

SSUSH21 – Analyze U.S. international and domestic policies including their influences on technological advancements and social changes during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations.

b. Connect major domestic issues to their social effects including the passage of civil rights legislation and Johnson’s Great Society, following the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

Race relations and poverty in the United States were major issues in the 1960s. The Civil Rights Movement was gaining momentum in an effort to speed up integration, as ruled on by the Supreme Court in the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* case. President John Kennedy supported Civil Rights legislation but it was being blocked in the Congress by Southern opposition. As a Democrat, Kennedy even faced opposition by many of his own Southern party members. Kennedy's assassination in 1963 had a significant effect on his domestic policy agenda, which became the responsibility of the new president Lyndon Johnson.

President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas on November 22, 1963. Kennedy was in Dallas for a political rally, as he was running for re-election the following year. The Kennedy-Johnson ticket needed to shore up the Democratic support that was waning in Texas. The **assassination** took place as Kennedy and his wife, Jacqueline, were riding in a convertible limousine waving to the spectators who lined the streets in Dallas. Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone assassin who shot and killed the president along the motorcade route. Vice President Lyndon Johnson was from Texas and was in Dallas at the time of the shooting. He was sworn in as the new President aboard Air Force One, as it flew back to Washington D.C. carrying Kennedy's body.

Kennedy's death had a profound impact on the nation. The assassination gave the new President, Lyndon Johnson, the political capital to force his domestic legislative package through Congress. The Civil Rights legislation that Kennedy supported but had not been able to get passed in the Congress was pushed through in 1964. Johnson depicted passage of the proposed Civil Rights law as being one of the best ways to honor the dead president's legacy. Congress responded to the call to action and passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed segregation in American schools and other public places. The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 was also passed, which launched President Johnson's War on Poverty.

The **Civil Rights Act of 1964** outlawed major forms of discrimination against Blacks and women. The law ended unequal application of voter registration requirements and the racial segregation of schools, places of work, and facilities that served the general public ("public accommodations"). The Supreme Court upheld the law when it was tested in the courts. Later, the law's provisions were extended to include private work facilities and wage discrimination against women.

The **Voting Rights Act of 1965** was passed the year after Congress moved on the issue of Civil Rights. This federal law made it illegal for Black voters to be disenfranchised through unfair voter registration criteria. It ended the practice of using literacy tests as a qualification to vote and mandated federal oversight of elections in the Southern states.

President Johnson launched his Great Society program as a way of attacking the endemic problem of poverty in the United States. He believed that the United States' post-World War II prosperity could be harnessed to solve key quality of life issues. Johnson's

Great Society programs involved the following:

1. War on Poverty - forty programs intended to eliminate poverty by improving living conditions and enabling people to end the cycle of poverty.
2. Education - sixty separate bills provided for new and better-equipped classrooms, minority scholarships, and low-interest student loans.
3. Medicare- guaranteed health care to every American over 65 years of age.
4. Medicaid - provided health care assistance to the poor.
5. Environment- introduced measures to reclaim clean air and drinking water.
6. National Endowment for the Arts and the Humanities - created with the philosophy that artists, performers, and writers were a priceless part of the United States identity and deserved support.
7. Job Corps - provided job training for young men and women.
8. Head Start - program for four and five year olds from disadvantaged families that gave them a chance to start school on an even basis with other children.

Define

Civil Rights Legislation

Johnson’s Great Society

John F. Kennedy

1. **What were the social effects of the passage of the civil rights legislation?**
2. **What were the social effects of the passage of Johnson’s great society?**
3. **What were the social effects of the assassination of John F. Kennedy?**