

Name _____



Date _____

Richard Nixon - The End of a Decade

By Jane Runyon

The 1960's began with a new face on the political scene. John F. Kennedy was young and energetic. He wanted Americans to find solutions for problems they faced in their own country. JFK was a strong supporter of civil rights. He pushed scientists to win the Space Race. He declared war on poverty in America. He or his vice-president, Lyndon Johnson, was able to control the Oval Office for eight of the ten years in the 60's decade.

The decade would end with a face from the 50's returning to the White House. Kennedy and Johnson had defeated Richard Nixon and Henry Cabot Lodge for the presidency in 1960. Lyndon Johnson had taken over the presidency when Kennedy was assassinated. He decided not to run for reelection in 1968. Nixon felt that this was time to try again. Many Republicans questioned the wisdom of his decision. Nixon's election record was not too good. He had lost the 1960 election. He then ran for the governorship of California in 1962. He was defeated in that election. Many people felt that his political career was over.



Richard Milhous Nixon had never been a man to give up. He was born in Yorba Linda, California, in 1913. His family practiced the Quaker religion. Nixon made a name for himself during high school as a debater. He attended a small Quaker college in Whittier, California, and then won a scholarship to attend the Duke University Law School in North Carolina. He finished law school third in his class.

Nixon practiced law in California for a few years before joining the Navy in 1942. World War II was just getting heated up. He served in the South Pacific. He was officially discharged in 1946. He decided to run for Congress from his home state after he returned home. He won the election and took his place in Washington, D.C.

It didn't take long for Nixon to make a name for himself. He was appointed to the House Un-American Activities Committee. It was his investigation which led to the conviction of Alger Hiss for lying to Congress. Hiss was a State Department official who was sent to prison because of this hearing. Nixon used his fight against communism in America to further his career. He was elected to the Senate in 1950.

General Dwight David Eisenhower was a World War II hero. He was the Republican candidate for the presidency in 1952. He chose Richard Nixon to be his running mate. It was hoped that Eisenhower and Nixon would control the White House for two terms, and then Nixon would become president in 1960. That could give the Republicans control for another eight years. All went as planned in 1952 and 1956. In 1960, however, Kennedy, Johnson, and the Democrats had other ideas. The Democrats took the presidency by a very narrow margin.

Nixon won the Republican nomination for president at the 1968 convention. He selected the little known governor of Maryland, Spiro Agnew, as his running mate. They defeated Hubert H. Humphrey by a little more than half a million votes. For the rest of the 60's, it was Nixon's goal to bring an end to the fighting by American troops in Vietnam. It was 1973 before American troops were no longer fighting in this Asian nation. He also began to improve relations between Communist China and to cool down the Cold War with Russia.

John F. Kennedy had been committed to improving conditions at home in America. Richard Nixon committed himself to improving conditions with foreign countries. Nixon made many strides forward; however it was his years in office during the 1970's which will be remembered in history. Instead of becoming a famous chief executive, he joined the ranks of the **infamous**.

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Questions

_____ 1. Richard Nixon served as Vice-President under President Eisenhower.
A. False
B. True

_____ 2. What state did Nixon represent in Congress?
A. Massachusetts
B. Texas
C. Washington, D. C.
D. California

_____ 3. Who was Nixon's running mate in 1960?
A. Henry Cabot Lodge
B. Lyndon Johnson
C. Spiro Agnew
D. Alger Hiss

4. Why were some Republicans apprehensive about Nixon running for President in 1968?

5. How did Kennedy and Nixon differ on their idea of important issues?

_____ 6. What issue did Nixon use in his early career to advance himself?
A. The Viet Nam war
B. The Bay of Pigs
C. Communism in America
D. World War II

_____ 7. Richard Nixon spent World War II in the states.
A. False
B. True

_____ 8. Who brought an end to the Viet Nam war?
A. No one
B. Kennedy
C. Nixon
D. Johnson

