

Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon Compared

You will have noticed that, on the webpages, I have presented the domestic policies of Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon identically, each under the same mnemonic: **ESCAPE**.

The **danger** of this is that you may muddle up who did what. The **advantage**, however, is that it will be easier to compare them if you are asked who was the better President, who did more for Civil Rights etc.

To help you learn who-did-what, and make comparison easier, please find following a table of notes on all three's domestic programmes which allows direct comparison of their policies/ achievements.

	KENNEDY	JOHNSON	NIXON
Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1961 economic stimulus: 420k construction jobs, \$400m to distressed areas. • Reduced interest rates, cut taxes on businesses.. • Negotiated reduced tariffs with EEC. • Blocked steel price rise ∴ it would harm growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisor Walter Heller introduced 'New Economics': focus on full employment, public/private investment, low interest rates, but tight budgets. • Revenue Act (1964): \$11b tax cut (top rate ↓ from 90% to 70%, lowest rate ↓ from 18% to 14%). • Vietnam War costs → Revenue & Expenditure Control Act (1968): taxes ↑, govt spending cut. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggled with Stagflation • Went off Gold Standard (1971) → dollar 'floated' → value ↓ → inflation worsened. • Imposed 90-day freeze on wages, prices, rents (1971) to combat inflation. • State & Local Fiscal Assistance Act redirected federal funds to stimulate local economies.
Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USSR's Yuri Gagarin 1st in space (1961); US lagging. • 1962: Kennedy vowed to reach the moon by 1970. • NASA's Apollo funding increased. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported NASA's Apollo programme through setbacks (eg Apollo 1 fire, 1967) → NASA 'spin-offs'. • Apollo 8 (1968): orbited the moon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved Space Shuttle program (1972). • Scaled back space spending but continued Apollo missions (incl. Apollo 11 (1969): moon landing).
Civil Rights etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Govt contractors required to ensure fair treatment (race, creed, color). • Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity (1961): worked with large employers for equality (weak on Equal Pay Act enforcement). • Banned segregation on interstate transport. • 11 June 1963: televised speech on Civil Rights → proposals incl. desegregation, voting rights (→ Civil Rights Act 1964). • For women: Equal Pay Act (1963); Commission on Status of Women (1961). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Rights Act (1964): banned discrimination (race, sex, religion), segregation, job discrimination. • Voting Rights Act (1965): ended voting discrimination → millions of Southern Black voters. • EO 11246 (1965): banned racial job discrimination for federal contractors. • Fair Housing Act (1968): banned housing discrimination. • Note: Civil Rights Acts ≠ end Black inequality → riots. • EO 11375 (1967): banned sexist hiring in govt jobs, but women's rights largely ignored NOW had to campaign for inclusion in EO 11246 (1967). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lukewarm on Civil Rights: urged Congress not to extend to Voting Rights & Fair Housing Enforcement. • Philadelphia Plan (1969): 1st federal affirmative action policy (contractors hiring minorities). • Yet, Indian Education Act (1972), Indian Financing Act (1974); ended Termination programme (1953). • Equal Educational Opportunity Act (1974): Latino pupils taught in their language. • Opposed Women's Rights: vetoed Comprehensive Child Development Act (1971) for 'family values.' • Yet, required federal agencies to hire more women (1971); women joined FBI, Secret Services. • Title IX (1972): banned gender discrimination in federally funded education. • Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) passed Congress but ≠ ratified by enough states.

Alleviate Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair Labor Standards Act (1961): minimum wage ↑ to \$1.15/hr. • 1961 stimulus: 20% ↑ in Social Security, aid for unemployed workers' children. • Social Security Amendments (1961): retirement at 62, more aid to widows, benefits extended to 5m more people. • Pilot Food Stamp programme (1961); free school meals for 750k more children. • Area Redevelopment Act (1961): job creation (limited success). • Housing Act (1961): home-building, slum clearance, rural housing. • Senior Citizens Housing Act (1962): funded housing for 62+. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Opportunity Act (1964): OEO programmes incl. Job Corps (16–21), VISTA, Head Start, Legal Aid, Adult Education, health centres. • Food Stamp Act (1964): expanded food aid; home-delivered meals for elderly (1965). • Min wage ↑ to \$1.40/hr. • Housing and Urban Development Act created (1965): urban housing/poverty focus; Model Cities Program cleared slums. • Poverty ↓: overall from 23% → 12%; Black poverty from 56% → 30%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opposed Great Society, called it a “monstrous outrage”; abolished Model Cities Program, Office of Economic Opportunity. • Supplemental Security Income Act (1972): better welfare for elderly, blind, disabled; ↑ housing funding. • Federal spending on welfare ↑ from \$182 billion in 1969 to \$215 billion in 1973 = welfare spending > defence spending for 1st time since WWII. • Family Assistance Plan (proposed guaranteed minimum income) failed in Congress.
Public Health etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medicare proposed but rejected. • Social Security Amendments (1961): improved medical services for disabled children, prenatal care for low-income families. • Clean Air Act (1963): set emission standards, govt control of pollution. • Funding for water pollution. • New parks/monuments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Security Amendments (1965): Medicare (elderly), Medicaid (low-income families). • Wilderness Act (1964): established protected areas; air pollution/emission controls (1965). • Consumer protection: product labels, cigarette warnings, meat inspection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed National Health Insurance Partnership to replace Medicare/Medicaid; failed in Congress. • Created Environmental Protection Agency (1970); Endangered Species Act (1973). • Attempted (failed) to veto Clean Water Act (1972). • Created Occupational Safety and Health Administration (1971) for workplace safety.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Education funding; school drop-out/delinquency prevention. • Pilot youth vocational training. • Health Professionals Educational Assistance Act (1963): grants for doctor/dentist/chemist training. • Peace Corps (1961): 5k volunteers abroad by 1963. • Most New Frontier programmes included educational elements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary/Secondary Education Act (1965): funding for low-income schools. • Higher Education Act (1965): expanded college aid. • Bilingual Education Act (1968): support for non-English speakers. • Peace Corps initiative (1967): ‘Volunteers to America’ worked in US poor areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ↑ federal funding for disadvantaged schools (Title I). • Proposed School Voucher Plan (failed in Congress). • Anti-bussing amendments (1974) appeased Southern politicians. • % Black students in integrated Southern schools ↑ from 5% (1968) → >90% (1974) (largely due to <i>Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg</i> case).