



About the USA – Virtual Classroom Newsletter for English Teachers

In this issue:

[60th Anniversary of the Berlin Airlift](#) | [Elections 2008: Connecting Past and Present](#) |
[1968: A Year of Social and Political Turmoil/ RFK](#) | [This Month: Presidential Visit](#) | [Web Chat Station](#) |
[Parlamentarisches Patenschaftsprogramm](#)

60th Anniversary of the Berlin Airlift

On the eve of the 60th anniversary of the historic, American-led initiative to supply the besieged German capital we will take a look at the Berlin Airlift. On June 26, 1948, in response to the Soviet blockade, C-47s began landing millions of tons of food and other supplies in an operation centered at Tempelhof. At its peak, the airlift landed planes every 90 seconds in West Berlin, along the way dropping handkerchief parachutes of chocolate and raisin into the arms of children. The planes became known as Candy Bombers.

Article

Berlin Airlift. Stephan Wilkinson. Military History, Dec 2007, v24, #9: No city of 2.5 million people had ever been supplied wholly by air, until the 1948-49 Berlin Airlift. Food. Clothing. Bedding. Coal. Gasoline. Medicine. Even candy and toys. Everything that had previously been carried by freight trains, by streams of trucks on the Autobahn, by big barges on the Elbe, had to be flown into Berlin. [Download article](#)

Timeline

- ❖ **March 31, 1948:** The Soviet blockade of Berlin begins. Railroad, waterway and road access is denied to the Western powers. Although they temporarily lift the blockade, by late June the Soviets once again have cut Berlin off from the rest of the world, leaving 2.5 million people without food, medicine and coal. No city had ever before been sustained solely by airlift. Below are highlights of the logistical miracle the Allies pulled off, capturing the attention of the world.
- ❖ **April and May 1948:** The Little Lift starts. Thirty-three Allied planes haul supplies into Western Berlin for their garrisons.
- ❖ **June 25, 1948:** General Lucius Clay, military governor of the U.S. Zone, orders the launch of an airlift by British and American military and civilian aircraft. They are joined by pilots from Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.
- ❖ **June 26, 1948:** The Berlin Airlift begins. Thirty-two American C-47s take off from West Germany, carrying 80 tons of cargo.
- ❖ **May 12, 1949:** The Soviets lift the blockade, though the airlift continues through late September. Ultimately, the Allies log 276,926 flights in 321 days, carrying more than 200,000 passengers to and from Berlin and delivering more than 2 million tons of supplies. Seventy American and British lives are lost during the operation.

Teaching Material

EDSITEment: Curriculum Unit: [The Origins of the Cold War](#)

- [Sources of Discard, 1945-1946](#)
- [The Strategy of Containment, 1947-1948](#)
- [Formation of the Western Alliance, 1948-1949](#)

Truman Library: [The Berlin Airlift: Student Activity](#) - Site offers interactive materials for students studying the blockade of t of Berlin by the Soviet Union in 1948/49. Featured are issues for discussion, suggestions for further reading, and additional Internet resources.

Photo Collection: Truman Library: ["Airbridge to Berlin"](#)

"Look," [one of them] said... "we can get along without enough to eat. Some day we'll have enough. But if we lose our freedom we may never get it back."

- Airlift Pilot Gail Halvorsen -



- USAF logistics staff calculates that at least 2,000 tons of coal and 1,439 tons of food per day will be needed.
- Within four days a C-47 is landing at Tempelhof Air Base every eight minutes.
- Douglas C-54s, which can carry 10 tons of cargo, replace the C-47s. They will become the workhorses of the airlift.
- By mid-July air crews are flying 2,000 tons of cargo per day into Berlin.
- USAF pilot Gail Halvorsen gains fame as the "Candy Bomber," rigging candy bars and bubblegum to tiny handmade parachutes and dropping them from his C-47 for the children.

Links

Harry S. Truman Library: [The Berlin Airlift](#)
PBS: [Timeline - The Berlin Airlift](#)
CNN interactive: [Berlin 1948-1949](#)
Interview: [Berlin Airlift Pilot Gail Halvorsen](#)

Tempelhof Airport

Tempelhof, one of the world's first commercial airfields, has been called "the mother of all airports," by the architect Sir Norman Foster.

- [No Rescue. Yet. for Airport That Saved Berlin.](#) M. Kimmelman, New York Times, May 20, 2008: Sometimes you can read a city though a cultural landmark. Tempelhof is Berlin's open book.
- [Where History Takes Off](#) - Students learn about the decision to close Berlin's Tempelhof Airport, the site of the "Berlin Airlift" of 1948. They then use primary documents to tell the story of the events surrounding the airlift in an adaptation of reader's theater. (NYT Learning Network, May 21, 2008)



Obama, in Iowa May 20, says the Democratic nomination is "within reach." (© AP Images)

Article

In 2008 It's Ronald Reagan vs. Bobby Kennedy. William Kristol. Time, April 9, 2007: "As Republicans and Democrats focus on Nov 2008, it's clear each of them yearns to nominate a second coming of its beau ideal, the figure it has most admired in recent decades. For Republicans, that's Ronald Reagan. For Democrats, it's Robert Kennedy." Bobby Kennedy's dream--even more than John Kennedy's--is the one that has never died for liberals. Since Bobby never had the chance to govern, his image carries a purer, more transcendent hope than even that of his elder brother. And Democrats have kept trying to revive that hope: [...] Finishing Bobby's work is the most gripping and compelling task for today's Democratic Party. That is why Barack Obama could well defeat Hillary Clinton for the nomination. It would be the victory Bobby Kennedy was denied by an assassin's bullet. Obama is, like Kennedy, a charismatic freshman Senator, running before his time but--supporters think--uniquely suited to the time. Obama follows Kennedy in being a bold liberal and a skeptic of simple ideological stances, a gifted politician and an antipolitician, a man familiar with the halls of power yet a charismatic critic of them." [Download article](#)

Book

Understanding America - The Anatomy of an Exceptional Nation (2008): "What is America? Is it a hegemonic superpower, composed of ruthlessly selfish capitalists? Or is it a land of hope and glory, a shelter for the huddled masses, a beacon of freedom and enlightenment? The definition of this complex nation has been debated substantially, yet all seem to agree on one thing: it is unique. The idea of an exceptional America can be traced all the way back to Alexis de Tocqueville's nineteenth-century observations of a newly formed democracy that seemed determined to distinguish itself from the rest. Little, it seems, has changed."

Links

- **NPR: [Origins and Future of U.S. 'Exceptionalism'](#)** [Listen Now](#) · It was a notion first laid out by Alexis de Tocqueville, who may have been the last Frenchman to consider the U.S. exceptional. But it's a distinction that's still useful for America and the world, says Yale and New York University Law Professor Peter Schuck.
- Britannica: [Alexis de Tocqueville](#)

"I confess that in America I saw more than America; I sought the image of democracy itself, with its inclinations, its character, its prejudices, and its passions, in order to learn what we have to fear or hope from its progress." ~ Alexis de Tocqueville

ELECTIONS 2008

Connecting Past and Present

As the hard-fought Democratic primary race nears the finish line we will connect the past with the present. Please take a look at the evolution of the Democratic Party, Alexis de Tocqueville's analysis of *Democracy in America* and a comparison of Democratic frontrunner Barack Obama with Robert F. Kennedy.

How the Democratic Party has Changed over Time

Read how the one-time Jackson Republicans became the Democratic Republicans. By the start of the 23rd Congress (which coincided with the Second Inauguration of President Andrew Jackson on 4 March 1833), the Democratic Republicans were becoming more generally known as Democrats. Green Papers: [A Brief History of American "Major Parties"](#)

CrystalBall: [This is not your father's \(or mother's\) Democratic Party: The White Working Class, Democrats and the 2008 Election](#) - "The key voting bloc in 2008 is the white working class. According to the new conventional wisdom of American politics, the presidential candidate who can win the support of white working class voters will have the inside track on becoming the next president of the United States. ... The reason that white professional and managerial workers are now more likely to identify with the Democratic Party than white clerical and sales or manual workers is that their attitudes are more in line with the party's current message."

"Democracy in America"

Historians consider Alexis de Tocqueville's "Democracy in America" one of the most comprehensive and insightful books ever written about the United States. Please see de Tocqueville's comments on elections: "When elections occur frequently, their recurrence keeps society in a feverish excitement and gives a continual instability to public affairs. Thus, on the one hand, the state is exposed to the perils of a revolution, on the other to perpetual mutability; the former system threatens the very existence of the government, the latter prevents any steady and consistent policy. The Americans have preferred the second of these evils to the first; but they were led to this conclusion by instinct more than by reason, for a taste for variety is one of the characteristic passions of democracy. Hence their legislation is strangely mutable." Chapter 13: [Government of the Democracy in America](#)

Reexamining American Exceptionalism

During the 1830s, Alexis de Tocqueville meticulously studied America's democratic experiment and defined the contours of American exceptionalism. Nearly 200 years later, scholars James Q. Wilson and Peter Schuck have gone back to reconsider what defines the United States and its role in our rapidly changing world. Their new book, *Understanding America: The Anatomy of an Exceptional Nation*, is the ground-breaking result. The [Brookings](#) Institution hosted a [panel discussion](#) featuring Wilson and Schuck. They were joined by expert panelists, who commented on how federalism and bureaucracy structure U.S. institutions, and on how economic inequality and immigration shape U.S. society. The event was part of the "Governing Ideas" series.

American Experience

PBS: [Connect today's election issues with the past.](#)

PBS: [The Presidents](#) - Watch in-depth portraits of Truman and other 20th-century presidents in this online video showcase.

Use the PBS' [American Experience teachers' area](#) to find history, civics, and other social studies resources for your classroom.

- ❖ **RFK - [Online Poll:](#)** If RFK had lived, what do you think might have happened in politics and Vietnam?
- ❖ **RFK - ["What If?"](#)** Historians and colleagues speculate on the history that didn't happen.
- ❖ **[Shock Year 1968:](#)** Explore 12 months of turmoil and uncertainty in America.

1968: A Year of Social and Political Turmoil

The 1960s reached an apex in 1968. This single year was a flashpoint for many of the social, political, and cultural transformations for which the overall decade of the 1960s is known. The tension that had been increasingly brewing over the previous years finally came to a head, exploding across 365 days of violence, uprising, and mourning. Robert Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. were assassinated, riots broke out at the Democratic National Convention, and the media coverage of the Tet Offensive exposed the gruesome underbelly of the Vietnam War. Together, these events signaled the powerful cultural, economic, and social changes that still reverberate today. [Source](#)

Articles

- "That was 1968—the year, Frank Rich of The New York Times wrote, that 'the 1960s became The Sixties.' For all the muscular personalities in the news that year, 1968 was defined by events, beginning with the war in Vietnam." **1968: In a Year of Turmoil, a Nation Goes to the Polls.** Sam Roberts, NYT Upfront, Sep 6, 2004 [Download article](#)
- **1968 America's Tragic Year.** Monica Davey. NYT Upfront. March 31, 2008: A recount of 1968 - the assassinations of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. and Senator Robert F. Kennedy. Davey relates that these deaths had unleashed a wave of anger, sadness, and violence, and made it seem as if America was coming apart at the seams." [Download article](#)
- **The year it all fell apart.** P. Goldman, Newsweek, June 8, 1998: The season of unrest and the deaths of MLK Jr. and RFK "roiled American cities in 1968. Riots, war protestors and political turmoil significantly changed the mood of U.S. culture and politics." [Download article](#)

Teaching Material

- History Channel: [Teacher Guide - 1968](#)
- History Lesson Plan: [1968 - A Year of Social and Political Turmoil](#)

Links

- Brown University: [1968](#) - timeline, interviews, essays, bibliography
- The University of Virginia: ["The Psychedelic '60s"](#) - images, essays, etc.

RFK - Robert F. Kennedy

The tensions and transformations of 1968 set the stage for one of the most dramatic presidential races in U.S. history. For many Americans who lived through the turbulent 1960s, Robert F. Kennedy's presidential campaign remains the great "what if." On June 5, 1968, U.S. presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy was shot at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, CA by Sirhan Sirhan. Kennedy died from his injuries the next day.

Speeches

- ❖ [Robert F. Kennedy: Georgia Law Day Address](#)
- ❖ [Robert F. Kennedy: 1964 DN Convention Address](#)
- ❖ [Robert F. Kennedy: Cape Town University Address](#)
- ❖ [Robert F. Kennedy: On the Death of Martin Luther King](#)

Articles

- **RFK's last campaign.** Evan Thomas. Newsweek, June 8, 1998: The author "examines how the tension and tumult of Robert F. Kennedy's final days--and his death--changed American politics. He was shot on the night he won the California primary, at 12:15 a.m. on Jun 5, 1968 by Sirhan Sirhan. Kennedy would never be able to prove to Americans that he felt he was the one person who could still create a peaceable nation." [Download article](#)
- **RFK.** Gregory W. Bush. The Journal of American History, Dec 2005 [Download article](#)
- **What if RFK had survived?** Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Newsweek, June 8, 1998 [Download article](#)
- **A Changed Man.** After 30 Years, the Essential Enigma of RFK remains. P. Hendrickson. Washington Post, June 4, 1998 [Download article](#)

Links

- BBC: [Video images, directly before and after the shooting.](#)
- [Robert F. Kennedy Memorial](#)
- [John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library and Museum](#)



© History Channel: [1968](#)

"Some men see things as they are and say why. I dream things that never were and say why not."

~ Robert Kennedy



© Robert F. Kennedy, Jan. 28, 1964.
LBJ Library Photo by Yoichi R. Okamoto

Biography

- JFK Library & Museum: [Robert F. Kennedy](#)
- Robert F. Kennedy Memorial: [RFK Biography](#)

"The future does not belong to those who are content with today, apathetic toward common problems and their fellow man alike, timid and fearful in the face of new ideas and bold projects. Rather it will belong to those who can blend vision, reason and courage in a personal commitment to the ideals and great enterprises of American Society. Our future may lie beyond our vision, but it is not completely beyond our control. It is the shaping impulse of America that neither fate nor nature nor the irresistible tides of history, but the work of our own hands, matched to reason and principle, that will determine our destiny. There is pride in that, even arrogance, but there is also experience and truth. In any event, it is the only way we can live."*

South Africa, Day of Affirmation, 1966

[Eulogy, given by Edward Kennedy](#)
(Audio and Transcript)



Chancellor Merkel and President Bush at the G8 summit in 2007. (© AP Photo/Misha Japaridze)

Links

- U.S. Diplomatic Mission to Germany: [Official Visits 2003-2007](#)
- U.S. Diplomatic Mission to Germany: [Amerika Dienst](#)

The President will begin his trip by participating in the annual U.S.-European Union (EU) Summit in Slovenia. Following the Summit, the President and Mrs. Bush will visit Germany, Italy, the Holy See, France, and the United Kingdom.

Articles

Foreign Affairs: [How Ethanol Fuels the Food Crisis](#): Food prices are rising rapidly across the globe, threatening many of the world's poor with starvation. The authors argue that the heavily subsidized ethanol industry is exacerbating the food crisis and harming the environment.

Teaching Lesson

NYT Learning Network: [Running Out of Rice?](#) Addressing the Causes and Effects of the Global Food Crisis: Students learn about the reasons for Australia's rice shortage and its impact on the rest of the world and identify the causes and effects of another agricultural commodity's recent changes in the global marketplace. (April 23, 2008)

THIS MONTH

President George W. Bush's Visit to Germany

The United States and Germany have built a solid foundation of bilateral cooperation in a relationship that has changed significantly over five decades. The historic unification of Germany and the role the United States played in that process have served to strengthen ties between the two countries. German-American political, economic, and security relationships continue to be based on close consultation and coordination at the most senior levels. High-level visits take place frequently, and the United States and Germany cooperate actively in international forums. About the USA: [History of German-American Relations > 2001-](#)

The President and Mrs. Bush will travel to Europe from June 9 to June 16, 2008, to strengthen the trans-Atlantic partnership and to celebrate the enduring friendship between our nations based on shared democratic values. The President and Mrs. Bush's visit will also commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Marshall Plan and the Berlin Airlift, underscoring the historic and continuing U.S. role in supporting a Europe increasingly whole, free, and at peace. [White House Press Office Release](#)

Department of State: [Presidential Visits Abroad - George W. Bush](#)

In Focus: Food Crisis - Food Prices

The U.S. is the world's largest food aid donor and has acted quickly to address the rise in global food prices. The U.S. is on track to provide nearly \$5 billion to fight global hunger in 2008 and 2009. From 2001-2006 approximately 50 percent of total world food aid came from the U.S. Food security is an international issue requiring an international response. The United States is coordinating closely with the United Nations, the G8, the World Bank, and other international partners. [Promoting Food Security Worldwide: A U.S. Commitment](#)

Links

- CRS Report: [Food Price Inflation: Causes and Impacts](#). April 10, 2008
- Brookings Institution: [Rising Food Prices: a Global Crisis](#)
- PBS Newshour: Classroom Activity - [High Food Prices Cause Concern Worldwide](#)

Webchat Station

Upcoming AskAmerica Webchats

Food vs. Fuel: June 3, 15:00

With worldwide demand for energy increasing, the development of new, clean, renewable energy sources is critical to Earth's environment. In the U.S., work is under way on a variety of potential answers to the global energy challenge including biofuels. U.S. Agriculture official Thomas Dorr will discuss biofuels, the impact of ethanol manufacture on food prices and its global ramifications.

[Enter Event >>>](#)

Parlamentarisches Patenschaftsprogramm



Jetzt bewerben!

Gemeinsam begründet haben 1983 der Kongress der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika und der deutsche Bundestag dieses Programm zur Förderung des Jugendaustausches. Pro Wahlkreis wird ein Vollstipendium vergeben. Die Abwicklung erfolgt durch AFS, Experiment, GIVE e.V. Partnership und YFU. Jetzt kann man die [Bewerbungskarten für 2009/2010 downloaden](#).



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