

# OUR WHITE HOUSE

LOOKING IN, LOOKING OUT

## EDUCATION RESOURCE GUIDE

### PART VI. THE PEOPLE'S HOUSE

This education resource guide is designed to augment the content included in Part VI of the NCBLA's anthology *Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out*. Included on these pages are engaging activities, discussion questions, and recommendations for print and online resources regarding most of the content in Part VI of *Our White House*. We invite you to print and share these materials with young people at home and in the classroom. Education resource guides for the other parts of *Our White House* are available on [OurWhiteHouse.org](http://OurWhiteHouse.org). All education guides are formatted to be printed double sided.

**The Kennedy White House** (pages 152-154)

by **Barbara Harrison**

#### Activity Suggestions and Discussion Questions

- **ACTIVITY: The Legend of Camelot**

John F. Kennedy's presidency was and is affectionately known as "Camelot." The term refers to the site chosen for King Arthur's legendary castle, court, and Round Table, also referring to a time of peace, good-will, "shining" successes, and the virtues of knighthood. First, as a class or student group, discover several Arthurian legends in your library (such as *King Arthur and His Knights of the Round Table* by Roger Lacelyn Green or *King Arthur: Tales From the Round Table* by Andrew Lang). Read these stories aloud to students, specifically highlighting and discussing stories associated with the advent of Camelot.

After reading the legends, collaborate with your school or public librarian. Divide the class into two groups. Ask the first group to research JFK's presidency. Determine why the period became known as "Camelot." Present the argument, supported by facts, to the second group. The second group will then research how these "Camelot-like" circumstances could be applied to today's presidency, presenting their contentions to the first group. As a culminating activity, both groups will collaborate and write a letter to the current president explaining how our country might enter a type of Second Camelot, despite First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy's contention: "There will be great presidents again, but there will never be another Camelot."

- **QUESTIONS:** Pose the following questions to young people:

- Why is it important for a society to honor all age groups? Childhood? Youth? Middle Age? The Aged?
- Why have the Arthurian legends remained a mainstay in both literary and popular society circles for thousands of years? What need do they fulfill for humanity?
- What is your favorite Arthurian legend and how would you relate it to the life and presidency of John F. Kennedy? Our current president?

## Read and Learn MORE

Relive the “magic” of John F. Kennedy’s presidency by reading the following articles and viewing the illustrations in *Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out*:

- Check out Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher’s endearing illustration of the Kennedy children on pages 150-151.
- Re-live the moment when Kennedy first thought of America reaching the moon in Joe Cepeda’s illustration on page 155.
- Read how the legend of Camelot began (the Kennedy Camelot, that is) in the article “[Jackie Started the Legend of JFK ‘Camelot.’](#)”
- Follow a [timeline](#) of JFK’s presidency on the JFK Library’s website.
- Discover the [view from President Kennedy’s desk](#) on the JFK Library’s website.

**The White House, the Moon, and a Coal Miner’s Son** (pages 154-156)  
by Homer Hickam, illustrated by Joe Cepeda

### Activity Suggestions and Discussion Questions

- **ACTIVITY: *Rocket Boys and October Sky***  
Did you know Homer Hickam wrote a whole book about his quest as a budding scientist within the “coalfields of West Virginia?” It is entitled *Rocket Boys*, also picked up by Hollywood and turned into a movie called *October Sky*. Encourage students to read about Homer Hickam’s inspiration for writing the book on his website [HomerHickam.com](#).

If time allows, have students read the book and watch the movie as an ELA activity. You can find helpful information for teachers at these links:

- [Rocket Boys Discussion Questions](#)
- [Random House Teacher’s Guide](#)
- [Teach with Movies Lesson Plan for October Sky](#)

Then, have students research the space race during the 60s and 70s. You might want to refer them to the following links: “[The Space Race](#)” on [DK findout!](#) and “[The Space Race](#)” on [History.com](#).

After delving into both materials, discuss as a class how both coal mining and the space race were, in the long run, “temporary” projects that became outdated. Ask students the following:

- How could the intelligent people involved with both projects have circumvented these steps in our history to think more about renewable energy, as well as reliable and fast on-ground transportation (such as high-speed trains), that do not impact the environment so drastically?
- How can humanity as a whole develop a broader perspective rather than a more immediate view?

- **ACTIVITY: Unto the Seventh Generation**

Introduce students to the Seventh Generation Great Law of the Iroquois:

*Seventh Generation takes its name from the Great Law of the Haudenosaunee, the founding document of the Iroquois Confederacy, the oldest living participatory democracy on Earth. Along with the Magna Carta, the Great Law was one of the key inspirations for our country's own constitution. It was created in the late 16th century when five warring Iroquois tribes—the Cayugas, Mohawks, Onondagas, Oneidas, and Senecas—lay down their weapons and joined together in a new nation in what is now New York State. As their governing document, the Great Law instructs that “in our every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generation.”*

Use the insights gained from the previous readings and discussions and work with students to create projects for a thematic science fair titled **Unto the Seventh Generation!**

- **QUESTIONS:** Pose the following questions to young people:

- Why were the coal miners excited about “mining that old moon good?” What are the good and bad aspects of cultures with a strong work ethic?
- Why does “excitement” play such a part in political campaigns when, really, we need politicians who can endure day-to-day struggles and work patiently to resolve issues? Bringing this discussion to a personal level, how do we balance the excitement needed to continue our studies with the work necessary to complete them?
- How might today’s coal miners be provided the necessary “excitement” required to train for 21<sup>st</sup> century energy jobs?

### Read and Learn MORE

- Homer’s orange suit is front-and-center in Joe Cepeda’s accompanying illustration, found on page 155 of *Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out*.
- Gain additional insight into the nature of presidential campaigns in “[Persuading the People](#)” on OurWhiteHouse.org.
- Read about today’s adventures in space on these two websites: [International Space Station](#) and [Mars Rover](#).
- Learn about the plight of today’s coal miners in the article “[America’s coal heartland is in economic freefall—but only the most desperate are fleeing](#).”

## **A White House Physician** (pages 157-158)

by James Young, M.D.

### **Activity Suggestions and Discussion Questions**

- **ACTIVITY: Great Lives in Medicine**

Collaborate with your school or public library to conduct a research project titled **Great Lives in Medicine**.

Your students should each select an accomplished medical professional to research. The students' research should consider the following:

- Personal odds overcome by the preeminent physician
- Sociological odds overcome by the medical giant
- Resulting contributions to medical science

Each student will research a different physician and thereafter report to the class via any method: Power Point or Prezi slide presentation, video production, song and/or music, a written article, art, pantomime, theatre, etc.

Lists of famous physicians can be found at: "[Famous Doctors](#)" on Biography.com, "[Famous People: Physicians](#)" on TheFamousPeople.com, and "[Famous People Who Made Medical Discoveries](#)" on Biography.com.

After presentations are complete, students will collectively prepare a listing of:

- Means of overcoming obstacles and/or odds
- Ways in which societies contribute to the success of its individuals
- Ways in which societies circumvent individual achievement

- **ACTIVITY: Brainstorm Medical Breakthroughs**

As a final critical thinking activity, students will brainstorm ways both individuals and society can continue to assist individuals on the frontier of medical breakthroughs and/or the resolution of contagious viral or bacterial diseases, such as [Zika](#) or [Ebola](#). As a culminating activity, students will create a visual Wiki relating their findings and opinions using [Wikispaces.com](#).

- **QUESTIONS:** Pose the following questions to young people:

- Read about the current initiatives of the Office of the Surgeon General on the [National Prevention Strategy](#) website. Then, discuss how your community can help meet the four strategic directions and implement the seven health-based priorities.
- Based on what you have learned about the Office of the Surgeon General, what would you recommend as the qualifications, abilities, and skills needed for the position?

### **Read and Learn MORE**

- Food is the best medicine! Learn about recipes served at the White House in "[A Taste of the Past: White House Kitchens, Recipes and Menus](#)" on OurWhiteHouse.org.
- "Let's Move," says Michelle Obama. Read about presidential physical activity in "[Stress Relief: Exercise and Relaxation at the White House](#)" on OurWhiteHouse.org.
- Laughter is also medicine, so do not forget to take a look at Chris Van Dusen's hilarious illustration of the White House "pets" on pages 96-97 of *Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out*.

## **A White Mouse in the White House** (pages 159-160)

by Anita Silvey

### **Activity Suggestions and Discussion Questions**

- **ACTIVITY: John Bemelmans Marciano**

Did you know Ludwig Bemelmans' grandson, John Bemelmans Marciano, took off where his grandfather left off, writing and illustrating a book entitled *Madeline in the White House*? Have students find and read the book and compare and contrast it to the first Madeline book written by Ludwig. Ask students:

- How are the books similar? Different?
- How are the architectural icons of America and France different? The same?
- Has Madeline's character changed or is she the same?

Use the International Reading Association's [online Venn Diagram tool](#) to have students graphically organize their comparisons.

- **ACTIVITY: White House Library**

Did you know Jackie Kennedy updated The White House Library as first lady? Read the story and have students complete the associated activities found at the end of the article "[The White House Library: A Twice Told Tale](#)" on OurWhiteHouse.org.

- **QUESTIONS:** Pose the following questions to young people:

- How have Ludwig and John's lives in America differed? Students can watch a [video interview](#) with John Bemelmans Marciano and [read about Ludwig Bemelmans](#) first.
- Which Madeline book do you like the most and why? Which illustration?
- Would you have rather John Bemelmans Marciano written about a white mouse in the White House or the character "Candle" as in *Madeline in the White House*?

### **Read and Learn MORE**

- Discover more about the role of the first lady in "[From White House Hostess to American Powerhouse](#)" on OurWhiteHouse.org
- Learn more about Jacqueline Lee Bouvier Kennedy in the "[First Lady Fact Files](#)" on OurWhiteHouse.org.
- Read a complete biography of [First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy](#) on the First Ladies Library Site.
- Allow First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy's [official White House portrait](#) to inspire your students' artistic endeavors at this site compiled by C-SPAN.

**Escape Map** (pages 161-165)  
by Mark London Williams

**Activity Suggestions and Discussion Questions**

- **ACTIVITY: Cuban Missile Crisis**

The Cuban Missile Crisis was an intense and worrisome time in our country’s history. Ask students to consider not only how President Kennedy reacted to the news of missiles in Cuba, but also how the American people responded. Use the excellent [Learning Network Guide](#) based on primary sources and developed by the *New York Times* to help students “remember” the Crisis and place it in a modern-day context. Ask students to consider “whether the crisis stands as an example of cool leadership under pressure or a cascade of error and miscalculation.” Have students examine news reporting from the time to understand what people believed, thereafter comparing what was believed then to what is known now. Ask students to create their own comparison chart template (categories might be: images, video, newspaper coverage, explanations, timelines, movies, oral histories, intelligence) using [templates from Edraw](#).

You can have students choose from many other projects provided by the [Learning Network Guide](#), but most importantly consider the “Handbook: How to Prevent World War III” and “Flash Points: The Next Crisis?” assignments.

- **QUESTIONS:** Pose the following questions to young people:

- Why do we not consider “survival” situations and resolutions today as much as in days past? Has terrorism become the “new norm?” Should we fight against acceptance of such violence in our world? How should we go about doing so?
- What does the author mean when he states the Soviet Union fell due to a “lack of blue jeans and rock and roll and not enough bread on people’s tables?”
- What are some of the qualities/character traits we should expect of our presidents, who have their fingertips on the nuclear code?

**Read and Learn MORE**

- Understand John Fitzgerald Kennedy even more by visiting the “Presidential Fact File” of [President Kennedy](#) on OurWhiteHouse.org.
- Discover the attributes of a quality president in “[Help Wanted: President of the United States](#)” on OurWhiteHouse.org.

**The Presidential Pet** (pages 166-169)  
written and illustrated by Steven Kellogg

**Activity Suggestions and Discussion Questions**

• **ACTIVITY: Hero Dogs**

Ask students if they knew that dogs have served their country, too. In fact, the City of San Antonio hosts the [Military Working Dog Team National Memorial](#).

Visit the library (school or public) and find books that reveal “hero dogs” within our nation’s history, books such as *Cracker* by Cynthia Kadohata, *Sergeant Rex* by Mike Dowling, or *Max: Best Friend, Hero, Marine* by Jennifer li Shotz. Also, find books about other animals that have served our country, such as the bear in Bibi Dumon Tak’s *Soldier Bear* or *War Horse* by Michael Marpurgo. Read some of these books aloud and assign others to groups of students who will write a report and gather images of the animal hero and the soldier companions.

Next, ask students to draw or paint a mural such as was completed by Steven Kellogg for this article (167-169), using instead the animals and soldiers researched. Collaborate with the art teacher for this project.

Finally, as a culminating activity, invite veterans within the community who now live with service dogs as a result of their military service to the library. Ask these veterans to tell stories of life with a service dog (and any other dogs or animals they served with during their time in the military). As a special honor for the veterans, unveil the completed mural during their visit and dedicate it to your community’s heroes.

• **QUESTIONS:** Pose the following questions to young people:

- Which pet did you choose as “best in show?” Which pet won the most votes for “best in show?”
- Did you know Steven Kellogg has another dog in his artistic repertoire? That’s right—Pinkerton! Listen to Mr. Kellogg’s National Book Festival speech on the [Library of Congress](#) website. Then, discuss what you REALLY want to be when you grow up! What other children’s authors and illustrators would you recommend give presentations at the National Book Festival? Why?
- What story do you want to tell about your pet?

**Read and Learn MORE**

- Laugh out loud at the Teddy Roosevelt family’s love of pets in Albert Marrin’s “Storming Down the Stairs” article found on pages 98-99 of the print edition of *Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out*.
- A simply puuurrfect poem about President William Clinton’s favorite pet may be found on pages 198-99 of *Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out*. Written by Jack Prelutsky and illustrated by Jim LaMarche, the title is simply “I Live in the White House.”
- Check out Maria Salvadore’s [Education Resource Guide for Steven Kellogg](#), sponsored by the National Children’s Book Literacy Alliance, which features activities aligned with the Common Core English Language Standards.

**My Room** (pages 170-172)  
by **Lynda Johnson Robb**, illustrated by **Jane Dyer**

Activities, readings, and discussion questions that directly correlate with this article can be found at the end of the article titled "[Knock, Knock! Whoooo's There: Spooky Stories From Children of the White House](#)" on OurWhiteHouse.org.

Also, be sure to view Jane Dyer's illustration of Lynda Johnson Robb looking out the window of her White House room on page 171 of the print version of *Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out*.

**White House Souvenir** (pages 173-176)

short story by Polly Horvath, illustrated by Sophie Blackall

**Activity Suggestions and Discussion Questions**

• **ACTIVITY: White House China**

Pieces of official White House china patterns, chosen by presidents and first ladies since George Washington, are especially targeted by “treasure” or memorabilia hunters. Ask students to view all of the china patterns on the [WhiteHouseMuseum.org website](http://WhiteHouseMuseum.org), then hold a vote as to the most: Beautiful, Artistic, Patriotic, and/or Best Suited (for the President/First Lady who chose it).

After the vote, as a class or group, brainstorm a new china pattern your class would suggest for the White House. Narrow down to five choices via debates that support each student’s position. Then, poll the class or group as to the top five patterns. Hold a voting day to select the most popular suggestion.

Collaborate with the art or crafts teacher/instructor to “put the pattern to paper.” Ask the technology teacher to assist in creating the suggestion using a computer graphics program. Ask each student to contribute to the recreation of these patterns by seeking out local craftspeople for imitation purposes – i.e. art, woodworking, knitting, handwork, etc. Invite these craftspeople into the school for a day in which students can learn about the crafts and see the craft person’s rendition of the chosen pattern.

• **ACTIVITY: “Ask Not What Your Country Can Do for You...”**

John F. Kennedy said, “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.” In a similar vein, ask students to think about what they can do for their White House. Have students view a [virtual tour](#) of the White House and then make any suggestions for how they might brighten or improve the White House (a craft, paper weight, ornament, sculpture). As a group or class, complete the project. Before or during the December holiday season (Christmas, Ramadan, Kwanzaa, Omisoka, Hanukkah, and Yule), have students write a letter to the president and ship their gifts with their explanation as to how the gift will improve the White House and its environs.

• **QUESTIONS: Pose the following questions to young people:**

- If you were to leave a treasure in the White House, what would it be and why?
- When is it appropriate or not to take souvenirs or memorabilia as a collector’s item?
- How does hair leave a “personal” impression? Listen to the [podcast](#) “Brains On: The How’s and Why’s of Hair” to begin the discussion.

**Read and Learn MORE**

- Check out Marsha’s dress in the illustration by Sophie Blackall on page 175 of the print version of *Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out*. Ask students if they see any of the objects rifled at the White House through the years.
- The [“Field Trip Guides” page on OurWhiteHouse.org](#) includes the following helpful field trip guides to enable you to plan a successful visit to the White House and to other historic presidential sites:
  - “Visiting the White House with Children and Teens”
  - “Preparing Kids for a Family Historical Field Trip”
  - “A Teacher’s Guide to Preparing a School Historical Field Trip”
  - “Presidential Birthplaces, Houses, and Libraries”

## Robert F. Kennedy's Remarks on the Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.

(pages 177-178)

### Activity Suggestions and Discussion Questions

- **ACTIVITY: Speak Truth to Power**

Robert F. Kennedy's legacy is "Speak Truth to Power," or speak out for human, natural rights in all aspects of life. "Speaking" these days is much more than the lovely oration for which RFK was famous and can include many artistic forms as well. Accordingly, first, have students learn about "[What Are Human Rights?](#)" on the website dedicated to RFK's memory, The Robert F. Kennedy Center. Also, read the illustrated version of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#). Have students view many of the "[Defenders](#)" of Human Rights on the website as well, learning their stories and gathering a sense of the type of human rights advocacy to which your class/group gravitates. Visit the library to conduct research on the development of these specific rights and the additional heroes who have worked tirelessly to ensure these rights.

- **ACTIVITY: Participate in a Contest**

As a creative activity, participate in the RFK Center's annual contests, either the [Speak Up, Sing Out](#) or [Speak Truth to Power Video Contest](#). After the group selects which contest to enter, collaborate with your music or technology teachers/mentors respectively to create either a song or a video which promotes human rights (per contest rules). This activity will span a number of months and will culminate with an entry into the contests noted. Good Luck, and make sure the final product is totally student created!

- **QUESTIONS:** Pose the following questions to young people:

- View the [2015 Speak Truth to Power Video Contest Grand Prize Winner](#) and discuss how Americans, who are for the most part able to live as they choose, may overcome indifference on a daily basis.
- How will you chart your progress toward overcoming indifference?
- What human suffering is occurring today to which we are turning a blind eye? How will we keep this suffering in the public eye and advocate for the cessation of such suffering?
- How does human suffering even continue in a world which is globally connected and instantaneous?

### Read and Learn MORE

- Ponder Chris Raschka's associated illustration on page 179 of the print version of *Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out*. How might the illustration be considered "irony," "satire," or a means of "speaking truth to power."
- Human Rights are not possible without voting rights! Have students read and discuss the following articles on OurWhiteHouse.org:
  - "[Who Gets to Vote?](#)"
  - "[Getting the Votes and Getting Elected: The Popular Vote vs. The Electoral Vote](#)"
  - "[From Peas to Paper to iPads: The Evolution of the Ballot in America](#)"
- Visit "[Get Out the Vote Websites](#)" for more online resources.
- Check out "[Books About Voting Rights](#)" for print resources.

## President Richard M. Nixon's Final Remarks to the White House Staff

(pages 180-181)

### Activity Suggestions and Discussion Questions

- **ACTIVITY: Nixon and Foreign Relations**

At the heart of Richard Nixon's legacy is his establishment of relations with China. Ask students to read about his historic trip in the articles: "[America's Story: President Nixon Goes to China](#)" and "[Nixon's China Game.](#)"

With your librarian (school or public), as a class research the advancement of Chinese industry, technology, commerce, and culture since 1979. Create a timeline as to this development similar to the one found on [the PBS site](#). Place these timelines side-by-side (blow them up as posters) and take several days to discuss how Nixon's emphasis on China did or did not help China enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century as a leading global power.

- **QUESTIONS:** Pose the following questions to young people:

- Why did Nixon emphasize religion and/or our country's tolerance of all religions in his closing remarks to staff members?
- Nixon displayed an erratic fear of Communism during his term in office. (Read more in "[Make the Economy Scream: Secret Documents Show Nixon, Kissinger role Backing 1973 Chile Coup.](#)") How do we as American citizens ensure our presidents do not make foreign policy decisions based in fear, but rather reason?
- Did Nixon make a difference in foreign relations and free markets around the world?
- At [First Lady Pat Nixon's funeral](#), we realize the humanity of Nixon despite his controversial presidency and his "coldness on the outside." How does this change your view of Nixon or any of our presidents?

### Read and Learn MORE

- View Tony Auth's "telling" accompanying illustration on page 180 of the print version of *Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out*
- Read President Nixon's resignation letter on page 181 of the print version of *Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out*.
- Learn more about Richard Nixon in the "[Presidential Fact Files](#)" on OurWhiteHouse.org.
- First Lady Pat Nixon opened the doors of the White House to the deaf and blind. Nikki Grimes' web exclusive poem, "[Staking Claim](#)," brings First Lady Nixon's advocacy for this population to life.

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