

CHAPTER 22 Section 4 (pages 748–753)

1968: A Tumultuous Year

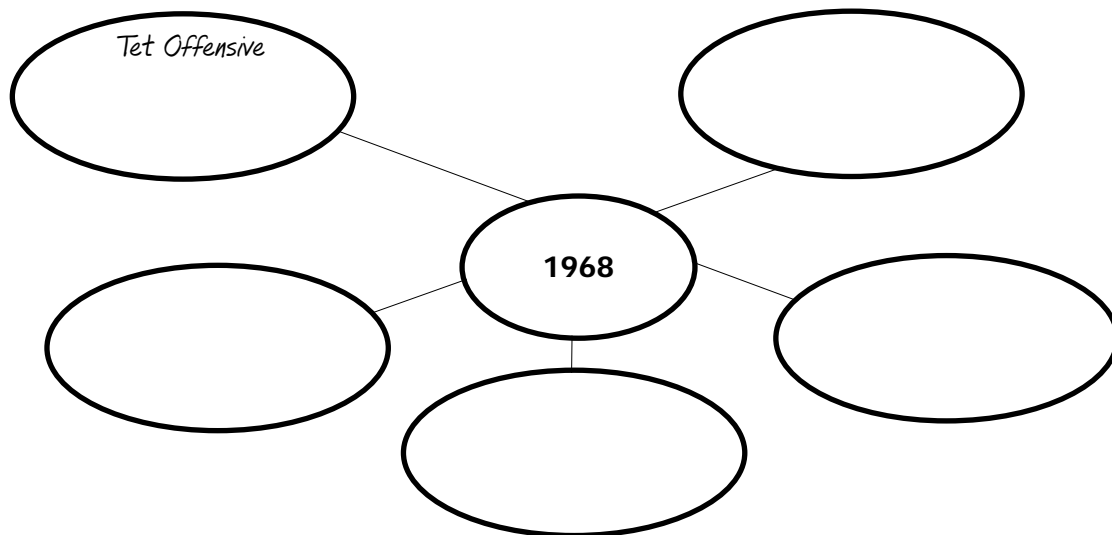
BEFORE YOU READ

In the last section, you read how the Vietnam War divided America.

In this section, you will read about the shocking events that made 1968 one of the most explosive years of the decade.

AS YOU READ

Use this diagram to take notes on the shocking events of 1968.



TERMS AND NAMES

Tet offensive Series of Vietcong attacks during the 1968 Tet holiday

Clark Clifford A Lyndon Johnson adviser who became his secretary of defense

Robert Kennedy A Democratic candidate for president in 1968

Eugene McCarthy A Democratic presidential candidate who ran on antiwar platform

Hubert Humphrey The 1968 Democratic nominee for president

George Wallace A third-party candidate in the 1968 presidential election

The Tet Offensive Turns the War

(pages 748–750)

***How** did the Tet offensive affect America?*

January 30 was the Vietnamese equivalent of New Year's Eve. It was the beginning of festivities known as Tet. During the Tet holiday in 1968, a week-long *truce* was called. Many peasants crowded into South Vietnam's cities to celebrate the holiday.

However, many of the peasants turned out to be Vietcong rebels. The rebels launched a massive attack on nearly 100 towns and cities in South

Vietnam. They also attacked 12 U.S. air bases. The attacks were known as the **Tet offensive**. The offensive lasted for about a month. Finally, U.S. and South Vietnamese forces regained control of the cities.

General Westmoreland declared that the Tet offensive was a major defeat for the Vietcong. From a military standpoint, he was right. The Vietcong lost about 32,000 soldiers during the attacks. The United States and South Vietnam lost only 3,000 soldiers.

However, the Tet offensive shattered America's confidence in the war. The enemy now seemed

everywhere. Many Americans began to think that the war was unwinnable. The Tet offensive also shocked many in the White House. **Clark Clifford** was the president's new secretary of defense. After Tet, Clifford decided that America could not win the war.

The Tet offensive also hurt President Johnson's popularity. By the end of February 1968, nearly 60 percent of the public disapproved of Johnson's handling of the war. In addition, nearly half the country said it had been a mistake to send troops to Vietnam.

1. How did the Tet offensive affect Johnson's popularity?

Days of Loss and Rage (pages 750–751)

Which events shocked the nation?

Even before the Tet offensive, an antiwar group in the Democratic Party had taken steps to *unseat* Johnson. The group looked for someone to challenge Johnson in the 1968 primary election. They asked **Robert Kennedy**, a senator from New York. Kennedy declined. However, Minnesota senator **Eugene McCarthy** agreed. He would run against Johnson on a *platform* to end the Vietnam War.

McCarthy surprised many people by nearly beating Johnson in the New Hampshire Democratic primary. Suddenly, Johnson appeared politically weak. As a result, Robert Kennedy declared himself a presidential candidate. The Democratic Party was now badly divided.

President Johnson decided to address the nation on television. He announced that he would seek peace in Vietnam. Then he declared that he would not seek reelection as president. The country was shocked.

In the days and months ahead, several more incidents stunned the nation. On April 4, a gunman killed civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. Two months later, an assassin gunned down and killed Robert Kennedy.

Meanwhile, antiwar protests continued to rock college campuses. During the first six months of 1968, almost 40,000 students on more than 100 campuses held demonstrations.

2. Name two events that shocked Americans in 1968.

A Turbulent Race for President

(pages 751–753)

What happened in Chicago?

In August 1968, the Democrats met in Chicago for their presidential convention. There, they would choose a presidential candidate. In reality, Democratic leaders had already decided on the candidate: Vice-President **Hubert Humphrey**. This angered many antiwar activists. They favored McCarthy.

About 10,000 antiwar protesters came to Chicago. Some protesters wanted to pressure the Democrats to create an antiwar platform. Others wanted to voice their opposition to Humphrey. Still others wanted to create violence to *discredit* the Democratic Party.

Violence eventually erupted at a downtown park away from the convention hall. There, police moved in on thousands of demonstrators. They sprayed the protesters with Mace. They also beat them with nightsticks. Many protesters fled. Others fought back.

The violence in Chicago highlighted the Democrats' division. The Republicans were more unified. They nominated former Vice-President Richard Nixon for president.

Nixon campaigned on a platform of law and order. He also assured the American people that he would end the Vietnam War. Nixon's campaign was helped by the entry of a third-party candidate, **George Wallace**. Wallace was a former governor of Alabama. He took many democratic votes away from Humphrey. In November, Nixon won the election. It was now up to him to resolve the Vietnam crisis.

3. Name two reasons that protesters came to Chicago for the Democratic convention.
