Unit 11, Lesson 13
Victories and Violence
Where we’re headed...

- As Martin Luther King's funeral was taking place, riots broke out in cities across the nation. More people were killed.

- But not everyone who was angry and hurt turned to violence. Some found creative ways to bring about change.
Objectives for this lesson:

- Describe the reactions to Dr. King’s assassination.
- Summarize major cultural, political, and economic achievements of blacks in the 1960s.
- Describe Malcolm X’s experience with the power of words.
- Explain the description of RFK’s “Born the son of wealth, he died a champion of outcasts of the world,” in terms of his background and goals.
Here is a timeline of some of the most important events that occurred in the United States in 1968.

**January 31** North Vietnam launches the Tet Offensive.

**March 31** President Lyndon Johnson announces that he will not seek reelection.

**April 4** Martin Luther King, Jr., is assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee; riots erupt in cities across the country.

**June 4 and 5** Robert Kennedy wins the California Democratic presidential primary and addresses supporters in Los Angeles; minutes later he is shot and dies the next day.

**September** Members of NOW and other women’s rights groups protest the Miss America Pageant in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

**October 18** U.S. athletes and medalists at the Olympic Games in Mexico City raise their fists in a black-power salute during the playing of “The Star-Spangled Banner”

**November 5** Richard Nixon wins the presidency; college campuses nationwide observe Turn in Your Draft Card Day.

**December 21** Apollo 8 begins the first U.S. mission to orbit the moon.
Martin Luther King, Jr., was carried to his grave in a casket of polished African mahogany on a plain farm cart pulled by two mules. The cart and the mules reminded people that King’s ancestors had farmed America’s land with courage and dignity. The mahogany symbolized his African heritage. Weeping at the graveside were leaders from around the world, who had come to pay tribute to the man who had earned a Nobel Peace Prize with his message of love and brotherhood and peace.

Martin Luther King, Jr.’s final journey to Atlanta, in a mule-drawn farm cart, was broadcast by satellite to millions all over the world.
But, at the very time King was being lowered into the ground, 130 cities around the nation were burning. Rioters—looting and shooting—were killing people and destroying homes and businesses; 65,000 troops had to be called in to put down the riots. Almost all the victims were black.

When the fires cooled, 39 people were dead. The rioters said they were responding to the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr. In the days following Dr. King’s assassination, cities across the country erupted in riots. Decades later, black neighborhoods in many cities had still not recovered economically.
How did Americans respond to King’s death? (Pages 242-243)

1. ____________________________________________

2. ____________________________________________

3. ____________________________________________
But was rioting the right thing to do in memory of a man who had dedicated his life to nonviolence? Hadn’t they heard his message?

Most black people had. Every poll showed that the majority of African Americans approved of the ideas of Martin Luther King, Jr., and disapproved of violence. But a black minority—a strong, active minority—was listening to other voices. Mostly those voices were young, male, urban, and angry. They were Black Power leaders; they wanted to change their world, and it certainly needed changing.

Some of them seemed to want power so they could get even for the terrible oppression of slavery and segregation. Some, disgusted by all oppression, wanted to separate themselves from whites. But some others wanted to bring respect and power to a black community that could then act on equal terms with whites.
That first idea didn’t go far. Most black people had no intention of being oppressors. A few did want to separate themselves from the rest of America’s citizens, which, after the sacrifices of the civil rights time, was difficult for many to understand. But that idea of power through respect—now that was appealing. Soon blacks—and whites, too—were studying African American history. They were also learning about Africa and its history. They were wearing African-inspired clothes. They were telling stories of slavery from the slaves’ point of view. They were taking pride in an inheritance full of stories of achievement. They were voting and electing blacks as sheriffs and mayors and congress people.
Black writers were bringing new sensitivities to readers. They were not just writing for African Americans; they were writing for all people. In 1940, Richard Wright published *Native Son*; five years later, his *Black Boy* was a main selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club. Ralph Ellison—whose ancestry was black, white, and Native American—wrote *Invisible Man* (1952), a novel about the ways in which society can ignore the ordinary person and make him feel invisible and powerless. In a stunning first novel titled *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953), James Baldwin wrote about the religious awakening of a boy living in Harlem.
Black women were among the best writers of the time. Zora Neale Hurston (who was part of the pre-World War II artistic movement known as the Harlem Renaissance) was rediscovered and celebrated. Hurston’s great novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*—which is both funny and profound—inspired many other writers. Toni Morrison was one of them. She won the Nobel Prize for Literature—there is no higher honor. Alice Walker, Maya Angelou, and Paule Marshall, too, found power in words and ideas.
How did blacks gain cultural, political, and economic power in the years following Dr. King’s death? (Page 244-245)

1. 

2. 

3. 
What did Malcolm X do in prison that helped him turn his life around and become a powerful speaker? (Page 245)

- Before he was killed, Malcolm X found power as a speechmaker. Malcolm had quit school, become a thief and a drug peddler, and landed in jail. He was frustrated; he wanted to turn his life around. But he couldn’t express himself because he didn’t have control of the English language. He decided to do something about that. He got a dictionary from the prison school and carefully copied every word onto a tablet. “With every succeeding page,” he recalled, “I also learned of people and places and events from history.” As his vocabulary grew, so did his sense of power and confidence.
Blacks and their political power (page 245)

- 1960 – fewer than 100 black elected officials in the entire United States.

- 1993 – more than 8,000, including 40 members of Congress.

- Between 1950 and 1990, the number of African Americans in white-collar jobs went from 10 to 40 percent.
Michael Jordan became a popular superstar as he brought unprecedented attention to the game of basketball.
Although most people still seemed to think in racial terms, that concern was hiding the real problem—poverty in this prosperous land. Martin Luther King, Jr., had seen that. Bobby Kennedy understood that America would never truly be a land of the free if some people were trapped in poverty and inequality. “Today, in America,” he said, “we are two worlds.” They were the worlds of rich and poor. He said he hoped to build a bridge between those worlds.

Kennedy decided he would run for president; there were many who believed he would win. And so he set out, giving speeches across the country. Young people flocked to his side. Wherever he went, however, along with the cheers there were also hate pamphlets.

In California, two months after Dr. King’s funeral, Kennedy won the Democratic primaries in California and South Dakota. On June 5, 1968, in front of a cheering crowd, he thanked some of those who had helped him: his staff, his friends, his wife, and César Chávez. Then Robert Kennedy, heading for a press conference, took a shortcut through the hotel kitchen. A shot rang out—and the man who might have been president was no more. It was the end of an era.
Thousands of people lined the railroad tracks as a train carried the slain Robert F. Kennedy from his funeral in New York to his burial at Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C.

Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, these ripples will build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.

—Robert Kennedy, speaking in South Africa
Describing Robert F. Kennedy, a historian wrote, “Born the son of wealth, he died a champion of outcasts of the world.” Based on what you read about Robert Kennedy, what do you think the historian meant?
Abraham, Martin, and John (and Bobby)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yZfRyWPZAII
Review what you’ve learned about some black writers by completing the online Flash Cards activity. In addition to using today’s reading, you may want to consult *Grolier’s Encyclopedia* online to find additional information.

- Malcolm X
- Ralph Ellison
- Zora Neale Hurston
- Richard Wright
- Toni Morrison

**B. Use What You Know**
Step 1: Click a picture to select it for your Flash Card.

- Malcom X
- Ralph Ellison
- Zora Neale Hurston
- Richard Wright
- Toni Morrison

Quick Links

- TotalView School
- Study Island
- Scantron Performance
- Scantron Achievement
- Teacher Support on thebigthinK12
- Teacher Training
- Contact Teacher Effectiveness
- Family Directory
- Grolier's Encyclopedia
- Class Connect Sessions
Homework

- Review pages 242-246 and answer questions 1-4 in your Student Guide pages.

- B. Use What You Know
  - Complete Unit 11, Lesson 13 Assessment.

- Prepare for tomorrow’s review over Unit 11.
  - Textbook pages 178-246