

Teachers' Guide for Cobblestone

May 2007: All the Way with JFK

By Debbie Vilardi

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Goal: To learn about the life and accomplishments of JFK.

*Always have a parent or trusted adult help with web research.

Before Beginning: Read the captions for photos throughout the issue. What do they tell you about President Kennedy?

"A Privileged Childhood" by Ruth Spencer Johnson (Pages 2-4)

Comprehension:

1. When was John Fitzgerald Kennedy born?
2. What were Rose and Joseph like as parents?
3. What was Peter's profession?
4. What issue faced Irish Americans at the time?
5. What was Joe Jr's relationship with Jack?
6. How did illness impact Jack's childhood?
7. What experience led Jack to become more serious as a student?

Writing Activity: Read "Always Reading" by Samuel Rubin on page 5. Describe how reading impacted JFK's early life and may have influenced his later decisions.

Research Topics: The Kennedy Family and its members, life on Cape Cod

"Collision in the Pacific" by Nancy McCoy (Pages 6-8)

Vocabulary: commission, phosphorescent, plankton

Comprehension:

1. Why did Kennedy enlist in the Navy?
2. What training did he receive?
3. What was the mission of his PT boat?

4. Why did the boat patrol slowly?
5. What accident occurred?
6. How did Kennedy and his crew survive?
7. How did Kennedy seek rescue?
8. How was rescue achieved?

Writing Activity: You are one of the men who survived with Kennedy. Write a letter home detailing your feelings toward your commanding officer and your activities while on the island. Use your imagination to fill in events.

Map Skills: Locate the Solomon Islands on a globe or world map.

Research: Solomon Islands, PT Boats, *Amagiri*, Ensign George "Barney" Ross, Biuku Gasa and Eroni Kumana, Lt. Reginald Evans,

"High Hopes" by Judith E. Harper (Pages 9-12)

Vocabulary: primary, National Convention, electoral vote, popular vote

Comprehension:

1. What happened to Joe Jr.?
2. Why did JFK decide to run for office?
3. What were obstacles to his first campaign?
4. How did he overcome these obstacles?
5. What impeded Kennedy's early years as a senator?
6. What accomplishments as a senator led Kennedy to believe he should run for president?
7. How did Kennedy address prejudice toward his religion?
8. What experience did Nixon have?
9. What surprised Kennedy about his election to president?

Math Activity: How many years did Kennedy serve in the House of Representatives? If he served three terms, how many years was each term?

Discussion: Would you vote for a person of a different ethnic, religious, or racial background than yourself? Why or why not?

Research: Elections to the House and Senate, John F. Kennedy campaigns, Adlai Stevenson, Richard M. Nixon

"Lights...Camera...Debates!" by Esther Kohn (Page 13)

Vocabulary: polls

Discussion: View the debates online. Discuss whether you agree with interpretations of the candidates expressed in the article.

"A New Frontier" by Judith E. Harper (Page 14-17)

Vocabulary: tyranny, bills, civil rights, segregation

Comprehension:

1. What was Kennedy's "New Frontier" campaign meant to overcome?
2. How did Kennedy react when his programs did not pass in Congress?
3. What compromises did Kennedy make?
4. Which major bill passed?
5. Why did Congress oppose Kennedy's bills?
6. Why might Kennedy have supported the space program?
7. Why didn't Kennedy support a civil rights bill?
8. Do you agree with Kennedy's decision to wait until his possible second term to push for a civil rights bill? Why?
9. What did JFK do to promote civil rights?
10. What prompted Kennedy to take stronger action?
11. When did the bill become law?

Community Activity: What can you do for your country or local community? Brainstorm projects and select one or two to carry out as a class.

Math Activity: Assuming a forty hour work week, how much did a minimum wage earner make in one week? How much more is the current minimum wage?

Writing Activities: Kennedy believed the country would be stronger if people had good jobs and were better educated. Congressmen felt the economy would struggle if the government spent too much. Choose a side in the debate and write your argument.

Research: Kennedy's presidential speeches, Area Redevelopment Act of 1961, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the Civil Rights Act, Lyndon B. Johnson

"RFK and Civil Rights" by Judith E. Harper (Pages 18-19)

Vocabulary: organized crime, U.S. marshals, interstate

Comprehension:

1. What was Robert Kennedy's position in his brother's administration?
2. What was his primary focus?
3. How did the Kennedys hope to protect Freedom Riders?
4. What other steps did RFK take to protect civil rights?
5. What did RFK do to prevent violent opposition to ending segregation?
6. Why did RFK decide to run for president?
7. How was his campaign ended?

Research: Robert F. Kennedy, Freedom Riders, James Meredith, Governor George Wallace, Sirhan B. Sirhan, Arlington National Cemetery

"A Presidential Time Line" by Andrew Matthews (Page 21)

Social Studies Activity: Use this time line and information from any related articles to create a separate time line on one of these topics: Affairs with Cuba, Civil Rights, Space Travel, European and Asian Affairs.

"Delicate Diplomacy" by Eric Arnesen (Page 26-29)

Vocabulary: communism, nuclear, Third World, counterinsurgency, guerrilla combat, quarantine

Comprehension:

1. What was the global situation like in 1960?
2. What was Kennedy's response to the threat of communism spreading to the Third World?
3. What were the core problems in Latin America?
4. What was the impact of the Peace Corps?
5. How did Kennedy change military policy?
6. What was the Bay of Pigs invasion?

7. Why did it fail?
8. Why were Soviet missiles considered a threat?
9. What was Kennedy's response?
10. What compromise was reached to avoid further confrontation?
11. What was Kennedy's policy in Vietnam?
12. Did it succeed?

Map Skills: Compare a map from the early 1960s to a map of today. Locate Cuba, the Soviet Union, Turkey and Vietnam. Consider how the map has changed.

Research: Cold War, Alliance for Progress in Latin America, Peace Corps, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Bay of Pigs Invasion, Fidel Castro, Fulgencio Batista, the Central Intelligence Agency, Cuban Missile Crisis, Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty of 1963, Ngo Dinh Diem, the Vietnam War

"The Resolute Desk" by Andrew Matthews (Pages 35)

Comprehension:

1. Why did the captain and crew abandon the HMS Resolute?
2. How was it found?
3. Why might the U.S. Congress have decided to send a gift of peace to England in 1856?
4. What year was the Resolute decommissioned?
5. How has the desk been used?
6. How did John Jr. help make it famous?

"What Happened?" by Kathiann M. Kowalski (Pages 36-38)

Comprehension:

1. What happened to President Kennedy on November 22, 1963?
2. Why was Oswald arrested?
3. Why didn't he stand trial?
4. What question was Warren asked to investigate?
5. What was the conclusion?

6. What made the public reconsider?
7. What did the 1976 House committee find?

Math Activity: How much time passed between President Kennedy's death and Johnson taking the oath of office?

Interview: Develop questions about President Kennedy and his assassination. Interview a family member or friend about how Kennedy affected their lives and how his death affected them.

Research: Governor John Connally, Lee Harvey Oswald, Jack Ruby, Earl Warren, House Select Committee on Assassinations

"A Legacy for Life" by Meg Chorlian (Page 39-42)

Vocabulary: continuum

Comprehension:

1. How is Caroline continuing her father's mission to encourage public service?
2. What is the Profiles in Courage Award?
3. What is the essay contest?
4. What ideal did one student take away from his museum visit?
5. What does Caroline encourage everyone to do?

Writing Activity: Compose a Profile in Courage essay.

Research: Caroline Kennedy, John F. Kennedy Library Foundation, Profiles in Courage by John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Profiles in Courage for Our Times by Caroline Kennedy

Activity for the Entire Issue: Write an essay explaining what is meant by, "of those to whom much is given, much is expected?" Did JFK live up to the expectations for him? How?