

## Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at [www.LibraryVideo.com](http://www.LibraryVideo.com)

- [history.nasa.gov/spdocs.html#1960s](http://history.nasa.gov/spdocs.html#1960s)  
NASA features speeches by President Kennedy regarding the space program.
- [www.jfklibrary.org/jfkl/modules/tour/default.aspx](http://www.jfklibrary.org/jfkl/modules/tour/default.aspx)  
The John F Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum offers self-guided exhibits that use President Kennedy's voice.
- [www.presidency.ucsb.edu/medialist.php?presid=35](http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/medialist.php?presid=35)  
The American Presidency Project at UC Santa Barbara provides links to President Kennedy's speeches, interviews and news conferences.

## Suggested Print Resources

- Clarke, Thurston. *Ask Not: The Inauguration of John F Kennedy and the Speech that Changed America*. Henry Holt & Co., New York, NY; 2005.
- Sorenson, Theodore C. (ed.) *Let the Word Go Forth: The Speeches, Statements and Writings of John F. Kennedy 1947-1963*. Delacorte Press, New York, NY; 1988.
- Tofel, Richard. *Sounding the Trumpet: The Making of John F. Kennedy's Inaugural Address*. Ivan R. Dee, Chicago, IL; 2005.

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### TEACHER'S GUIDE

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GREATEST SPEECHES  
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## JOHN F. KENNEDY

Grades 9–12

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## Historical Overview

Cold War hostilities between the United States and the Soviet Union raged unabated throughout the post-World War II era. In his inauguration speech, John F. Kennedy spoke eloquently of national values and hopes for the future generation, but he also reestablished his cold warrior credentials, clearly warning Cuba and the Soviet Union that the United States would oppose any attempts at aggression or subversion in the Americas. World events proved President Kennedy's words prophetic, as Cuba became the focal point of a crisis that would have the world teetering on the brink of a nuclear confrontation.

## Time Line

**1917** — John F. Kennedy is born in Brookline, Massachusetts.

**1946** — Kennedy is elected to Congress.

**1952** — Kennedy is elected as a senator from Massachusetts.

**1960** — Kennedy is elected president of the United States.

**1961** — The Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba begins.

**1962** — The Cuban Missile Crisis occurs.

**1963** — President Kennedy is assassinated in Dallas, Texas.

## Vocabulary

**Cold War** — An intense hostile rivalry during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century between Communist nations, particularly the Soviet Union, and the democratic nations of the world, led by the United States.

**U.S.S.R.** — The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, also known as the Soviet Union (1922–1991).

**communist** — One who advocates an economic system in which all property and the means of production are publicly owned.

**World War II** — The second major war of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that involved the Allied Powers led by England, France, the Soviet Union and the United States and their opponents, the Axis Powers, which included Germany, Japan and Italy.

**Pearl Harbor** — An American military base in the Pacific that was attacked by Japan on December 7, 1941. The United States declared war on Japan the next day.

**Jim Crow** — Policies of discrimination and segregation against African-Americans in the South after the Civil War.

**contrapuntalism** — A rhetorical technique favored by President Kennedy that is characterized by the juxtaposition and reversal of ideas.

**Peace Corps** — An organization established by President Kennedy in 1961 through which American volunteers work in developing countries around the world.

**Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)** — An organization in the United States that is responsible for gathering information and facilitating overseas communications.

**Bay of Pigs** — An unsuccessful attempt by United States-backed Cuban exiles to overthrow Cuban leader Fidel Castro in April, 1961. *(Continued)*

**National Security Council** — A forum of security advisors and cabinet officials chaired by the president that considers national and foreign policy.

**Berlin Blockade** — The first major crisis of the Cold War in which the Soviet Union blockaded West Berlin and sparked a massive American-led airlift.

**Organization of American States (OAS)** — A group of countries in the Western Hemisphere that cooperate on social, political and economic issues.

**United Nations Security Council** — A group founded under the U.N. Charter whose responsibility is to maintain international peace and security.

**Cuban Missile Crisis** — A 1962 Cold War confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union over nuclear weapons in Cuba.

## Discussion Questions

1. Who are the Baby Boomers?
2. Describe John F. Kennedy's military service.
3. What was Kennedy's campaign stance on communism?
4. What were the goals of Kennedy's inaugural address?
5. Why was the Bay of Pigs operation an embarrassment to the United States?
6. Why did tensions between the United States and Soviet Union increase dramatically in October, 1962?
7. How was the Cuban Missile Crisis resolved?

## Discussion Questions and Activities

- At the height of the Cold War, President Kennedy spoke out against secrecy in government in his "The President and the Press" speech. Ask students to listen to President Kennedy's speech and summarize his remarks on how best to balance the public's need for information with the government's desire to protect national security. How does the president characterize public debate, public scrutiny and public criticism of government policies? Students may compare and contrast President Kennedy's position regarding the free and independent press with that of the Bush Administration in the aftermath of 9/11. Students may listen to President Kennedy's speech at the following web site: [millercenter.virginia.edu/scripps/diglibrary/prezspeeches/kennedy/jfk\\_1961\\_0427.html](http://millercenter.virginia.edu/scripps/diglibrary/prezspeeches/kennedy/jfk_1961_0427.html)
- At a time when peaceful demonstrators were being brutalized in Alabama, President Kennedy gave a major address on Civil Rights and followed it with a comprehensive Civil Rights Bill that focused on the desegregation of schools and public facilities. Ask students to listen to President Kennedy's speech and describe its tone, use of language and overall message. As a follow-up ask students to conduct demographic studies on social and economic changes that have occurred for African Americans since President Kennedy's speech. The Civil Rights Speech may be found at the following web site: [www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/johnfkennedycivilrights.htm](http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/johnfkennedycivilrights.htm)
- In his Inaugural Address, President Kennedy utilized a rhetorical technique known as "contrapuntalism," which is characterized by the juxtaposition and reversal of ideas — a technique also favored by Abraham Lincoln. Ask students to identify the use of contrapuntalism in JFK's speeches and analyze its effectiveness.