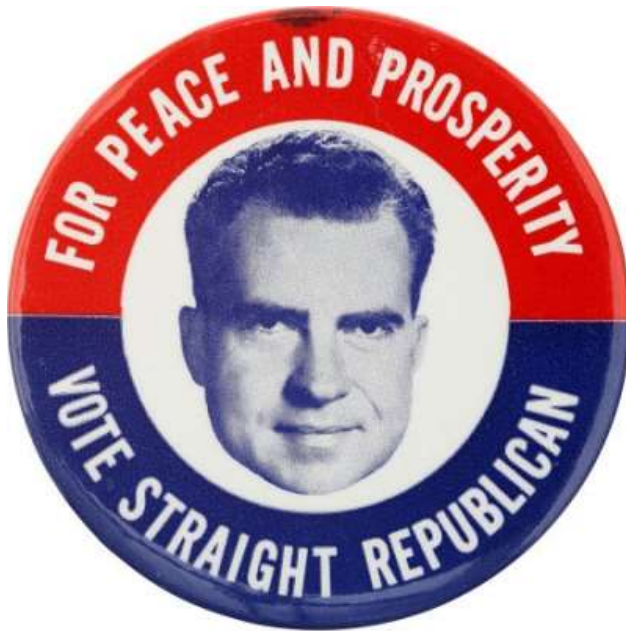
In substance, the candidates were much more evenly matched. Indeed, those who heard the first debate on the radio pronounced Nixon the winner. But the 70 million who watched television saw a candidate still sickly and obviously discomforted by Kennedy's smooth delivery and charisma. Those television viewers focused on what they saw, not what they heard. Studies of the audience indicated that, among television viewers, Kennedy was perceived the winner of the first debate by a very large margin.

<http://www.museum.tv/eotvsection.php?entrycode=kennedy-nixon>

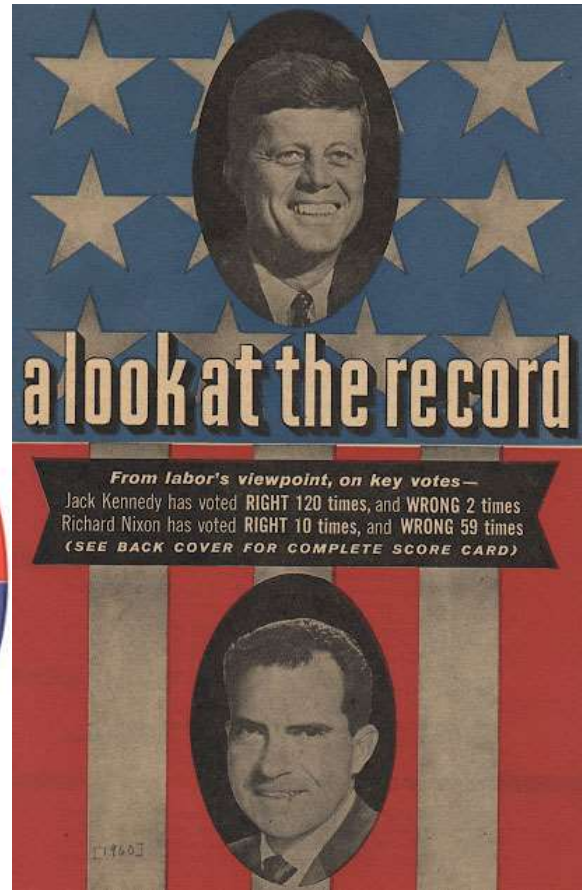
Questions:

1. What impact did the article suggest the televised debates had on the election?
2. Do you think looks matter in voting? Should they? Why or why not?
3. If a person talking is more energetic, and charismatic are you more or less likely to believe them if they say the same thing as someone else?
4. How did your opinion of each candidate change after reading about this debate?

Document Set C: Campaign Buttons/Posters



*Campaign Button 1*



*Poster 1*

1. What message is each of the campaign pieces trying to show?
2. Do you think it is an effective strategy to talk about the poor job another candidate is doing?

Document D: The First Kennedy-Nixon Presidential Debate: September 26, 1960

Part 1:

MR. FLEMING: Senator, the Vice President in his campaign has said that you were naive and at times immature. He has raised the question of leadership. On this issue, why do you think people should vote for you rather than the Vice President?

MR. KENNEDY: Well, the Vice President and I came to the Congress together 1946; we both served in the Labor Committee. I've been there now for fourteen years, the same period of time that he has, so that our experience in uh - government is comparable. Secondly, I think the question is uh - what are the programs that we advocate, what is the party record that we lead? I come out of the Democratic party, which in this century has produced Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman, and which supported and sustained these programs which I've discussed tonight. Mr. Nixon comes out of

the Republican party. He was nominated by it. And it is a fact that through most of these last twenty-five years the Republican leadership has opposed federal aid for education, medical care for the aged, development of the Tennessee Valley, development of our natural resources. I think Mr. Nixon is an effective leader of his party. I hope he would grant me the same. The question before us is: which point of view and which party do we want to lead the United States?

MR. SMITH: Mr. Nixon, would you like to comment on that statement?

Mr. NIXON: I have no comment.

Part 2:

MR. NIXON; I of course disagree with Senator Kennedy insofar as his suggestions as to what should be done uh - with re- on the farm program. He has made the suggestion that what we need is to move in the direction of more government controls, a suggestion that would also mean raising prices uh - that the consumers pay for products and im- and imposing upon the farmers uh - controls on acreage even far more than they have today. I think this is the wrong direction. I don't think this has worked in the past; I do not think it will work in the future. The program that I have advocated is one which departs from the present program that we have in this respect. It recognizes that the government has a responsibility to get the farmer out of the trouble he presently is in because the government got him into it. And that's the fundamental reason why we can't let the farmer go by himself at the present time.

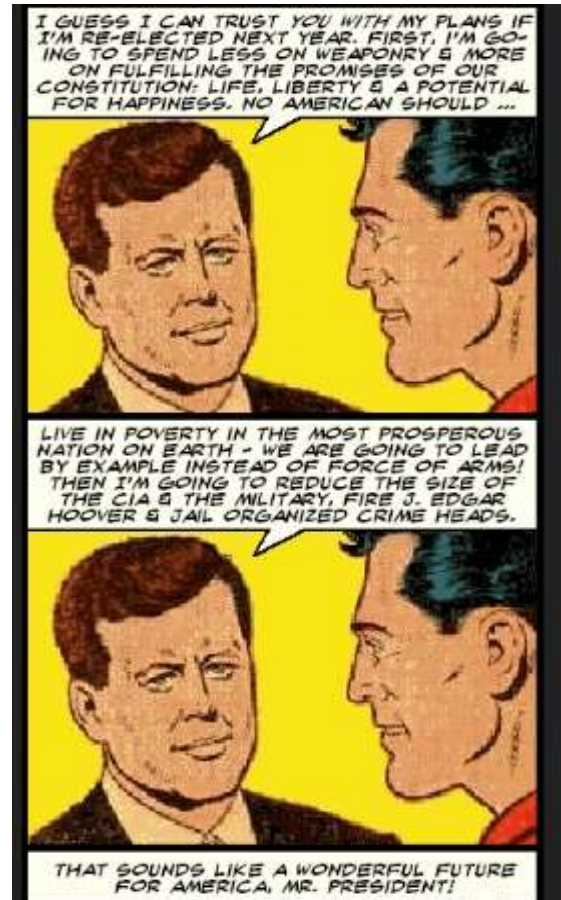
1. What was the overall message of Part 1?
2. What was the overall message of Part 2?
3. If you only saw these pieces of the debate (there is much more), who would you say won the debate? Why?
4. What can a voter learn about during a debate?



Document Set E: Political Cartoons:



Cartoon 1



Cartoon 2

1. In what way does cartoon 1 say Nixon is more prepared than John Kennedy?
2. Who appears to be scared in cartoon 1? What does he represent?
3. Who is Kennedy talking to in cartoon 2? Does the fact that Kennedy impresses him make you more or less likely to think he's the right guy for the presidency?
4. What facial expression does Kennedy have in cartoon 2? Would it change the meaning of the cartoon if he had been doing something else?

Document Set:	Which candidate does this document set show is the better candidate? (JFK/Nixon/Tied)	Evidence from the text to support your position.
A		
B		
C		
D		
E		

**If you were voting in the 1960 presidential election, who would you vote for and why (5-7 Sentences)? Use evidence from the documents to support your position.**