

Lesson Plan

Summarizing the Great Society

Book: *New Frontier and Great Society*

Series: Postwar America

Level: Navigator

Objective

To help students practice summarizing chapters from a nonfiction book about laws and welfare programs in the United States after World War II.

Supplies

- *New Frontier and Great Society* book
- Whiteboard
- Whiteboard markers
- Paper and pencils

Before the Activity

Read through the *New Frontier and Great Society* book, or assign it to students to read on their own.

Activity

New Frontier and Great Society describes some of the economic and social reforms that took place in the United States after World War II. Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson worked to pass laws to help fight poverty and discrimination.

Write the following questions on the whiteboard:

- What is the main topic of this chapter?
- In this chapter, what did the president hope to accomplish?
- Did he face challenges to these goals?
- What impact or changes did the laws or programs create?

Have students answer these questions for each chapter in the *New Frontier and Great Society* book on a piece of paper. Students should use complete sentences in their answers.

Evaluation

Collect each student's paper. Using the sample answers below, give students 1 point for each question they answer correctly, for up to 16 points total.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 focuses on President Kennedy and his goals for his presidency after the great economic boom the United States experienced. He wanted to create a better future through social change, such as lowering taxes and improving health care. Kennedy ended up focusing more on the Cold War and Communism. But he did help form a treaty limiting nuclear testing, which eased tensions with the Soviet Union.

Chapter 2

This chapter looks at the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s. President Kennedy hoped to pass laws to help protect Black Americans and create social change. He was able to raise the minimum wage, but opposing politicians blocked laws that would lower taxes and increase education funding. As Kennedy was hoping to pass the Civil Rights Act, he was assassinated. But President Lyndon B. Johnson continued many of Kennedy's goals, including passing the Civil Rights Act later on.

Chapter 3

This chapter describes how President Johnson declared a War on Poverty and tried to help people find economic opportunities. He did this by creating new laws to help people receive job training or loans. He faced fewer challenges than Kennedy did because the US government had a Democratic majority and could pass laws more easily. Many of the laws helped low-income people find education and better-paying jobs.

Chapter 4

This last chapter focuses on the long-term impacts the New Frontier and Great Society had on the United States. President Johnson wanted to continue pushing for a Great Society, but the Vietnam War made this difficult. It took his attention away from social change and also made him less popular. However, Johnson's improvements in environmental laws, car safety, civil rights, immigration, voting rights, and much more can still be seen today.

Standards

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards' reading standards for informational text, grade 6 (RI 6.7).