

Robert F. Kennedy and the 1968 Indiana Primary

The Credibility Gap: Trust, Vietnam, and Elections

Content Focus

- One of the strongest ideas from the discussion notes was the “credibility gap” during Vietnam. This gives students a way to explore how democracies function when citizens stop trusting government explanations or media narratives.

Historical Connection

- By 1968, many Americans believed government officials were misleading the public about progress in Vietnam. Public distrust became connected to elections, protests, demonstrations, and anti-war activism.

Question

- What happens to democracy when citizens stop believing official explanations?

Student Objectives

Students examine multiple primary sources and complete a three-column analysis:

1. What does the source claim?
2. Why might citizens doubt this?
3. How could that distrust affect voting, protest, or public behavior?

Possible Extension: Students compare Vietnam-era distrust with a modern example of public distrust in institutions or media.

Primary Sources for Lesson
LBJ and Vietnam digital collections https://guides.loc.gov/lyndon-b-johnson/digital-collections Herblock 1968 exhibit https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/herblock-gallery/herblock-looks-at-1968.html Vietnam War primary source set https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/united-states-history-primary-source-timeline/vietnam-war/ Vietnam War photographs https://www.loc.gov/photos/?fa=subject:vietnam+war



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