Promises Into Programs

Tracing continuity and change from Kennedy to Johnson

SS24.US2.12 "Compare and contrast major domestic initiatives of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, and explain how Kennedy's assassination led to both change and continuity in these initiatives..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two Kennedy goals that Johnson continued, circle two Great Society programs that expanded federal support, and number two sentences that explain how the assassination affected the domestic agenda.

From the New Frontier to the Great Society

1 In 1961, President John F. Kennedy called his domestic agenda the New Frontier. He supported a higher minimum wage and signed a law raising it for covered workers. His administration also backed aid for economically distressed regions. Kennedy proposed health insurance for older Americans through Social Security, but Congress did not pass it during his presidency. He urged federal support for education and sent Congress a major civil rights bill in 1963. These proposals aimed to widen opportunity, yet resistance in Congress limited what Kennedy could achieve. His agenda mixed enacted measures with plans still awaiting action.

2 Kennedy's assassination in November 1963 put Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson in the White House. Johnson urged Congress to honor Kennedy by passing the civil rights bill, which became the Civil Rights Act of 1964. He also pursued Kennedy's health insurance goal, but moved beyond it with a larger agenda called the Great Society. Johnson used his experience working with Congress, and his 1964 election victory strengthened his political position. The assassination did not create every new program or make passage certain. It changed who led the effort and gave Johnson a powerful reason to press for unfinished proposals.

3 Johnson's War on Poverty tried to reduce poverty through programs such as Job Corps, which offered job training to young people. Head Start provided early learning and related services to children from low-income families. In 1965, Congress created Medicare, health insurance primarily for people age 65 and older, and Medicaid, health coverage for certain people with low incomes. These measures expanded the social safety net, the public support available when people face barriers to health, education, or earnings. Compared with Kennedy's proposals, Johnson's programs put more federal resources into services and reached additional groups, although poverty and unequal access did not disappear.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Johnson's Medicare policy continue a Kennedy goal, and how did Medicaid extend federal health support beyond that goal?

2. Compare a domestic measure Kennedy achieved with one Johnson achieved. What does the difference show about the scope of their agendas?

3. How did Kennedy's assassination create both a change in leadership and a reason for Johnson to continue an unfinished initiative?

4. How did Job Corps and Head Start address poverty in different ways, and how did both expand the social safety net?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 90 to 110 word museum label comparing one Kennedy goal with a Johnson action. Explain how the assassination shaped both continuity and change, then show how two named Great Society programs expanded the safety net in different ways.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 11 · SS24.US2.12

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two Kennedy goals that Johnson continued, circle two Great Society programs that expanded federal support, and number two sentences that explain how the assassination affected the domestic agenda. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Johnson's Medicare policy continue a Kennedy goal, and how did Medicaid extend federal health support beyond that goal?	**Medicare fulfilled Kennedy's proposed health insurance for older Americans. Medicaid also provided health coverage to certain people with low incomes.**
2	Compare a domestic measure Kennedy achieved with one Johnson achieved. What does the difference show about the scope of their agendas?	**Kennedy signed a minimum wage increase for covered workers. Johnson secured Medicare, which added federal health insurance for older Americans and shows how the Great Society expanded public support.**
3	How did Kennedy's assassination create both a change in leadership and a reason for Johnson to continue an unfinished initiative?	**The assassination made Johnson president. He urged Congress to honor Kennedy by passing Kennedy's civil rights bill, which became law in 1964.**
4	How did Job Corps and Head Start address poverty in different ways, and how did both expand the social safety net?	**Job Corps offered job training to young people, while Head Start offered early learning and related services to children from low-income families. Both added public services intended to reduce barriers to opportunity.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Kennedy proposed health insurance for older Americans, but Congress did not pass it during his presidency. His assassination brought Johnson to office, where Johnson pursued that unfinished goal. Congress created Medicare in 1965. Johnson also urged lawmakers to honor Kennedy by passing his civil rights bill, which became law in 1964. Yet Johnson's Great Society moved beyond those unfinished plans. Medicaid extended health coverage to certain people with low incomes, while Head Start offered early learning and related services to children from low-income families. Together, these programs expanded the safety net through health coverage and education, not just insurance for older adults.

Accept other passage-supported comparisons, including Kennedy's proposed education support and Johnson's Head Start. Look for a distinction between continuing Kennedy's goals and expanding federal services under Johnson.