



John F. Kennedy



Teaching Guide

SEGMENT 6, WEBISODE 14

Please note: Each segment in this Webisode has its own Teaching Guide



Segment Overview



Let's Discuss

While Eisenhower projected the image of everyone's trusted grandfather. John Kennedy, on the other hand, had the presence of a movie star—a rich and smart one at that. He assumed the office with a flourish of idealism, energy, and promise. When Kennedy challenged the nation in his inaugural address to “ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country,” thousands responded. Many aspired to enter government service and be part of Kennedy's “Golden Age of poetry and power,” as Robert Frost intoned in his inaugural poem. As part of his promised New Frontier, Kennedy established the Peace Corps, which sent thousands of volunteers to less developed nations to provide assistance in farming, education, health care, and development. Another new organization, the Alliance for Progress, hoped to bring democratic reform to Latin America.

Teacher Directions

1. If possible, show students a photograph of President Kennedy's inauguration. Some sources include Joy Hakim's *A History of US, All the People*, page 92; the Library of Congress web site @ <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/pp/mdbquery.html>, and the John F. Kennedy web site @ <http://www.jfklibrary.org>.
2. Identify the people in the photograph.
3. Ask the students.
 - What words would you use to describe President and Mrs. Kennedy?
 - What words would you use to describe the expressions on peoples' faces?
 - What words would you use to describe the mood of the occasion?
4. Make sure students understand the following points in discussing the questions.

President and Mrs. Kennedy were the youngest couple to enter the White House. They were fashionable, intelligent, and good-looking, and they brought with them an energy and idealism that infected the nation. The inauguration was a very happy occasion, and President Kennedy's speech inspired people to want to become involved in being active citizens. The inauguration day was filled with hope and enthusiasm. Kennedy had a gift for inspiring everyone to give their best.

Let's Discuss, Cont.



History Sleuth



What do you
Think?

5. Write on the chalkboard or on chart paper — “the brightest and the best.”
6. Ask students to speculate what these words mean in relation to President Kennedy’s administration.
7. Explain to students that Kennedy drew on many sources for people to work with him: college professors, artists, politicians from both the Democratic and Republican party, and citizens young and old to carry out his plans.

Teacher Directions

1. Distribute the Student Sheet: *In Kennedy’s Own Words*.
2. Students, working in their small teams, read the first set of quotations and discuss how President Kennedy’s attitude changed. How had it stayed the same? What events may have caused changes?
3. Teams share their conclusions in a class discussion

Teacher Directions

1. Display the famous words from Kennedy’s inaugural address “Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country.”
2. Explain to the students that President Kennedy’s challenge spoken forty years ago still applies to Americans of all ages today. Students brainstorm what they as students and young people can do for their country. (Some ideas may include working hard to become well educated, working in their communities as volunteers, mentoring younger children, keeping informed of current events.)
3. Students create a collage of drawings or magazine clippings that illustrate what they can do for America.



Moving Toward Freedom



Connections

Teacher Directions

1. Students research the history of the Peace Corps and what the program is doing today. Peace Corps Kids World @ <http://www.peacecorps.gov/kids/>.
2. Students write an application to join the Peace Corps. They should include in their applications what skills they have to offer, where they would like to go, what kind of job they would like to have.
3. Students discuss how the contributions of Peace Corps workers move not only America, but also other nations toward freedom.

Teacher Directions

Use the following activities with your students.

Language Arts/Library — Students read excerpts from Kennedy's book, *Profiles in Courage*, for which he won the Pulitzer Prize.

Language Arts/Library — Students read several well-known poems by Robert Frost, who wrote a poem for President Kennedy's inauguration. Students read "Mending Wall," "Birches," "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," "Fire and Ice," or "The Road Not Taken."

Science/Library — In his inaugural address, Kennedy vowed to put a man on the moon before the end of the decade. Students research the early space flights and the lives of Neil Armstrong, John Glenn, and other early astronauts.

Math — In the 1960 election, Kennedy received 303 electoral votes and 34.2 million popular votes. Nixon received 219 electoral votes and 34.1 million popular votes. Students solve problems such as how many more electoral and popular votes did Kennedy receive? And by what percentage did Kennedy defeat Nixon in both electoral and popular votes?

In Kennedy's Own Words

On the Presidency

Just after he won the presidential election, Kennedy told a reporter:

"Sure it's a big job. But I don't know anybody who can do it any better than I can. I'm going to be in it for four years. It isn't going to be so bad. You've got time to think--and besides, the pay is pretty good."

One year later, President Kennedy said to an interviewer:

"This job is interesting, but the possibilities for trouble are unlimited. It represents a chance to exercise your judgment on matters of importance. It takes a lot of thought and effort. It's been a tough first year, but then they're all going to be tough."



On America's Role in the World

In his inauguration speech, President Kennedy said:

"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...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."

In a later speech, Kennedy told his audience:

"And we must face the fact that the U.S. is neither omnipotent nor omniscient, and that we cannot right every wrong or reverse each adversity, and that therefore there cannot be an American solution for every world problem." We must face problems which do not lend themselves to easy, quick or permanent solutions."