

New Frontiers

A newsletter for ★ educators

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS AT THE JOHN F. KENNEDY PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

Save these Dates!

Framing History: The Power of Pictures

A Conference for Teachers of
Grades 3 – 8 and School Librarians

November 2, 2022

This year's conference will explore how illustrations and images help children better understand historical and contemporary events. Participants will discover how pictures can help learners build a more inclusive understanding of history. Workshop sessions will provide strategies for using visual literacy skills to navigate the ever-expanding world of images. Join keynote speaker **Ekua Holmes** and guest illustrators **Don Brown**, **Laura Freeman**, and **E.B. Lewis** to investigate how illustrations can deepen children's understanding of and interest in history.

Visit jfklibrary.org/FramingHistory for more information.

National Student Mock Election

Don't miss this civic
education opportunity!

Fall 2022

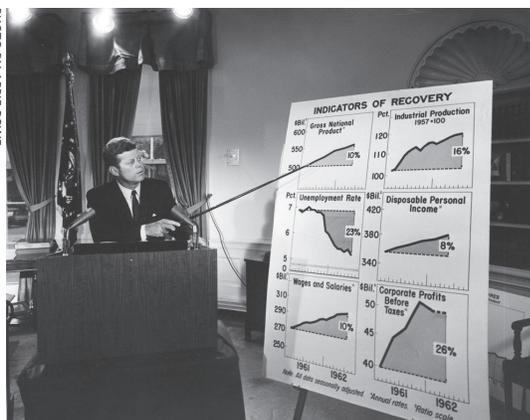
Engage your students in the Massachusetts gubernatorial election with this voter education program for grades K-12. The *National Student Mock Election* emphasizes the importance of voting and the power of student ballots for application to both in person and virtual settings with grab and go resources.

Visit jfklibrary.org/MockElection for the most up-to-date information.

Students Set National Priorities through the Years

In early 2022, the Kennedy Library presented its 20th annual federal budget simulation series. In this activity, students take on the role of economic advisers to the president and work in small groups with their peers from around New England to set priorities for their administration by looking at the current list of programs that need funding and deciding how much to invest in each discretionary spending category. Over 14,000 students have participated in this program since its inception in 2003. Through the years, students' budgets have reflected the significant events of the time, the political climate, and some consistent priorities and concerns of young people.

PHOTO BY ABBIE ROWE
JOHN F. KENNEDY PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM



President Kennedy points to a chart entitled "INDICATORS OF RECOVERY" during his radio and television report to the American people on the state of the national economy. Oval Office, White House, Washington, DC. August 13, 1962.

the first three years of the program (2003-2005) and beginning in March of 2022, students have been less eager to vastly diminish spending in this category.

In the winter of 2003, when the Kennedy Library inaugurated this program, the country was on the brink of the Iraq War. Students were familiar with the events of September 11, 2001, and had been hearing about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. President Bush announced that US forces had begun military operations

continued on page 2

National Defense Spending

One unwavering student response to the federal budget has been their astonishment in the amount of money the government spends on national defense in comparison with other discretionary spending. Although students have generally wanted to reduce defense spending, conversations around slashing spending in this category and the intensity of discussions about how much to cut have varied based on military activity in the world. In

HIGHLIGHTS

3 Federal Budget
Challenge

4 Elementary &
Middle School
Lesson

7 Collections
Corner Highlight

8 American Studies
Summer Institute

Students Set National Priorities through the Years

continued from page 1

there on March 20, 2003. By the winter of 2004-2005, with US troop levels in Iraq and Afghanistan increasing, students had been hearing news reports stating that US soldiers deployed in that region did not have the necessary equipment for their missions. They were very interested in knowing specifically how national defense money was allocated: were our servicemen and women getting paid enough? Was the US spending too much on weaponry? What was the minimum the US could spend to maintain the strongest military in the world? For most students in those first years of the program, the issue was not whether to have a strong military, but how much to spend on it.

As the years passed after the US removed its troops from Iraq and began appreciably decreasing the numbers stationed in Afghanistan, students became more willing to significantly reduce defense spending. In 2017, a student from Boston noted “We don’t need to make more aircrafts when there’s nothing wrong with the ones we have now.” Other students have mentioned how much more our government spends on defense than other countries in the world. A common theme has been the desire by students to cut spending on nuclear weaponry.

As the war in Ukraine intensified this March, students’ discussions about military spending became more passionate. “No one attacks us because we have a good military,” insisted one student from Somerset, MA, advocating to keep the current funding in military spending. “Why do we need to prepare for a war that may or may not come?” asked a student from Fiskdale, MA, who encouraged larger cuts in military spending.

The Federal Deficit

The federal deficit has also been a major issue in our programs throughout the twenty years. From the very outset of this budget program, many students have been vocal about their fears that their generation would be saddled with heavy interest payments associated with the growing federal debt. A major piece of legislation, the Budget Control Act of 2011, forced the rules of the program to change for the ten years that the law was in effect. Since the law required caps on discretionary spending, students were required to keep their budgets within the legislated limits. They were also not allowed to move funds from the National Defense category to non-Defense categories since, according to the law, there were separate caps for these two entities.



Students work in small, facilitated discussion groups of fourteen to twenty students using poker chips to represent money spent in fourteen functional categories. Each chip represents \$10 billion.



Education Specialist Nina Tisch asks students for the rationales of their final budgeting decisions.

With the Budget Control Act of 2011 as a rule, funding students’ priorities became more difficult since by adding money to one category of non-defense spending, they were required to eliminate spending from another non-defense category. Negotiating these trade-offs with students from other communities in the allotted time proved challenging and made students question the value of individual government programs. One student from Malden, MA, in 2015 noted, “We learned that allocating funds, contrary to popular belief is not an emotionless, robotic task. In fact, myriad tough decisions are required. We learned that regardless of how precisely funds are distributed or reserved, many people are still left displeased with some aspects of the budget.”* A Newton, MA, student in 2017 observed, “If you do this it’s going to hurt these people in this way, and these people in this way. [T]here are people behind the numbers and that’s really important to consider.”

*“*Students Attend Budget Simulation at JFK Library.*” Wicked Local. 02/24/2015. (Accessed at <https://www.wickedlocal.com/story/medford-transcript/2015/02/24/students-attend-budget-simulation-at/35120999007/>)

PHOTO BY TOM FITZSIMMONS, JOHN F. KENNEDY PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM.

From Personal Experience to Investment Priorities

One category of spending has been generally embraced by students throughout the years: appropriations for education. This is a budgetary category that students understand, and many have argued that supplementing education spending would solve a plethora of problems in the country including food insecurity and homelessness. Students have shared stories about cuts that affected their own lives—chronic shortages of textbooks, students sitting on the windowsills because of lack of desks, and lack of money for library books, sports, and school nurses.

Another common theme, although not universal, has involved a vocal group of students’ desire to cut spending on international affairs. Some rationales have included the concern that we should take care of our own country before taking care of others, that money given in humanitarian aid has not been spent wisely, and that we provide funds to countries that don’t deserve our help. These students are often challenged by others who express interest in adding to US foreign aid in order to cut more from US national defense spending. This March, with the plight of so many Ukrainian refugees highlighted in the news, students were

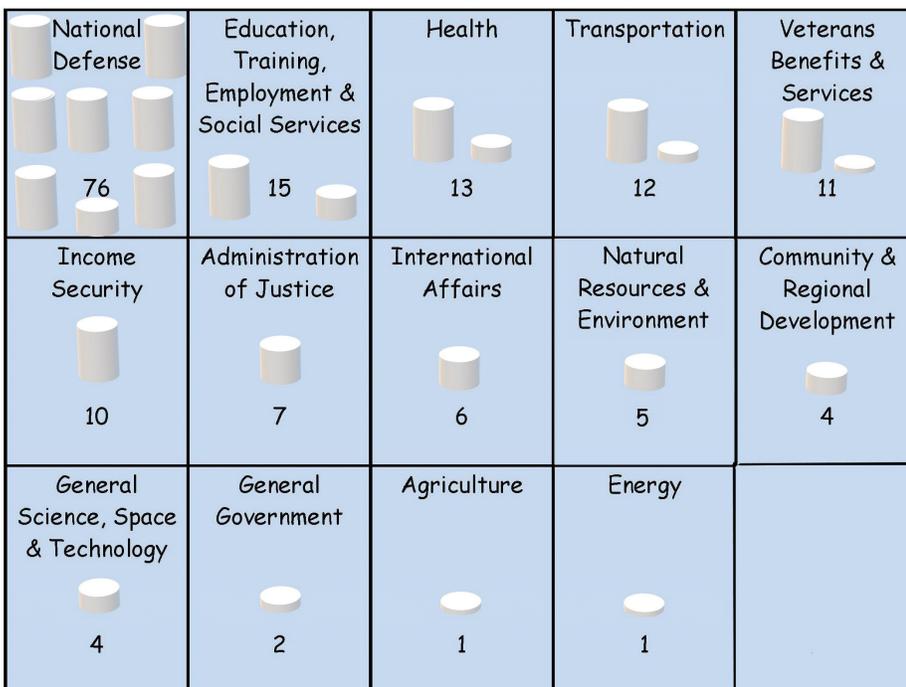
Challenge your students to produce a prioritized federal budget!

A lesson plan that includes all of the program materials is made available annually on the Library’s website at jfklibrary.org/BudgetSimulation.

more reluctant to cut programs in International Affairs, and most groups added funding to this category.

From the categories of Income Security to Transportation, students have brought their own experiences to the table to help shape budgeting conversations. One student might speak about the federal aid their family receives, another might complain about experiencing delays on buses or subways. Coming from different communities—urban, suburban and rural—students have sat together to do the hard work of coming to a consensus in their small budgeting groups. This experience of exchanging ideas with peers from different backgrounds has been both a hallmark of the program and a highlight for participating students and teachers.

The experience of working with diverse students from other schools has been eye-opening for many. A student from Arlington, MA commented in a 2012 program evaluation, “What I was not ready for was the enthusiasm of students towards one section of government. Many kids were devoted to changing one thing, namely because it affected them personally or they had a strong belief in it. Gentle arguments ensued from differing opinions within the group, and it seemed like it was hard to agree on many things. However, it is exactly this conflict that would propel us forward. It allowed for more vantage points on the situation, but it also occasionally provided deadlocks, which shows how hard the government must be to run if even a group of fifteen or so kids cannot come to an agreement.” ★



A virtual game board from one of the two years the program was held remotely.

With support from: **EVERSOURCE**

Petition for Peace: Exercising First Amendment Rights

Historical Background and Context:

A strong democracy depends on civic engagement – active citizens who participate in government and exercise their rights. By learning about the US Constitution, students can develop the civic knowledge they need to take civic action and participate fully in their communities and government. For young students, the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights provides accessible content about rights and freedoms. By analyzing primary sources from a different period in time, students can learn how people in the past have exercised their First Amendment rights. These examples can guide and inspire students to take civic action in their own lives.

The John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum archival collections contain hundreds of thousands of letters from people of all ages who exercised their First Amendment rights by writing a letter to President Kennedy. Many of these messages can be considered petitions because they make requests of the president of the federal government. The authors also exercised their freedom of speech as they agreed or disagreed with Kennedy’s actions, shared information, and gave advice to the president and other government officials.

In the letter dated May 27, 1961, George Garland, an eleven-year-old boy from Excelsior, Michigan, writes to “Pres. Kennedy” (President of the United States John F. Kennedy) and “Mr. Khrushchev” (Premier of the Soviet Union) to “please try to be friends and help the whole world.” The letter shows evidence of deep concern as George “wonders” about his future and that of Russian boys. By suggesting that a friendship between Kennedy and Khrushchev might enable “American boys and Russian boys to see 1999,” the author implies that the future of the world rests in the hands of the two leaders. Neither a response, the stamps mentioned in

Lesson aligns with the following standards:

- National History Standards: Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation
- Common Core State Standards ELA College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language
- NCSS C3 Framework Discipline 2: Applying disciplinary concepts and tools (History and Civics) Discipline 3: Evaluating sources and using evidence
- Massachusetts History and Social Studies Frameworks 5.T3 Principles of United States Government

the letter, nor evidence of a letter to Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev could be found in the Kennedy Library archival collections. George Garland’s letter, which references his worries about the future, conveys a sense of imminent danger. What was happening at that time to warrant such concern from an eleven-year-old boy?

According to the date on the letter, May 27, 1961, it was written five days before Kennedy’s much anticipated visit with Khrushchev in Vienna, Austria. The meeting was an historic event because of the conflict and tension between the United States and the USSR. The United States and its allies were in a decades-long struggle with the Soviet Union known as “The Cold War” that had begun after World War II. The two superpowers did not engage in direct combat, but continually antagonized each other through political maneuvering, military coalitions, espionage, propaganda, arms buildups, economic aid, and proxy wars between other nations.

In June 1961, Kennedy met with Khrushchev in Vienna, Austria. The stakes were high since both countries had nuclear weapons. The threat of nuclear war was so real to people that they had fallout shelters in their homes and communities in case of a nuclear disaster. Not only was the summit unsuccessful in its goal of building trust between the two countries, but it raised tensions between the two superpowers – particularly in discussions regarding the city of Berlin.

As a result of these threatening developments, Kennedy ordered substantial increases in US intercontinental ballistic missile forces. He also added five new army divisions and increased the nation’s air power and military reserves. The Soviets meanwhile resumed nuclear testing and President Kennedy responded by reluctantly reactivating US tests in early 1962. The two superpowers came dangerously close to nuclear conflict in October 1962 when the United States discovered missile sites built by the Soviet Union on Cuba,



President John F. Kennedy and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev meet at the US Embassy in Vienna, Austria. June 3, 1961.

but they eventually resolved the crisis through diplomacy. In the final months of the Kennedy presidency, Cold War tensions seemed to soften as the Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty was negotiated and signed. In addition, Washington and Moscow established a direct line of communication known as the “Hotline” to help reduce the possibility of war by miscalculation.

For additional historical information, see the following topic guides (visit jfklibrary.org/JFKinHistory):

- The Cold War
- Cold War in Berlin
- Cuban Missile Crisis
- Nuclear Test Ban Treaty

Goals:

Students learn that the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights guarantees several rights, including freedom of speech and the right to petition the government for redress of grievances. By analyzing a letter from an eleven-year-old boy to President Kennedy, students discover that young people have the right to take civic action on issues of concern. They learn that US President John F. Kennedy and USSR Prime Minister Nikita Khrushchev were leaders of two countries in conflict during the Cold War and what impact that tension had on young people.

Essential Question:

How does the Bill of Rights empower young people to participate in a democracy?

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- identify the First Amendment rights
- analyze a primary source document
- use their First Amendment rights to express their views on a world issue

May 27, 1961

Dear Pres. Kennedy and
Dear Mr. Khrushchev,

I am 11 year old and I wonder what my future and the future of 11 year old Russian boys will be? If you President Kennedy and you Mr Khrushchev will try to be real friends maybe the American boys and the Russian boys will see the year of 1999. If both of you are real friends it will mean life to all boys and girls. Please try to be friends and help the whole world.

I have stamps so would you both help me out by both signing these stamps and put the date on them and mail them to me.

I hope I can get you each to sign the stamps I sent to you and Mr Khrushchev.

K for Kennedy and K for Khrushchev and K for kindness so why not be real friends,

Your friend,
George H. Boland
Route #1 - Box 92
Excelsior, Minn.

This petition for peace from an eleven-year-old boy is dated five days before the Vienna Summit, an historic meeting between President Kennedy and Soviet Premier Khrushchev. Pages 1-2.

Materials:

- 5/27/61 Letter
- RAPPS poster or handout

Prior Knowledge and Skills:

It is helpful for students to be familiar with the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Procedure:

1. Discuss the meaning of rights and brainstorm a list of rights that students have, such as the right to go to school or the right to go into a store.
2. Explain that there are rights that are protected by the US Constitution, the document that lays out how the government works. The US Constitution also includes the Bill of Rights, the first ten amendments or changes to the Constitution.
3. Explain that the First Amendment has “five rights in one” and they can remember them using the acronym RAPPS (see poster). Discuss each freedom and give examples.

continued on page 6

Petition for Peace: Exercising First Amendment Rights

continued from page 5

- Freedom of Religion: The freedom to choose what religion to practice (or to choose no religion at all.)
 - Freedom of Assembly: The freedom to peacefully assemble and address important issues.
 - Freedom of the Press: The freedom of news organizations to report about what is going on in towns, cities, states, and the world.
 - Freedom to Petition: The freedom to write to government officials with our opinions and ideas.
 - Freedom of Speech: The freedom to share our perspectives about things happening in the world.
4. Explain that in the United States, these freedoms or rights are protected for people of all ages by the Bill of Rights. They are going to explore a document to see how young people’s rights were protected in the past and how they can use their rights today.
 5. Introduce the document dated 5/27/61. Have the students work in groups to analyze and discuss the letter.
 - a. What is the date of the letter? (*May 27, 1961*)
 - b. Who is the letter to? (*President Kennedy and Soviet Premier Khrushchev*)
 - c. Who is the letter from? (*George H. Garland*)
 - d. How old is the sender? (*eleven years old*)
 - e. Where is the author of the letter from? (*Michigan*)
 - f. What is the concern of the author? What is the purpose of the letter?
 - g. What is your favorite part of the letter? Why?
 - h. What questions do you have?
 6. Address students’ questions or guide them to find information about Kennedy and Khrushchev.
 7. Prompt students to think about RAPPS and the First Amendment. What freedom(s) is the author of the letter exercising by writing this letter to Kennedy and Khrushchev? (*Freedom of Speech, Freedom to Petition the Government – this is a request of the president to be friends with Khrushchev.*)

First Amendment Freedoms

5 Rights in the 1st Amendment

R is for Religion : The freedom to choose what religion to practice (or to choose no religion at all)
A is for Assembly : The freedom to peacefully gather (assemble) and address important issues
P is for Press - The freedom of news organizations to report about what is going on in the world
P is also for Petition - The freedom to write to government officials with our opinions and ideas
S is for Speech - The freedom to share our perspectives about things happening in the world

Use “RAPPS” to remember your First Amendment freedoms. Visit jfklibrary.org/PeacePetition, for the full lesson plan.



COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION.

8. Ask students what they are concerned about in the world. Brainstorm how they can use their First Amendment freedoms to address the issue. Work individually or as a class to take civic action on one or more of the issues.

Assessment

Have students write a letter to an elected official about a concern they have about a foreign policy situation. Have them research the situation and locate the countries in question on a globe or map. What are they concerned about? Why are they concerned? Have students include any suggestions to address the issue.

Additional Resources

Write a Letter to the President

Students can watch a 15-minute video about the importance of letter writing which provides examples of letters to President Kennedy from young people, and guides students to write their own letter to the president. Includes letter writing templates you can download at jfklibrary.org/WriteALetterToThePresident.

The First Amendment: Five Rights in One!

In this 45-minute interactive virtual program, students explore the First Amendment freedoms through historical primary sources from the National Archives. It is offered as a part of “We Rule: Civics for all of US”. Visit the National Archives civic education programs for more information, including how to request a program for groups of 10 or more students at archives.gov/education/civic-education. ★

Collections Corner

This year marks the 60th anniversary of Jacqueline Kennedy's televised tour of the White House when the first lady shared with the public her project to restore the Executive Mansion. Towards the end of the main Museum galleries, visitors can explore artifacts that illustrate her role as first lady including the White House restoration project. The goal of the restoration was to reinvigorate the rich history of the White House for future generations. Visitors can watch excerpts from the televised CBS White House tour watched by eighty million viewers on February 14, 1962 that led to her being awarded an Emmy. Each of the state rooms restored by Mrs. Kennedy has its own story. After recent curatorial updates, the exhibit now also helps to tell the story of the restoration of the White House Treaty Room.

The White House Treaty Room was originally the president's cabinet room from 1865 to 1902. The Treaty Room's name stems from the documents that were often signed there. Mrs. Kennedy kept much of the furniture used in the cabinet room and added a wallpaper border copied from the wallpaper in the room where President Lincoln died, in a house across the street from Ford's Theater. She re-installed a Ulysses S. Grant-era chandelier which was returned from the US Capitol Building. Several gifts from the White House restoration project completed the room including a desk that belonged to First Lady Julia Grant, fireplace accessories used by President Zachary Taylor, and chairs with carved portrait busts of President Taylor and President Martin Van Buren.

Among the items currently on display in the White House Restoration exhibit is the dress Mrs. Kennedy wore at the opening of the restored Treaty Room on June 28, 1962. It was here in this room on October 7, 1963 that President Kennedy signed the Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, an accomplishment of which he was most proud.

Visit jfklibrary.org to confirm the latest admission hours and ticketing procedures. ★

PHOTO BY ABBIE ROWE. JOHN F. KENNEDY PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM.



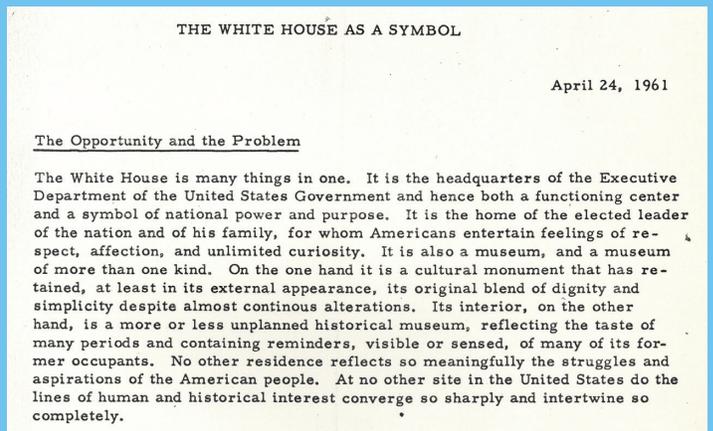
First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy opens the newly refurbished Treaty Room. Left to right: Senator Everett Dirksen (Illinois), Mrs. Kennedy, Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson, Senator Mike Mansfield (Montana), Maureen Hayes Mansfield, and Archivist of the United States Dr. Wayne C. Grover. White House, Washington, DC. June 28, 1962.



First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy wore this dress at the opening of the redecorated Treaty Room of the White House on June 28, 1962. The dress was designed by Joan "Tiger" Morse.



This Emmy Award was presented to First Lady Jacqueline in 1963 for her television tour of the White House restoration project. This statuette of a winged woman holding an atom became the symbol of the Television Academy of Arts and Science in 1948 and represents its goal of supporting and uplifting the arts and science of television.



This is an excerpt from the first of the four-page document titled "The White House as a Symbol" with details about the principles that would guide the White House restoration project.

Columbia Point, Boston,
Massachusetts 02125

Ⓜ JFK/UMass
617.514.1600
www.jfklibrary.org



American Studies Summer Institute ★ July 11–22, 2022 (weekdays) 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM

America's Silenced Histories

Join us for an intensive ten-day program of thought-provoking lectures and discussions led by distinguished scholars and practitioners. The American Studies Summer Institute, an annual program co-sponsored by the University of Massachusetts Boston American Studies Department and the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, offers educators and graduate students the opportunity to explore in depth a rich topic with contemporary resonance drawn from American social, cultural, and political history.



PHOTO BY CARL WEIS, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

A Chain Gang, ca. 1898.
www.loc.gov/item/92522563

The 2022 program, “America’s Silenced Histories,” will consider the country’s untold stories, examining the ways narratives of America’s past have been silenced, misrepresented, and underrepresented in scholarship, in archives, and in public memory. The application deadline is May 27, 2022. In the event that registration requests exceed the available capacity, preference will be given to graduate students enrolled in the UMass Boston American Studies Program and to secondary school teachers.

Visit jfklibrary.org/SummerInstitute for more information. ★

Additional support for the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum’s history and civic education programs is provided by The James M. and Cathleen D. Stone Foundation, Stephen and Carol Canter, and:

