

Section 3

The Great Society

Guide to Reading

Big Ideas

Individual Action President Lyndon B. Johnson relied on his experience and persuasiveness to get civil rights and antipoverty bills enacted.

Content Vocabulary

- consensus (p. 611)

Academic Vocabulary

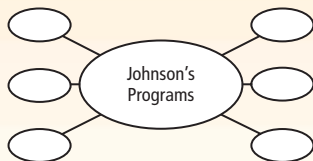
- confine (p. 613)
- subsidy (p. 614)

People and Events to Identify

- War on Poverty (p. 611)
- VISTA (p. 612)
- Barry Goldwater (p. 612)
- Great Society (p. 613)
- Medicare (p. 613)
- Medicaid (p. 613)
- Head Start (p. 614)
- Robert Weaver (p. 614)

Reading Strategy

Organizing As you read about Lyndon Johnson's presidency, complete a graphic organizer similar to the one below to list the social and economic programs started during his administration.



Lyndon B. Johnson had decades of experience in Congress and was skilled in getting legislation enacted. When he became president, he moved quickly to push for passage of a civil rights bill and antipoverty legislation.

Johnson Takes the Reins

MAIN Idea President Johnson's experience in Congress helped him push through a civil rights bill and new laws to fight poverty.

HISTORY AND YOU How do you think someone's early life affects his or her career choices? Read on to learn how Lyndon Johnson's early life prepared him for the presidency.

At 2:38 P.M. on November 22, 1963, just hours after President Kennedy had been pronounced dead, Lyndon B. Johnson stood in the cabin of *Air Force One*, the president's plane, with Kennedy's widow on one side of him and his wife, Claudia, known as "Lady Bird," on the other. Johnson raised his right hand, placed his left hand on a Bible, and took the oath of office.

Within days of the assassination, Johnson appeared before Congress and urged the nation to move forward and build on Kennedy's legacy: "The ideas and ideals which [Kennedy] so nobly represented must and will be translated into effective action," he declared. "John Kennedy's death commands what his life conveyed—that America must move forward."

The United States that President Lyndon B. Johnson inherited from John F. Kennedy appeared to be a booming, bustling place. Away from the nation's affluent suburbs, however, was another country, one inhabited by the poor, the ill-fed, the ill-housed, and the ill-educated. Writer Michael Harrington examined the nation's impoverished areas in his 1962 book, *The Other America*. Harrington claimed that, while the truly poor numbered almost 50 million, they remained largely hidden in city slums, in Appalachia, in the Deep South, and on Native American reservations. Soon after taking office, Lyndon Johnson decided to launch an antipoverty crusade.

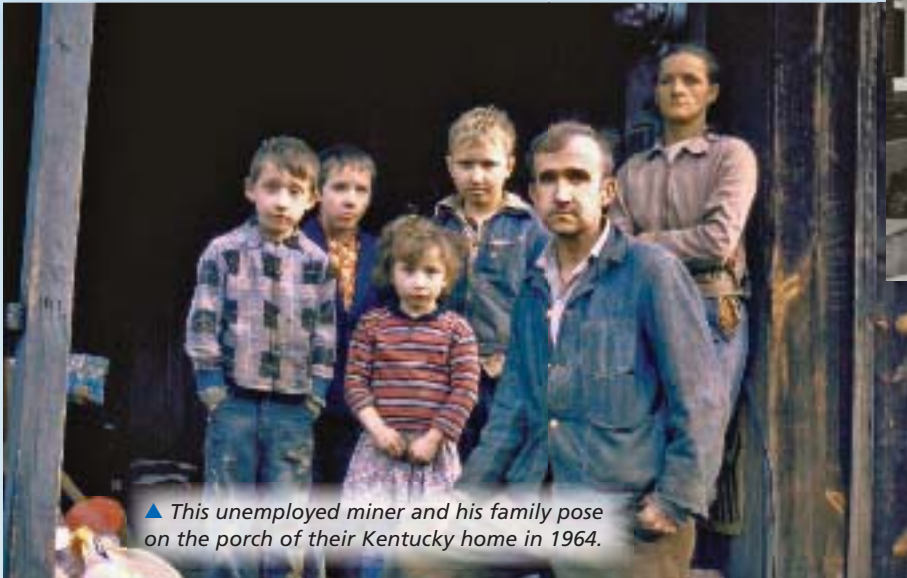
Johnson's Leadership Style

Lyndon Baines Johnson was born and raised in the "hill country" of central Texas, near the banks of the Pedernales River. He remained a Texan in his heart, and his style posed a striking contrast with Kennedy's. He was a man of impressive stature who spoke directly, convincingly, and even roughly at times.

PRIMARY SOURCE

The Other America

When President Johnson launched the War on Poverty in 1964, he wanted programs that would help all impoverished Americans, rural and urban.



▲ This unemployed miner and his family pose on the porch of their Kentucky home in 1964.



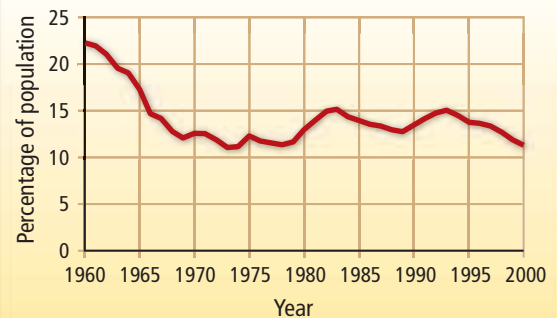
▲ Low-income residents sweep the front stoops of their row houses in Baltimore, Maryland, in the early 1960s.

Analyzing VISUALS

DBQ

- Evaluating** Do you find anything hopeful in the photographs shown?
- Interpreting** Based on the data in the chart, how successful was Johnson's War on Poverty?

Poverty Rate in America, 1960–2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Johnson had honed his style in long years of public service. By the time he became president at age 55, he already had 26 years of congressional experience behind him. He had been a congressional staffer, a member of the House of Representatives, a senator, Senate majority leader, and vice president.

During his career Johnson earned a reputation as a man who got things done. He did favors, twisted arms, bargained, flattered, and threatened. With every technique he could think of, Johnson sought to find **consensus**, or general agreement. His ability to build coalitions had made him one of the most effective and powerful leaders in the Senate's history.

A War on Poverty

Why was this powerful man so concerned about poor people? Although Johnson liked to exaggerate the poor conditions of his child-

hood for dramatic effect, he had in fact known hard times. He had also seen extreme poverty firsthand in a brief career as a teacher in a low-income area. Johnson believed deeply in social action. He felt that a wealthy, powerful government could and should try to improve the lives of its citizens. Kennedy himself had said of Johnson, "He really cares about this nation." Finally, there was Johnson's ambition. He wanted history to portray him as a great president. Attacking poverty was a good place to begin.

Kennedy had plans for an antipoverty program and a civil rights bill before his death. President Johnson knew that any program linked to the slain president would be very popular. In his State of the Union address in 1964, Johnson told his audience: "Unfortunately, many Americans live on the outskirts of hope, some because of their poverty and some because of their color and all too many because of both." He concluded by declaring an "unconditional **War on Poverty** in America."

By the summer of 1964, Johnson had convinced Congress to pass the Economic Opportunity Act. This legislation attacked inadequate public services, illiteracy, and unemployment as three major causes of poverty. The act established 10 new programs within a new government agency, the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). Many of the new programs were directed at young Americans living in inner cities.

The Neighborhood Youth Corps provided work-study programs to help underprivileged young men and women earn a high school diploma or college degree. The Job Corps helped unemployed people ages 16–21 acquire job skills. One of the more dramatic programs introduced was **VISTA** (Volunteers in Service to America), which was essentially a domestic Peace Corps. VISTA put young people with skills and community-minded ideals to work in poor neighborhoods and rural areas to help people overcome poverty. Additional programs included Upward Bound, which offered tutoring to high school students, and a Work Experience Program, which provided day care and other support for those in poor households to enable them to work.

The Election of 1964

In April 1964 *Fortune* magazine observed, “Lyndon Johnson has achieved a breadth of public approval few observers would have believed possible when he took office.” Johnson had little time to enjoy such praise, for he was soon to run for the office he had first gained through a tragic event.

The Republican candidate in the 1964 election was Senator **Barry Goldwater** of Arizona. Known for his strong conservatism, he set the tone for his campaign when he accepted his party’s nomination, declaring, “Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice! And let me remind you also that moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue!”

Few Americans were ready to embrace Goldwater’s message, which seemed too aggressive for a nation nervous about nuclear war. On Election Day, Johnson won in a landslide, gaining more than 61 percent of the popular vote and winning all but six states in the Electoral College.

Reading Check **Examining** What inspired the War on Poverty? Why was Johnson able to convince Congress to pass it?

PAST & PRESENT

VISTA Continues the War on Poverty

Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) began in 1965 as part of President Johnson’s War on Poverty. Its focus was to help people help themselves, offering money and programs to low-income communities. Many young people during the idealistic 1960s who weren’t able to serve abroad in the Peace Corps program chose instead to work with VISTA. Since the program began, more than 140,000 people have served.

In 1993 VISTA became part of the government agency AmeriCorps. Today, more than 1,200 projects across the nation attempt to make gains in bridging the technology gap, increase housing opportunities, improve health care services, and strengthen community organizations. Volunteers, who must be at least 18, usually work for a year in VISTA-sponsored projects through local, state, or federal agencies or nonprofit, public, or private organizations. In 2006 VISTA had nearly 6,000 volunteers.

1973



▲ In 1973, Leroy Sneed was a VISTA member in his hometown of Mitchellville, South Carolina, where he was involved in home-repair and community organizing. Here he talks with a homeowner about rebuilding or repairing her home.

The Great Society

MAIN Idea Great Society programs provided assistance to disadvantaged Americans.

HISTORY AND YOU What reforms do you think might help reduce poverty today? Read on to learn about the antipoverty programs initiated by President Johnson.

After his election, Johnson began working with Congress to create the “**Great Society**” he had promised during his campaign. In this same period, major goals of the civil rights movement were achieved through the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which barred discrimination of many kinds, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which protected voters from discriminatory practices.

Johnson’s goals were consistent with the times for several reasons. The civil rights movement had brought the grievances of African Americans to the forefront, reminding many that equality of opportunity had yet to be realized. Economics also supported Johnson’s goal. The economy was strong, and many believed it would remain so indefinitely. There was no

reason to believe, therefore, that poverty could not be significantly reduced.

Johnson elaborated on the Great Society’s goals during a speech at the University of Michigan in May of 1964. It was clear that the president did not intend only to expand relief to the poor or to **confine** government efforts to material things. The president wanted, he said, to build a better society “where leisure is a welcome chance to build and reflect, . . . where the city of man serves not only the needs of the body and the demands of commerce but the desire for beauty and the hunger for community.”

This ambitious vision encompassed more than 60 programs that were initiated between 1965 and 1968. Among the most significant programs were **Medicare** and **Medicaid**. Health care reform had been a major issue since the days of Harry Truman. By the 1960s, public support for better health care benefits had solidified. Medicare had especially strong support since it was directed at all senior citizens. In 1965 approximately half of all Americans over the age of 65 had no health insurance.

2005



◀ Members of AmeriCorps clear debris from a home in Pass Christian, Mississippi, following Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

- 1. Analyzing** How does volunteering help both the volunteer and the communities served?
- 2. Problem Solving** What challenges in your town or city could AmeriCorps help address? What would you do to solve these challenges?

What Was the Great Society?

Health and Welfare

Medicare (1965) established a comprehensive health insurance program for all senior citizens; financed through the Social Security system.

Medicaid (1965) provided health and medical assistance to low-income families; funded through federal and state governments.

Child Nutrition Act (1966) established a school breakfast program and expanded the school lunch and milk programs to improve nutrition.

Education

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) targeted aid to students and funded related activities such as adult education and education counseling.

Higher Education Act (1965) supported college tuition scholarships, student loans, and work-study programs for low- and middle-income students.

Project Head Start (1965) funded a preschool program for disadvantaged children.

The War on Poverty

Office of Economic Opportunity (1964) oversaw many programs to improve life in inner cities, including Job Corps, an education and job training program for at-risk youth.

Housing and Urban Development Act (1965) established new housing subsidy programs and made federal loans and public housing grants easier to obtain.

Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act (1966) revitalized urban areas through a variety of social and economic programs.

Consumer and Environmental Protection

Water Quality Act and Clean Air Acts (1965) supported development of standards and goals for water and air quality.

Highway Safety Act (1966) improved federal, state, and local coordination and created training standards for emergency medical technicians.

Fair Packaging and Labeling Act (1966) required all consumer products to have true and informative labels.

Analyzing VISUALS

- 1. Interpreting** What was the purpose of the Water Quality and Clean Air Acts of 1965?
- 2. Evaluating** Which of the Great Society programs do you think had the most effect on American life? Why do you think so?

Johnson convinced Congress to set up Medicare as a health insurance program funded through the Social Security system. Medicare's twin program, Medicaid, financed health care for welfare recipients who were living below the poverty line. Like the New Deal's Social Security program, both programs created what have been called "entitlements," that is, they entitle certain categories of Americans to benefits. Today, the cost of these programs has become a permanent part of the federal budget.

Great Society programs also strongly supported education. For Johnson, who had taught school as a young man, education was a personal passion. Vice President Hubert Humphrey once said that Johnson "was a nut on education. . . [He] believed in it, just like some people believe in miracle cures."

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 granted millions of dollars to public and private schools for textbooks, library materials, and special education programs. Efforts to improve education also extended to preschoolers through Project **Head Start**.

Administered by the Office of Economic Opportunity, Head Start was directed at disadvantaged children who had "never looked at a picture book or scribbled with a crayon." Another program, Upward Bound, was designed to prepare low-income teenagers for college.

Improvements in health and education were only the beginning of the Great Society programs. Conditions in the cities—poor schools, crime, slum housing, poverty, and pollution—blighted the lives of those who dwelled there. Johnson urged Congress to act on several pieces of legislation addressing urban issues. One created a new cabinet agency, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, in 1965. Its first secretary, **Robert Weaver**, was the first African American to serve in the cabinet. A broad-based program informally called "Model Cities" authorized federal **subsidies** to many cities. The funds, matched by local and state contributions, supported programs to improve transportation, health care, housing, and policing. Since many

urban areas lacked sufficient or affordable housing, legislation also authorized about \$8 billion to build houses for low- and middle-income people.

One notable Great Society measure changed the composition of the American population: the Immigration Act of 1965. This act eliminated the national origins system established in the 1920s, which had given preference to northern European immigrants. The new measure opened wider the door of the United States to newcomers from all parts of Europe, as well as from Asia and Africa.

The Great Society's Legacy

The Great Society programs touched nearly every aspect of American life and improved thousands, perhaps millions, of lives. In the years since President Johnson left office, however, debate has continued over whether the Great Society was truly a success.

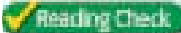
In many ways, the impact of the Great Society was limited. In his rush to accomplish as much as possible, Johnson did not calculate exactly how his programs might work. As a result, some of them did not work as well as hoped. Furthermore, the programs grew so quickly they were often unmanageable and difficult to evaluate.

Cities, states, and groups eligible for aid began to expect immediate and life-changing benefits. These expectations left many feeling frustrated and angry. Other Americans opposed the massive growth of federal programs and criticized the Great Society for intruding too much into their lives.

A lack of funds also hindered the effectiveness of Great Society programs. When Johnson attempted to fund both his grand domestic agenda and the increasingly costly war in Vietnam, the Great Society eventually suffered. Some Great Society initiatives have survived to the present, however. These include Medicare and Medicaid, two cabinet agencies—the Department of Transportation and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)—and Project Head Start. Overall, the programs provided some important benefits to poorer communities and gave political and administrative experience to minority groups.

An important legacy of the Great Society was the questions it produced. How can the federal government help disadvantaged citizens? How much government help can a society provide without weakening the private sector? How much help can people receive without losing motivation to fight against hardships on their own?

Lyndon Johnson took office determined to change the United States in a way few other presidents had attempted. If he fell short, it was perhaps that the goals he set were so high. In evaluating the administration's efforts, the *New York Times* wrote, "The walls of the ghettos are not going to topple overnight, nor is it possible to wipe out the heritage of generations of social, economic, and educational deprivation by the stroke of a Presidential pen."

 **Summarizing** What were the Great Society programs, and what was their impact?

Vocabulary

- 1. Explain** the significance of: consensus, War on Poverty, VISTA, Barry Goldwater, Great Society, Medicare, Medicaid, Head Start, Robert Weaver.

Main Ideas

- 2. Analyzing** How did Johnson's War on Poverty strive to ensure greater fairness in American society?
- 3. Describing** Which Great Society programs supported education? How did these programs help?

Critical Thinking

- 4. Big Ideas** How did President Johnson carry on the ideals of President Kennedy?
- 5. Organizing** Use a graphic organizer similar to the one below to list five of the Great Society initiatives that have survived to the present.

Great Society Initiatives

- 6. Analyzing Visuals** Look at the graph on page 611. When was poverty at its lowest in the U.S.?

Writing About History

- 7. Descriptive Writing** Assume the role of a biographer. Write a chapter in a biography of Lyndon Johnson in which you compare and contrast his leadership style to that of John Kennedy.



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Chapter 17 VISUAL SUMMARY



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Domestic Programs of the 1960s

- A growing awareness of poverty, as well as concern for women's rights and the rights of various minority groups, leads to a series of new programs known as the War on Poverty and the Great Society.
- The President's Commission on the Status of Women is established and the Equal Pay Act of 1963 is passed.
- New programs aid the developmentally disabled.
- Office of Economic Opportunity is established to fight poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, and disease.
- Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits race discrimination and social segregation, and the Voting Rights Act protects universal suffrage.
- Medicare and Medicaid Acts are passed to provide federal medical aid to senior citizens and poor.
- Elementary and Secondary Education Act is passed to increase aid for public schools.



▲ VISTA volunteers work to curb delinquency by counseling and helping troubled children and their families.



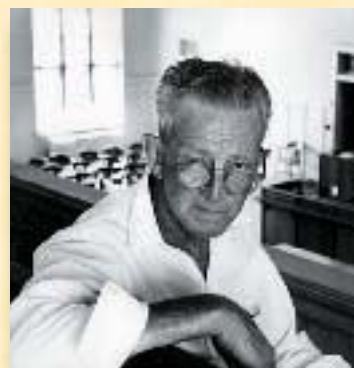
▲ The U.S. Navy ship, the Vesole, intercepts the missile-carrying Soviet ship Potzunov as it leaves Cuba during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Foreign Policy of the 1960s

- Kennedy pledges to end Eisenhower's reliance on nuclear weapons and to use new methods to prevent the spread of communism.
- Kennedy introduces the "flexible response" policy—building up both nuclear missiles and conventional forces.
- The United States pledges aid to struggling Latin American nations.
- Peace Corps sends volunteers to help in poor countries.
- The United States aids Cuban exiles trying to overthrow Castro, but their landing at the Bay of Pigs fails.
- Soviet missiles in Cuba lead to the Cuban missile crisis; the United States blockades Cuba and the Soviets remove the missiles.
- The U.S. and Soviet Union sign the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

Supreme Court Cases of the 1960s

- Led by Chief Justice Earl Warren, the Supreme Court makes a series of decisions that dramatically change American society and the federal government's relationship to citizens.
- In *Reynolds v. Sims* the Court requires states to adhere to the principle of one person, one vote.
- In four cases, *Mapp v. Ohio*, *Gideon v. Wainwright*, *Escobedo v. Illinois*, and *Miranda v. Arizona*, the Court extends due process, giving more protection to those accused of crimes.
- In *Abington School District v. Schemp*, the Court rules that states cannot require prayer and Bible readings in public schools.



▲ Clarence Earl Gideon was denied counsel during a trial in Florida in 1961. His case eventually went to the Supreme Court.

STANDARDIZED TEST PRACTICE

TEST-TAKING TIP

To answer vocabulary questions 2–4 below, first look at the terms listed as answers. See if you can mentally define each one. Then read the question to select the right answer.

Reviewing Vocabulary

Directions: Choose the word or words that best completes the sentence.

- Reapportionment, as ruled on by the Warren Court, is
 - the requirement of separate but equal facilities for schools.
 - the process courts must follow when trying cases to treat individuals fairly.
 - the way in which political districts are drawn based on population changes.
 - the separation of church and state for schools.
- The policy called _____ helped nations resist Communism by building up conventional troops and weapons.
 - military-industrial complex
 - containment
 - mutual assured destruction
 - flexible response
- _____ means that the law may not treat individuals unfairly or unreasonably and must treat all individuals equally.
 - Reapportionment
 - Consensus
 - Due process
 - Judicial review
- President Johnson was successful at building coalitions and finding a _____, or general agreement.
 - discord
 - consensus
 - accord
 - variance

Reviewing Main Ideas

Directions: Choose the best answers to the following questions.

Section 1 (pp. 596–601)

- During the presidential election of 1960, Kennedy focused his campaign message on
 - bridging the “missile gap” between the United States and the Soviet Union.
 - continuing the foreign policy of the current administration.
 - how the Democrats’ fiscal policies would boost inflation and harm the economy.
 - how Catholicism would influence his decision-making as president.
- Congress defeated which of the following proposals of Kennedy’s New Frontier?
 - raising the minimum wage
 - investing funds in defense and space exploration
 - health care for senior citizens
 - providing funds to build low-income housing
- The Warren Court decision requiring that a defendant in a state court had the right to a lawyer, regardless of his or her ability to pay, was
 - Engel v. Vitale*.
 - Griswold v. Connecticut*.
 - Plessy v. Ferguson*.
 - Gideon v. Wainwright*.

Need Extra Help?

If You Missed Questions . . .	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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GO ON 

Chapter 17

Section 2 (pp. 602–607)

8. Kennedy attempted to reduce the threat of nuclear war and stop the spread of communism by
- A withdrawing aid from Latin American countries.
 - B withdrawing troops from limited military conflicts.
 - C creating the Peace Corps.
 - D encouraging growth in the automotive industry to assure that capitalism was superior to communism.
9. How did Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev respond when Western powers refused to withdraw from West Berlin?
- A He sent long-range missiles to Cuba.
 - B He had a wall built through Berlin, to keep East Germans from escaping to West Berlin.
 - C He enlisted *La Brigada* to invade Cuba and remove Castro from power.
 - D He had food and supplies airlifted to Berlin to end a blockade by American forces.

Section 3 (pp. 610–615)

10. Which Johnson program provided work-study opportunities to help young people earn high school diplomas or attend college?
- A the Neighborhood Youth Corps
 - B VISTA
 - C the Peace Corps
 - D AmeriCorps
11. Medicare and Medicaid were major accomplishments of
- A Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal.
 - B John F. Kennedy's New Frontier.
 - C Richard Nixon's New Federalism.
 - D Lyndon Johnson's Great Society.
12. Which idea was part of Johnson's Great Society?
- A eliminating government-funded health care for senior citizens
 - B providing federal aid for education
 - C opposing civil rights legislation
 - D increasing foreign aid to Cuba

Need Extra Help?

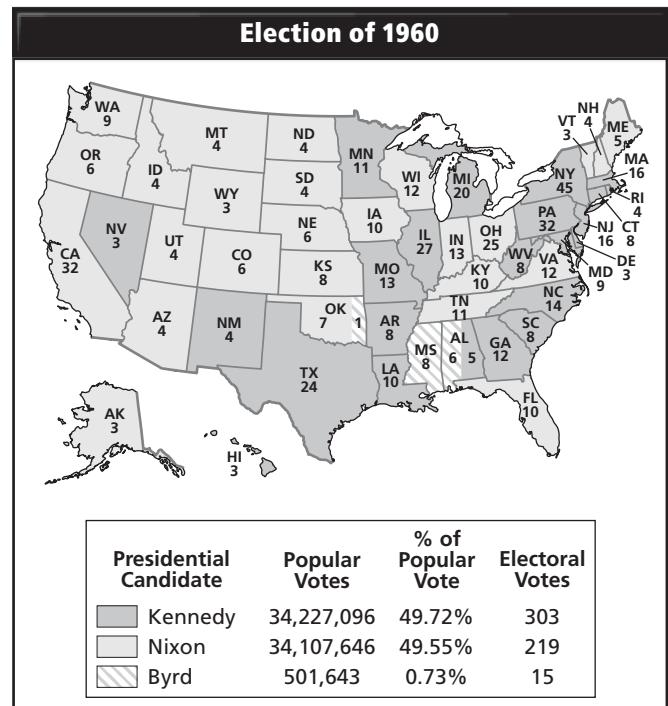
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Critical Thinking

Directions: Choose the best answers to the following questions.

13. How did the Immigration Reform Act of 1965 change the composition of the American population?
- A It set strict limits on the number of immigrants admitted to the United States.
 - B It did not allow any immigrants to enter the United States from Eastern Europe.
 - C It continued the national origins system, which gave preference to northern European immigrants.
 - D It opened the United States to individuals from all over the world, including Asia and Africa.

Base your answer to question 14 on the map below and on your knowledge of Chapter 17.



14. Which region of the country gave Kennedy the most electoral votes?
- A Pacific Northwest
 - B Northeast
 - C Southwest
 - D Midwest

GO ON

15. President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society is similar to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal in that both programs
- A sought ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment to guarantee equality for women.
 - B advocated passage of civil rights laws to help African Americans.
 - C approved efforts by states to reduce taxes for the middle class.
 - D supported federal funding of programs for the poor.

Analyze the cartoon and answer the question that follows. Base your answer on the cartoon and on your knowledge of Chapter 17.



16. According to the cartoon, what is Johnson trying to do?
- A Johnson wants to give more money to the arms race and military establishments.
 - B Johnson is trying to give health, education, and welfare programs more money.
 - C Military establishments and arms costs are giving money to social programs.
 - D Social programs are receiving more money than the military.

Document-Based Questions

Directions: Analyze the document and answer the short-answer questions that follow the document.

Although the standard of living for most Americans rose dramatically throughout the 1960s, some Americans remained mired in poverty. Read the excerpt below in which John Rath discusses his personal experiences with coping with poverty in his sparsely furnished room in Chicago:

"I come home to an empty room. I don't even have a dog. . . . No, this is not the kind of life I would choose. If a man had a little piece of land or something, a farm, or well . . . anyway, you've got to have something. You sit down in a place like this, you grit your teeth, you follow me? So many of them are doing that, they sit down, they don't know what to do, they go out. I see 'em in the middle of the night, they take a walk. Don't know what to do. Have no home environment, don't have a dog, don't have nothing . . . just a big zero."

—quoted in *Division Street: America*

- 17. What does Rath think might help him to have some purpose in his life?
- 18. What does he mean when he says: "You sit down in a place like this, you grit your teeth"?

Extended Response

- 19. Discuss why President Johnson proposed the Great Society and how his initiatives were intended to bring about social change. Then evaluate the extent to which the Great Society succeeded in meeting its goals. Write a well-organized essay that includes an introduction, several paragraphs, and a conclusion. Establish a framework that goes beyond a simple restatement of facts and draws a conclusion about the effectiveness of Johnson's programs.

STOP

History  **ONLINE**

For additional test practice, use Self-Check Quizzes—Chapter 17 at glencoe.com.

Need Extra Help?

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