



Honors' American History 1&2 (Reconstruction—Today)



Unit #5: "The American Overhaul" Blue Book Review

Question 5-A

The popular generic conception of the 1960s is that of a swirling, colorfully psychedelic montage of long-haired hippies protesting war, listening to drugged-out musicians, pursuing inner enlightenment, and dodging tear gas canisters lobbed at them by disapproving, uniformed authoritarian types. Many of the trends of the 1960s were due to the demographic changes brought about by the "Baby Boom Generation" and the expansion of the Cold War. In the 1960s, Presidential initiatives, judicial rulings, and social protest created a climate of rebellion, confrontation, and upheaval not seen since the American Revolution. The Civil Rights Movement, the Women's Movement, and the Anti-War Movement battled race discrimination, expanded free expression, challenged tradition, blasted the placidity of the previous decade, and, for better or worse, dispelled the widespread respect for government that had prevailed since World War II. The "Counterculture Revolution" resulted from the social and political factors of the 1950s, such as brinksmanship, fighting in the Third World, and a return to pre-WWII lifestyles. The new generation was determined to reject a conformist lifestyle with men in suits and women in the kitchen. Today, many refer to the 1960s as "revolutionary"? Justify whether or not this label is correct by examining the decade's political *and* social changes.

Question 5-B

As a national force, the Civil Rights Movement took root in the 1950s but greatly expanded during the 1960s. The movement originated among black Americans in the South who faced racial discrimination and segregation in almost every facet of their lives. By the end of the decade, the Civil Rights Movement had ended legal segregation, registered black voters, battled discrimination, generated black pride, and liberalized white attitudes. For many, however, the Civil Rights Movement ended in 1968 with the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Some believe it ended in 2008 with the election of the first black man, Barack Obama, to the office of U.S. President. Still, others argue the movement is not over because the goal of *full* equality has not yet been achieved. Whatever its perceived "end date", the Civil Rights Movement strongly influenced other groups, which adopted its peaceful protest tactics and used them to make major gains in their own areas of social reform in the decades to come. Explain how the Civil Rights Movement was so successful and so impactful by detailing the key battles it faced in its journey toward equality.

Question 5-C

The Vietnam War has been debated since the conflict came to an ignominious end with the fall of Saigon in 1975. From politicians to the media, from veterans to the general public, and to the generations alive today who were not yet born while hostilities raged, the Vietnam War remains a very polarizing topic. Examine how the conflict started, how it was fought, and the impact it had on the U.S. military, society, politics, future foreign policy, and the nation's reputation. Then read the quotes below and explain why these people said what they said – and hypothesize why their backgrounds may shed light on the tone of their quotes.

"In revealing the workings of government that led to the Vietnam War, the newspapers nobly did precisely that which the Founders hoped and trusted they would do." -- Hugo L. Black (judicial opinion, June 30, 1971)

"Vietnam was lost in the living rooms of America – not on the battlefields of Southeast Asia."
-- Marshall McLuhan (*Montréal Gazette*, May 16, 1975)

"Vietnam was the first war ever fought without any censorship. Without censorship, things can get terribly confused in the public mind." -- William Westmoreland (*Time* magazine, April 5, 1982)

"No event in American History is more misunderstood than the Vietnam War. It was misreported then, and it's misremembered now." -- Richard M. Nixon (*New York Times*, March 28, 1985)