

## The Right to Vote

“Millions of Americans are denied the right to vote because of their color. This law will ensure them the right to vote. . . . The right is one which no American, true to our principles, can deny.”

—President Lyndon B. Johnson,  
on the Voting Rights Act, 1965

▲ Voter registration drive

# An Expanding Role for Government

## Objectives

- Describe how the U.S. Supreme Court took on a more activist role under Chief Justice Earl Warren.
- Discover the domestic goals of President Kennedy.
- Find out how President Johnson’s Great Society increased the social role of the federal government.

## Reading Skill

### Support Inferences With Text

**Evidence** As you know, inferences must be supported by evidence stated in the text. One common focus for inferences is as a tool to learn about people in history. Text evidence can help you infer answers to questions, for example, by describing the person or giving examples of his or her actions. Ask: What were they like?

## Key Terms and People

Earl Warren      welfare  
Lyndon Johnson

**Why It Matters** As protest expanded and the call for civil rights and equality grew louder, government responded. After the *Brown* decision on desegregating the schools, new Supreme Court decisions had a powerful impact on American life. Two Presidents of the 1960s supported reforms that transformed the nature of American society.

**Section Focus Question: What was the “Great Society”?**

## The Warren Court

In 1953, President Eisenhower appointed former California governor Earl Warren as chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Eisenhower expected the former California governor to keep the Court on its conservative course of respecting past decisions or precedents. Instead, a year later, the Supreme Court broke all precedent with its groundbreaking decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*.

**Extending Individual Rights** In the 1960s, the Warren Court continued to make decisions with far-reaching effects. In the 1966 case of *Miranda v. Arizona*, the Court overturned the guilty verdict of Ernesto Miranda. Miranda had been convicted on the basis of a confession obtained without access to a lawyer. The Court ruled that this violated the Fifth Amendment. As a result of the *Miranda* ruling, the police must now advise arrested persons of their right to remain silent and to have legal counsel. The Court made other rulings to protect the rights of the accused. Many critics argue that such rulings make it more difficult to combat crime.

## Key Decisions of the Warren Court

Case	Decision Based On	Impact
<i>Mapp v. Ohio</i> (1961)	<b>Fourth Amendment:</b> Protects "against unreasonable searches and seizures."	Evidence from an illegal search cannot be used in a criminal trial.
<i>Gideon v. Wainwright</i> (1963)	<b>Sixth Amendment:</b> Guarantees accused person "the assistance of counsel for his defense."	If a person accused of a crime cannot afford an attorney, the state must provide one.
<i>Miranda v. Arizona</i> (1966)	<b>Fifth Amendment:</b> Defendant cannot "be compelled . . . to be a witness against himself."	Before being questioned by police, suspects must be informed of their right to keep silent, as well as to have an attorney.
<i>Tinker v. Des Moines School District</i> (1969)	<b>First Amendment:</b> Protects "freedom of speech."	A school cannot interfere with a student's right to free speech unless that speech causes major disruption of the school day.

### Reading Charts

#### Skills Activity

Under Chief Justice Earl Warren, the Supreme Court made a number of decisions that continue to have an impact today.


(a) **Interpret Charts** Which cases shown on the chart involved the rights of accused criminals?

(b) **Evaluate Information** Which of the decisions shown here do you think had the greatest impact on American life? Explain.

Another case, *Tinker v. Des Moines School District* (1969), expanded the concept of freedom of speech guaranteed in the First Amendment. The Court ruled that school administrators had violated the free speech of students by suspending several of them for wearing black arm bands to protest the war in Vietnam.

**Judicial Activism** Perhaps more important than any individual decision was Warren's approach to the law. Unlike most earlier chief justices, Warren believed that the Constitution must be interpreted flexibly—in light of what the Framers wrote but also in light of what best serves the public interest today. The Warren Court began to strike down laws that the justices regarded as unfair, regardless of past decisions or the exact wording of the Constitution.

This concept of "judicial activism" has stirred controversy. Then and later, critics argue that following their own ideas of fairness gives judges too much power. Only what was written in the Constitution could be written into law, they insist.

 **Checkpoint** How did the Supreme Court decision in *Miranda v. Arizona* affect law enforcement?

## Kennedy's Brief Presidency

**Election of 1960** In one of the closest presidential elections in history, John F. Kennedy won by about 100,000 of 70 million votes cast. At 43, he became the youngest person ever elected President.

**Mixed Success** In his inaugural address, the young President sounded an idealistic, optimistic note:

“Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage—and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this Nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world.”

—John F. Kennedy, First Inaugural Address

Kennedy had been shocked to learn that one fifth of Americans lived below the poverty line. He called on Congress to take action to end poverty, fight disease, and ensure justice for all Americans. Although Kennedy did win some support for his antipoverty measures, Congress rejected most of his domestic proposals. His most lasting accomplishment was the space program. He set a bold goal: to place a man on the moon by the end of the decade.

Kennedy also became convinced of the need for extensive civil rights legislation. But he did not live to achieve this goal.

**Assassination** On November 22, 1963, Kennedy was in Dallas, Texas, on a political visit. Riding in an open limousine, the President and his wife, Jacqueline, greeted the cheering crowds. Suddenly, shots rang out. Kennedy slumped over. He died shortly afterward.

Within hours, Dallas police arrested Lee Harvey Oswald for the assassination. Two days later, Oswald himself was shot to death while being transferred from one jail to another. Millions of horrified Americans saw the shooting live on television.

### Vocabulary Builder

**domestic** (doh MEHS tihk) *adj.*  
relating to matters within one's own country, rather than to foreign affairs

### The Kennedy Assassination

Moments after the picture at the left was taken, President Kennedy was shot to death in Dallas. The sign in this New York City store window (right) reflects the nation's shock and grief. **Critical Thinking: Make Inferences**  
*Why do you think the store owner referred to the assassination as “a national disgrace”?*



## The Great Society

“Our society will not be great until every young mind is set free to scan the farthest reaches of thought and imagination. We are still far from that goal. Today, 8 million adult Americans . . . have not finished five years of school. . . . We must give every child a place to sit and a teacher to learn from. Poverty must not be a bar to learning, and learning must offer an escape from poverty.”

—Lyndon Johnson, “The Great Society,” 1964



### Reading Primary Sources

#### Skills Activity

In May 1964, President Lyndon Johnson outlined his vision of what he called the Great Society. In the excerpt here, Johnson discusses his goals for education.

- (a) **Interpret Primary Sources** What link does Johnson make between education and poverty?
- (b) **Apply Information** How did Head Start relate to Johnson’s goals?

The murder of the young, energetic President stunned the nation. A few months later, a commission headed by Earl Warren concluded that Oswald had acted alone. Still, some people continue to question the conclusions of the Warren Commission.

 **Checkpoint** What was Kennedy’s most lasting success?

## Johnson’s Great Society

On the day Kennedy was assassinated, Vice President Lyndon Johnson was sworn in as President. The following year, he was elected President in his own right by a landslide.

**Johnson’s Background** Lyndon Johnson grew up in a poor family in rural Texas. As a young man, he taught at a school for Mexican Americans. Johnson grew deeply attached to his pupils there and became convinced that something needed to be done to help the nation’s poor and oppressed.

An ardent supporter of President Franklin Roosevelt, Johnson was elected to Congress in 1937 on a pro-New Deal platform. He won election to the Senate 11 years later, rising to the powerful position of majority leader. He became Vice President in 1961.

**A Flood of Legislation** As President, Johnson set out to make his mark with an ambitious program of economic and social reforms. Using his political skills, Johnson persuaded Congress to enact more new laws than at any time since the New Deal. One journalist commented, “Johnson had scarcely settled in office before bills were coming out of Congress like candy bars from a slot machine.”



### Support Inferences With Text Evidence

Give two details from the text to support this inference: Lyndon Johnson was a persuasive politician.

At first, he worked to push through legislation that Kennedy had begun, including a major civil rights law. (See Section 3.) Johnson then turned his attention to his own program, which he called the Great Society. Its goal was to expand opportunity and provide a decent standard of living for all Americans.

Much of this legislation was part of what Johnson called his War on Poverty. The Economic Opportunity Act attacked the causes of poverty, such as illiteracy, unemployment, and inadequate public services. Head Start provided preschool education for needy children. Other Great Society programs provided food stamps and welfare to needy families. Welfare is a system in which government agencies make cash payments to the poor. Johnson also created a Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to oversee the building of middle-income and low-income housing.

Perhaps the most important Great Society legislation was Medicare. This act helped citizens 65 years of age or older to pay their medical bills. A companion act, Medicaid, provided money to assist poor people of all ages who were not covered by Medicare.

Like the New Deal, the Great Society greatly expanded the role of the federal government. Critics said providing for people's needs on such a scale was not the proper **function** of the federal government. They also charged that, though the Great Society programs cost billions of dollars, many were badly run and did not work.

**✓Checkpoint** Describe two important laws passed during the administration of Lyndon Johnson.

★ **Looking Back and Ahead** In this section, you saw how Johnson supported social reforms. In the next section, you will see how legislation in the Johnson years advanced civil rights.



Johnson displays a newly signed antipoverty law.

**Vocabulary Builder**  
**function** (FUHNK shuhn) *n.*  
 purpose; proper use

## Section 2 | Check Your Progress

### Progress Monitoring Online

**For:** Self-test with instant help  
**Visit:** PHSchool.com  
**Web Code:** mva-9262

### Comprehension and Critical Thinking

1. **(a) Identify** What were the domestic goals of Kennedy?  
**(b) Evaluate Information** Was Kennedy's program successful or unsuccessful in the long run? Explain.
2. **(a) Describe** Choose and describe two Great Society programs.  
**(b) Draw Conclusions** Do you think the federal government should support expensive social programs? Why or why not?

### Reading Skill

3. **Support Inferences With Details** Read the text following the subheading "Johnson's Background." Give two details from the text to support this inference: Lyndon Johnson's sympathy for the poor grew from his own experience.

### Key Terms

4. Write two definitions of the word **welfare**—one a formal definition for a teacher, the other an informal definition for a younger child.

### Writing

5. Imagine that you are one of the following individuals. Write a few sentences explaining your thoughts and feelings.
  - Police officer reacting to the *Miranda* ruling
  - Resident of Dallas just after Kennedy was shot
  - Poverty-stricken American hearing about Johnson's Great Society program