

## John F. Kennedy

John F. Kennedy (1917-1963) was the youngest man ever elected president, and he was the youngest ever to die in office. He was shot to death on November 22, 1963, after two years and ten months as Chief Executive Officer of the United States. The world mourned Kennedy's death, and presidents, premiers, and members of royalty walked behind the casket at his funeral.

Kennedy, a democrat, won the presidency with his "New Frontier" program, after a series of television debates with his Republican opponent, Vice President Richard M. Nixon. At 43, Kennedy was the youngest man ever elected President. Kennedy was the first president of the Roman Catholic faith. He was also the first president born in the 1900's.

<b>1917</b>	May 29 <sup>th</sup> Born in Brookline , MA
<b>1940</b>	Graduated from Harvard University
<b>1941-1945</b>	Served in the U.S. Navy during World War II
<b>1946</b>	Elected to the U.S. House of Representatives
<b>1952</b>	Elected to the U.S. Senate
<b>1953</b>	September 12 – married Jacqueline Bouvier
<b>1960</b>	Elected President of the US
<b>1961</b>	March- Created the Peace Corp April- Bay of Pigs, Cuba June- Berlin Wall, Germany American combat begins in Vietnam Makes commitment to space exploration
<b>1962</b>	October-Cuban Missile Crisis
<b>1963</b>	July-signed Missile treaty August-Freedom march on Washington. Martin Luther King made his famous "I have a Dream Speech" November 22-assassinated in Dallas, Texas

### Kennedy-Nixon Election

The 1960 election proved to be extremely close. It illustrated the importance of voting since a shift of one vote in a number of wards in large states, such as Illinois could have changed the result. The Republicans had nominated Richard Nixon, who was the Vice President at the time. The Democrats

nominated John F. Kennedy, who was a senator. Kennedy chose Lyndon B. Johnson, the state majority leader, who has been his leading opponent, for the nomination as vice president.

At, first most experts believed Nixon would win. He had the advantage of being known as the Vice President under Eisenhower, who was an unusually popular president. Kennedy was perceived as young, not well-known and inexperienced. But, Kennedy was not as unknown as some people believed. Kennedy was young, good-looking, a naval hero of World War II, a senator, and the son of a millionaire who had served as ambassador to Great Britain. His good looks, wealth, and attractive wife had made him a popular subject for articles in newspapers and magazines. Television also helped Kennedy greatly during his four televised debates with Nixon. In his first debate, Kennedy's poise and charisma overshadowed Nixon and helped answer the criticism that he lacked the maturity needed for the presidency. The debates marked the first time that presidential candidates argued campaign issues face to face.

Nixon ran chiefly on the record of the Eisenhower administration. Kennedy promised to lead America to a "New Frontier." He charged that, under the Republicans, the United States had lost ground to the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Kennedy defeated Nixon by fewer than 115,000 popular votes (the votes of the people) But, he won a clear majority of the votes in the Electoral College.

### The Peace Corp

Kennedy's idealism and desire to have Americans "ask what they can do for their country" lead to the development of one of the most successful of Kennedy's programs – The U.S. Peace Corps. It was launched by executive order in March 1961, and was later authorized by Congress. The corps sent thousands of young Americans who had volunteered to use their skills to third world countries to help them raise their standards of living. The Peace Corps seemed to carry the enthusiasm of the President to the people of the world, who often called it the Kennedy Corps."

## **Civil Rights – The March on Washington**

In 1963, demands by African Americans for equal civil and economic rights increased. In May 1963, rioting broke out in Birmingham, Alabama. In June, Kennedy federalized the Alabama National Guard again to ensure the integration of public schools in three Alabama Cities.

On Aug. 28, 1963, more than 200,000 persons from all walks of life staged a freedom March in Washington, DC. The peaceful demonstrators listened to Martin Luther King's memorable "I have a dream" speech. It was a masterful appeal to all that was best in America for fairness, for equality, and for understanding. It was the high point for the civil rights movement. The mood of optimism and hope generated by the march did not last. In September, in Birmingham, Alabama, four Afro-American girls were killed while at Sunday school by a bomb thrown at their church by white extremists.

To meet growing demands of African Americans, Kennedy asked congress to pass legislation requiring hotels, motels and restaurants to admit customers regardless of race and to end segregation in schools. Unfortunately, Kennedy did not live to see this legislation passed.

## **The Cold War**

Kennedy was a true cold war warrior who was out to win the war and who saw the soviets as different, as the enemy. The Kennedy policy was still of containment of the Communists. Conflicts occurred in Cuba, Berlin and Southeast Asia during his Kennedy's Presidency.

On April 17, 1961, in Cuba, Cuban rebels invaded the Bay of Pigs to overthrow Fidel Castro. The assault planned by the US ended in disaster. President Kennedy accepted blame for the ill-fated mission. The Cuban Missile Crisis threatened the safety of the US with Nuclear attack finally ending after a week's discussion.

In June 1961, Kennedy discussed Berlin with Khrushchev at a two-day meeting in Vienna, Austria. Nothing was settled, and the crisis deepened. Both countries increased their military strength. In August, the East Germans built a wall between East and West

Berlin to prevent persons from fleeing to the West.

In July, 1963, the Soviet Union, the United States, and the United Kingdom signed a treaty banning atomic testing in the atmosphere, outer space, and under water. Testing was permitted underground. Many countries that had no atomic weapons also signed the treaty.

## **The End of Camelot- The Kennedy Assassination**

On a political campaign trip to Dallas, Texas, Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963. Lee Harvey Oswald was arrested for the crime. Oswald had been given a hardship discharge from the US Marines and had once tried to become a Soviet citizen. An admitted Marxist, Oswald has a Soviet wife. He also was active in a group that supported Cuba's communist leader Fidel Castro, but was shot by Jack Ruby while being transferred from jail. The Warren Commission investigated the assassination and in 1964 reported that Oswald has acted alone, but critics disputed the findings believing that Oswald was part of a conspiracy group that had planned to murder Kennedy.

The sudden death of the young and vigorous American President shocked the world and traumatized the nation, plunging it into a period of deep mourning. On the Sunday after the assassination, the President's flag-draped coffin was carried to the Capital Rotunda to lie in state. Throughout the day and night, hundreds of thousands of people filed past the guarded casket. Dignitaries from over 90 countries attended the funeral on November 25<sup>th</sup>.

The 1000 days of the Kennedy Presidency have been referred to as "Camelot," the legendary castle of King Arthur of Britain where the king and his Knights of the Round Table fought for good and justice. It was also a time of rebirth for art and culture. This Camelot version of the Kennedy years is appealing, but it is just too idealistic. Kennedy supplied the nation with a new national mood of optimism, signified in his call for the nation to move to a "New Frontier," but his Presidency also included the harshness of the frontier as seen in the steel strikes, civil rights problems, and foreign policy confrontations.



## VOCABULARY

“Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.”

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|-----------------------------|--|
| _____ 1. assassinate        | a) a rare personal quality attributed to leaders who arouse fervent popular devotion and enthusiasm.   |
| _____ 2. segregation        | b) an agreement to perform together an illegal, wrongful, or subversive act.   |
| _____ 3. campaign           | c) one who advocates or resorts to measures beyond the norm, especially in politics  |
| _____ 4. candidate          | d) a person who seeks or is nominated for an office, prize, or honor.  |
| _____ 5. charisma           | e) the practice of separating people of different races, classes, or ethnic groups in schools, housing, and public facilities, especially as a form of discrimination. |
| _____ 6. cold war           | f) to murder a prominent person  |
| _____ 7. demonstrator       | g) disagreeable to the senses, especially to the sense of hearing. severe, cruel, or exacting  |
| _____ 8. conspiracy         | h) the act or practice of envisioning things in an ideal form.   |
| _____ 9. conflict           | i) a body of electors chosen to elect the president and vice president of the united states.   |
| _____ 10. debate            | j) to engage in argument by discussing opposing points. to engage in a formal discussion or argument.  |
| _____ 11. electoral college | k) a state of disharmony between incompatible or antithetical persons, ideas, or interests; a clash.   |
| _____ 12. extremists        | l) the feeling of shock or distress after a physical or psychological injury.  |
| _____ 13. idealism          | m) one who protests against something that he or she sees as unfair  |
| _____ 14. traumatized       | n) the race between candidates for elective office   |
| _____ 15. harshness         | o) a state of political tension and military rivalry between nations that stops short of full-scale war  |

## JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY

"Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or the present are certain to miss the future."



### Questions for Comprehension

1. What year did Kennedy die?
2. Who did Kennedy run against in the campaign?
3. What are two unique things about Kennedy being elected?
4. How did the debates help Kennedy in the election?
5. What two programs resulted from Kennedy's idealism?
6. What was the main point of the civil rights movement?
7. What is the name of the leader of the civil rights movement mentioned in the article?
8. Who were the US's biggest enemies during the cold war? Who was the leader of this group?
9. Who assassinated Kennedy? What kind of person was he? Please describe him
10. What were the results of the Warren Commission?

### Questions for Discussion

1. What are the qualities of a good leader?
2. Do you think that everyone liked Kennedy? Why or Why not?
3. Why do people refer to Kennedy's leadership as Camelot?
4. Who do you consider a great leader? Why?
5. Does the fact that JFK was assassinated make him more important than he really was?
6. What do you think the long term results of Kennedy's assassination were?

# John F. Kennedy Museum Worksheet

## The Convention(1)

1. Who was running with Kennedy as Vice President? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What year was the convention? \_\_\_\_\_

## Kennedy / Nixon Debate (4)

Watch the debate for a few minutes to answer these questions

3. Who was Nixon? \_\_\_\_\_
4. After watching the debate how do you describe Nixon and Kennedy?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## The Election Results (5)

5. How many electoral college votes did Nixon receive? \_\_\_\_\_ Kennedy \_\_\_\_\_?
6. How many popular votes did Nixon receive? \_\_\_\_\_ Kennedy \_\_\_\_\_?
7. What is the meaning of the Red States \_\_\_\_\_, Blue, \_\_\_\_\_ Purple states \_\_\_\_\_?

## Inauguration (6)

8. How old was Kennedy when he became President? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What number President was he? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What was the date of his inauguration? \_\_\_\_\_
11. What was his religion? \_\_\_\_\_ Why is this special? \_\_\_\_\_

## White House Corridor (7)

12. List 3 domestic and 3 international issues JFK dealt with during his presidency  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. When Kennedy was elected he received 49.7% of the popular vote. Two years later what percentage of the population claimed to have voted for him during the election? \_\_\_\_\_%

## International Affairs Briefing Room (8)

14. Looking at the large map in this room, please fill in the blanks with the right names of the areas of the world that match the key point on the right.
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ - Bay of Pigs
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ - Southeast Asia, previously governed by France
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ - Cold War
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_ - Key to Southeast Asia

## Peace Corps (9)

15. What is the Peace Corps? \_\_\_\_\_
16. Who usually joins the Peace Corps? \_\_\_\_\_
17. What countries did the Peace Corps volunteer in –list three? \_\_\_\_\_

**Cuban Missile Crisis (11)**

18. What happened during the Cuban Missile Crisis? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
19. What date the crisis end? \_\_\_\_\_

**The Space Program (12)**

20. When did the US Land on the moon? \_\_\_\_\_
21. What were that names of the two Astronauts that landed? \_\_\_\_\_

**Oval Office (15)**

22. Describe a few details of the physical appearance of the oval office?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
23. Who is the famous civil rights leader on the TV screen? \_\_\_\_\_

**Assassination (19)**

Look at the videos and listen to the commentary in the room and answer the following questions:

24. Where was Kennedy assassinated? \_\_\_\_\_
25. How many shots were fired? \_\_\_\_\_
26. What time did he die? \_\_\_\_\_
27. What two events do the TV images show? \_\_\_\_\_

**A Legacy Of Hope (20)**

The following countries/cities have named or created something in the memory of JFK

28. Please fill in the boxes with the correct matching answer.

	1. Paris	a. school of government
	2. England	b. museum
	3. Canada	c. JFK Centre
	4. Ireland	d. a park
	5. Tunisia	e. a street
	6. Cambridge	f. metal sculpture
	7. Solomon Islands	g. Arboretum
	8. Hong Kong	h. National Memorial
	9. Israel	i. Mountain

29. , "A man may die, nations may fall, but an idea lives on." JFK  
What do you think this quote means?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

30. At the end of the exhibit, there is a piece of concrete, where is it from? \_\_\_\_\_  
Why is it important? \_\_\_\_\_