

The Big Ideas

School-to-Home Connection

The 1960s introduced tremendous changes into the culture of the United States, but change brings tumult as well as excitement, anxiety as well as optimism. As well as being a time of great hope, the 1960s had moments of terror and darkness.

President Kennedy's inaugural address in 1960 set the country on a path to a safer, more dynamic, and just future. Two years later, the world came to the brink of nuclear destruction during the Bay of Pigs crisis. The Soviet Union had placed nuclear missiles in Cuba, a mere fifty miles from the United States. For days, Americans thought the end of the world was possible. With President Kennedy's assassination in 1963, followed not even four years later by the assassinations of his brother, Robert, and Martin Luther King, Jr., all hope of a new era of peace and joy seemed but a passing dream. While people are again wearing tie dyed clothes, what remains of the idealism of the 1960s?

ACTIVITY

Directions You have rich resources with which to explore the legacy of the 1960s. Older family members may have been eyewitnesses to those years. Ask them about their memories and perspectives, using the questions below as a guide.

1. What positive changes resulted from the 1960s?

2. What was the most valuable aspect of those years?

3. What do you miss from those years?

4. Did you think then that protesting social injustice was valuable? How have your thoughts on this changed?

5. What values do you see continuing today from that era?
