



**Big Era Nine  
Paradoxes of Global Acceleration  
1945 to the Present**



**Closeup Teaching Unit 9.7.1  
1968: A Year of Global Protest**

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## Why this unit?

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There have been few times in history when there has been a clear demarcation when changes occurred in the same year in many countries throughout the world: 1968 was one of those rare times. A new generation of women and men made it clear that the values that they had inherited from their parents were in question, in large part revolving around an anti-war movement. This unit examines these core changes in context, as well as the unusual cross-class alliances that emerged so that students can assess their significance, both at the time and afterwards.

Questions that were unresolved led to new problems, and upheavals in different countries led those in power to come up with ways to deal with these changes. Point of view, an important element of historical understanding, is therefore another focus of this unit.

The new values of this generation were closely tied to the music they absorbed. A music analysis opens the first lesson, as students analyze not only the lyrics, but also the beat and the mood of this music.

During the course of 1968 different kinds of reformers and/or revolutionaries emerged—peaceful community-based reformers, national and/or international reformers, countercultural activists uninterested in politics per se, and single cause revolutionaries who were willing to use violence to achieve their goals. A jigsaw activity allows students not only to assess these perspectives, but also that of the men in power who were opposed in varying degrees to changes.

Given that 1968 has been interpreted in different ways by historians, students debate the merits and demerits of two conflicting interpretations. In a concluding activity students investigate the myriad legacies on these [revolutions](#), both from an immediate and from a long-term perspective.

## Unit objectives

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*Upon completing this unit, students will be able to:*

1. Identify the problems that led a new generation of educated women and men to reject their parents' values in many countries of the world.
2. Assess the different and similar solutions that these reformers or revolutionaries presented to solve the abovementioned problems.
3. Analyze their similar and different goals.
4. Assess the ability of cross-class and cross-national alliances.
5. Identify the reasons why in the immediacy of 1968 most of these goals were not met and why historians assess the impact differently.
6. Assess the long-term impact of these movements in the long run.

## Time and materials

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- This unit should take four class periods.
- Materials required: Laptop and InFocus machine with speakers.

## Author

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## This unit’s Big Question

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Why was 1968 a year of protest movements worldwide, and what significant political, social, or cultural consequences, if any, did those movements have in the following years?

## The historical context

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During the early 1960s economic prosperity in western European countries and the United States led to economic advancements in the world that had not been experienced before, as well as a growth in the number of women and men having opportunities to go to college. While there was a push in these countries for people to accept and welcome all that capitalist societies had to offer, there was increasingly a questioning of these values among the newer generation.

At the same time in eastern European countries, their connection to the Soviet Union had led both to a strengthening of a new kind of economic and political system—communism—and to a questioning of that very system from socialist perspectives. Intellectuals accepted socialist values, but questioned whether the current governments were capable of meeting people’s needs in their divided world.

Meanwhile in the former colonies—the so-called “Third World”—there was an explosion of revolutionary and reform activities where women and men were creating their own countries and values in parts of Africa, the Americas, and Asia. In some of these cases resistance to this inevitable change by powerful governments led to war: Cuba, Vietnam, and South Africa are some examples. Opposition to the war in Vietnam became the uniting initial force for many of these student activists.

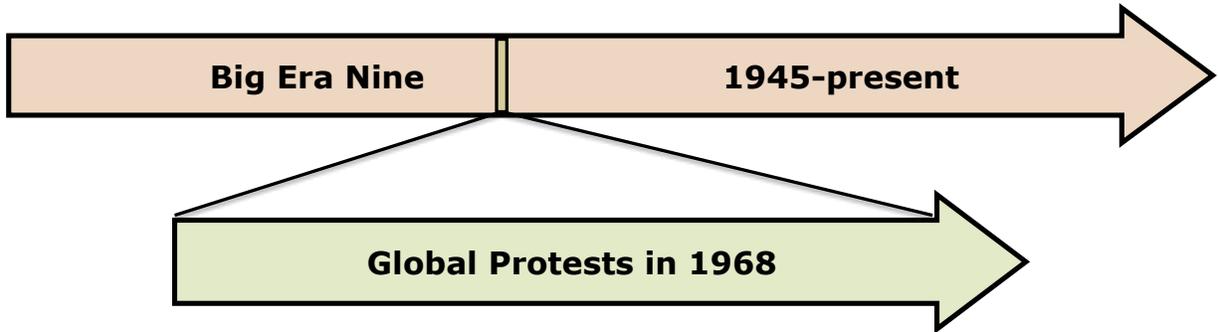
Critics of all three developments—advances in capitalism, apparent stability of communism, and continuation of colonial dominance—began to coalesce, as opportunities for communication increased through music, song, poetry, and writing. The 1960s saw an unusual redefinition of citizenship, as women and men in their twenties began to raise countless questions about their place in society and about society generally. This political or social activism took different

forms; the most common were: community-based reformers, national or international reformers, countercultural activists, and political activists with a single cause, willing to use violence to achieve their goals. Some of these activists also joined forces with workers, who concurred with the need for economic changes, but disagreed with these middle-class activists on almost everything else.

During the course of 1968, people in power in most countries began to react to the changes initiated in part by their very own children and found ways to disrupt or suppress them the movements. By the fall of 1968 the political protests had lost some of their edge. Nonetheless, countercultural aspects continued, as did the growth of a variety of movement-based constructs: civil rights, women's rights, environmentalism, and opposition to the Vietnam War, among others. In essence a new generation was born: men and women who came of age questioning the values of their parents and bringing to all aspects of their lives varying degrees of global awareness that would affect all aspects of society.

## This unit in the Big Era Timeline

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## *Lesson 1*

### *The Role of Music in Changing Youth Culture*

#### **Preparation**

1. Locate the lyrics for the six songs below on Lyricsmode ([www.lyricsmode.com](http://www.lyricsmode.com)) or other web sites or in printed sources. You may wish to print copies of the lyrics for student use in the classroom. [Note: The lyrics to these songs are not included in this unit as handouts owing to copyright and “conditions of use” issues.]

You may also locate video or audio performances of the songs on YouTube or other Internet sites. If you have the classroom resources, show the performances to students.

*Blowin' in the Wind* by Bob Dylan, 1962

*The Times They Are a-Changin'* by Bob Dylan, 1963

*Master of War* by Bob Dylan, 1963

*All You Need is Love* by The Beatles, 1967

*I Got Life* from Hair, 1968

*The Ballad of Spring Hill* by Peter, Paul, and Mary, c. 1958 (composed by Peggy Seeger and Ewan MacColl)

2. Make copies of Student Handouts 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 for your students. Student Handout 1.3 is a quiz that you may use as an assessment.

#### **Introduction**

Ask students about the role of music in their lives and whether they listen to both the lyrics and the instrumentals or if one takes precedence in their view. Explain that both parts played a large role in the music of the 1960s. Explain that as a result of this lesson, students will understand the role of music in the protest movements.

1. Distribute Student Handout 1.1 (Discussion Questions on Songs). Ask students to listen to each song carefully. Introduce the idea that while music may unite people in this regard in

terms of the creation of a counterculture, it also leads others to interpret the music differently, noting that activists with differing political and social ideas emerged in the 1960s.

2. Distribute Student Handout 1.2 (Port Huron Statement Excerpt). Explain to students that the Port Huron Statement is a “manifesto.” This means that it is a published declaration of a set of beliefs, goals, motives, and perspectives of an individual or group, often a political party. In this case, the Port Huron Statement is the manifesto of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), one of the leading protest organizations in the United States in the 1960s. See Student Handout 1.2 for a brief introduction to the statement excerpt.

## Activities

1. Play the songs and discuss them in class, using the questions in Student Handout 1.1, as well as other questions of your own. Use only some of the six songs if you are short on time. Break the songs into verses, lines, and words and analyze them for particular meanings. Discuss in class the questions presented in Student Handout 1.1. Read the excerpt from the Port Huron Statement together in class and discuss its message in terms of the problems it poses and the solutions it offers for the betterment of society. Ask students if they find any commonalities between the song lyrics and the Port Huron statement in terms of political or social attitudes or values.
2. Have students write reflections on the lyrics of the songs and on the Port Huron Statement in a short essay or journal entry. Ask students to focus their essay on this question: Do you sympathize or not with the ways in which the songs and the Port Huron Statement propose solving political and social problems?

## Assessment

1. The essay or journal entry.
2. Quiz using the questions in Student Handout 1.3. Teachers may evaluate or grade the quizzes as they choose.

**Lesson 1*****Student Handout 1.1—Discussion Questions on Songs***

1. What sort of emotion or sentiment, if any, does each of the six (or fewer) songs make you feel?
2. What do you think is the main message of each of the songs?
3. How would you describe the rhythm and tune of each of the songs?
4. How are the songs similar to or different from one another in their main message?
5. What sort of action do these six songs encourage listeners to take?



**Bob Dylan performing at St. Lawrence University in New York State  
November 1963**

*Source:* Bob Dylan in November 1963, Wikimedia Commons,  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bob\\_Dylan\\_in\\_November\\_1963.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bob_Dylan_in_November_1963.jpg),  
St. Lawrence College Yearbook, 1964

## Lesson 1

### *Student Handout 1.2—Port Huron Statement Excerpt*

*At the start of the 1960s, far more young Americans than ever before were enrolled in colleges and universities. Campuses became hotbeds for discussion of the political and social problems of the day, especially civil rights. Both civil rights activists and men and women who had strong liberal or leftist views on a range of issues attended a convention of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) at Port Huron, Michigan, in June 1962. The convention published a 25,000 word manifesto centering on the idea that the United States must achieve a greater degree of “participatory democracy.” Tom Hayden, a student at the University of Michigan, was the principal author of the Port Huron Statement. The selection below is an excerpt from the statement.*

We are people of this generation, bred in at least modest comfort, housed now in universities, looking uncomfortably to the world we inherit.

When we were kids the United States was the wealthiest and strongest country in the world: the only one with the atom bomb, the least scarred by modern war, an initiator of the United Nations that we thought would distribute Western influence throughout the world. Freedom and equality for each individual, government of, by, and for the people—these American values we found good, principles by which we could live as men. Many of us began maturing in complacency.

As we grew, however, our comfort was penetrated by events too troubling to dismiss. First, the permeating and victimizing fact of human degradation, symbolized by the Southern struggle against racial bigotry, compelled most of us from silence to activism. Second, the enclosing fact of the Cold War, symbolized by the presence of the Bomb, brought awareness that we ourselves, and our friends, and millions of abstract “others” we knew more directly because of our common peril, might die at any time. We might deliberately ignore, or avoid, or fail to feel all other human problems, but not these two, for these were too immediate and crushing in their impact, too challenging in the demand that we as individuals take the responsibility for encounter and resolution ...

We can no longer rely on competition of the many to insure that business enterprise is responsive to social needs. The many have become the few. Nor can we trust the corporate bureaucracy to be socially responsible or to develop a “corporate conscience” that is democratic. The community of interest of corporations, the anarchic actions of industrial leaders, should become structurally responsible to the people—and truly to the people rather than to an ill-defined and questionable “national interest.” Labor and government as presently constituted are not sufficient to “regulate” corporations. A new re-ordering, a new calling of responsibility is necessary: more than changing “work rules” we must consider changes in the rules of society by challenging the unchallenged politics of American corporations. Before the government can really begin to

control business in a “public interest,” the public must gain more substantial control of government: this demands a movement for political as well as economic realignments. ...

As students, for a democratic society, we are committed to stimulating this kind of social movement, this kind of vision and program in campus and community across the country. If we appear to seek the unattainable, it has been said, then let it be known that we do so to avoid the unimaginable.

*Source:* Port Huron Statement of the Students for a Democratic Society, 1962, Office of Tom Hayden, <http://www.h-net.org/~hst306/documents/huron.html>.



***Lesson 2***  
***Readings on New York, Paris, Prague, and Mexico***  
***Jigsaw Activity***

### **Introduction**

This lesson focuses on four case studies—**New York, Paris, Prague, and Mexico City**—so that students will determine similar and different goals and methods of reformers or revolutionaries, as well as of national governments. Students will also look for transnational connections.

### **Preparation**

1. Copy and distribute Student Handout 2.1: Making Sense of 1968: Student Voices: Protests and Reactions in 1968.
2. Copy Student Handout 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5, making enough copies of each handout for about one quarter of the students in the class.
3. Organize chairs and tables to form four “home groups” and four “expert” groups.

### **Jigsaw Activity**

1. Jigsaw: Divide class into four “home groups.” Assign each student in the home groups a documents representing one of the four cities, numbering those cities 1, 2, 3, or 4. In other words, a quarter of the students in a single home group will work with city document 1, a quarter with city document 2, and so on. If you have a large class, you may want to have multiple groups within each of the four home groups, so that groups are no larger than four people.

Group 1: Student Handout 2.2, Columbia University

Group 2: Student Handout 2.3, Paris

Group 3: Student Handout 2.4, Prague

Group 4: Student Handout 2.5, Mexico City

2. Explain that in each home group, students will read carefully, preferably twice, their assigned city documents. They will then take some notes on their documents and answer briefly the four questions on Student Handout 2.1 (Making Sense of 1968: Student Voices: Protests and Reactions in 1968: Part One). This first process should take at least 20 minutes.
3. Organize four temporary “expert groups.” Each of these groups should include all students from the home group that share the same city document. Ask the expert groups to discuss what they have learned about their assigned city by studying their document. The groups should identify the main points they think their document makes. The expert groups should also strategize how they will present what they have learned to their own home group.
4. Reconvene the home groups, where the members will present their findings for their assigned city documents. Assign one student in the group as leader in managing the discussion. When one student is presenting, the others in the group should be encouraged join in to ask for clarifications.
5. You the teacher should move from group to group, intervening only if a problem with the discussion arises.
6. Following the home group discussions or in the next class period, either give a quiz or pose questions to the whole class to assess what they learned about the four cities. The questions in Student Handout 2.1 (Making Sense of 1968: Student Voices: Protests and Reactions in 1968: Part two) may serve as prompts.

**Lesson 2*****Student Handout 2.1—Making Sense of 1968: Student Voices: Protests and Reactions in 1968***

Part One: Becoming an Expert on the Situation in New York, Prague, Paris, or Mexico City

The readings contain material both on protest and reaction. Regardless of the city that you and your partners have been assigned: New York, Paris, Prague, or Mexico City, answer the following questions:

1. What do the reformers or revolutionaries want?
2. Who are the protesters (students, workers, government leaders, intellectuals)? Be as specific as possible.
3. What are the methods of the protesters to get their points across?
4. How did those in authority respond?

Part Two: Sharing the Four Situations

1. In what ways were these situations similar?
2. How did the reformers and or revolutionaries influence one another across international borders?
3. In which cases did different kinds of activists—peaceful community-based reformers, national or international reformers, countercultural activists, and single cause revolutionaries who were willing to use violence to achieve their goals—dominate the discussion?
4. What were some common issues among those opposed to the protests and the changes protesters wanted?
5. What group(s) appeared to have been successful? Why?

## Lesson 2

### *Student Handout 2.2—Excerpt from Columbia Strike Coordinating Committee statement and excerpt from a statement by Vice-President Spiro Agnew.*

#### **Columbia Strike Coordinating Committee**

*In the spring of 1968 protesting students at Columbia University organized the Strike Coordinating Committee to present a list of six demands to the university administration: amnesty for student protesters facing probation, repeal of a rule against indoor demonstrations, halt of construction of a gym on public park land, disaffiliation of the university from the Institute for Defense Analysis (IDA), and cancellation of charges against anyone who tried to block gym construction. More than 1,000 students occupied university buildings in order to protest university policies, civil rights violations, and Columbia's involvement in research related to the Vietnam war. Mark Rudd, president of the Columbia chapter of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), was a key figure in the protests. They ended violently on April 30, 1968, when Grayson Kirk, Columbia's President, called in New York police to forcibly clear the buildings of protesters, in the process injuring more than 150 people.*

The most important fact about the Columbia strike is that Columbia exists within American society. This statement may appear to be a truism, yet it is a fact too often forgotten by some observers, reporters, administrators, faculty members, and even some students. These people attempt to explain the “disturbances” as reaction to an unresponsive and archaic administrative structure, youthful outbursts of unrest much like panty raids, the product of a conspiracy of communist agents in national SDS or a handful of hard-core nihilists (“destroyers”) on the campus, or just general student unrest due to the war in Vietnam.

But in reality, striking students are responding to the totality of the conditions of our society, not just one small part of it, the university. We are disgusted with the war, with racism, with being a part of a system over which we have no control, a system which demands gross inequalities of wealth and power, a system which denies personal and social freedom and potential, a system which has to manipulate and repress us in order to exist. The university can only be seen as a cog in this machine; or, more accurately, a factory whose product is knowledge and personnel (us) useful to the functioning of the system. The specific problems of university life, its boredom and meaninglessness, help prepare us for boring and meaningless work in the “real” world. And the policies of the university—expansion into the community, exploitation of black[s] and Puerto Ricans, support for imperialist wars—also serve the interests of banks, corporations, government, and military represented on the Columbia Board of Trustees and the ruling class of our society. In every way, the university is “society’s child.” Our attack upon the university is really an attack upon this society and its effects upon us. We have never said otherwise.

The development of the New Left at Columbia represents an organized political response to the society. We see our task, first as identifying for ourselves and for others the nature of our society—who controls it and for what ends—and secondly, developing ways in which to transform it. We understand that only through struggle can we create a free, human society, since the present one is dominated by a small ruling class which exploits, manipulate[s], and distorts for its own ends and has shown in countless ways its determination to maintain its position. ...

Basically, the sit-ins and strike of April and May gave us a chance to express the extreme dissatisfaction we feel at being *caught in this system*. We rejected the gap between potential and realization in this society. We rejected our present lives in the university and our future lives in business, government, or other universities like this one. In a word, we saw ourselves as oppressed, and began to understand the forces at work which make for our oppression. In turn, we saw those same forces responsible for the oppression and colonization of blacks and Puerto Ricans in ghettos, and Vietnamese and the people of the third world. By initiating a struggle in support of black and third world liberation, we create the conditions for our own freedom; by building a movement which will someday take power over our society, we will free ourselves.

*Source:* Columbia University Strike Coordinating Committee, <http://www-personal.umd.umich.edu/~ppennock/doc-Columbia.htm>.

### Statement by Vice-President Spiro Agnew

*Spiro Agnew served as Vice-President under President Richard M. Nixon from 1969 to 1973. This selection is an excerpt from a speech he gave at a Republican dinner in early 1969.*

What I said before, I will say again. It is time for the preponderant majority, the responsible citizens of this country, to assert *their* rights. It is time to stop dignifying the immature actions of arrogant, reckless, inexperienced elements within our society. The reason is compelling. It is simply that their tantrums are insidiously destroying the fabric of American democracy.

By accepting unbridled protest as a way of live, we have tacitly suggested that the great issues of our times are best decided by posturing and shouting matches in the streets. America today is drifting toward Plato's classic definition of a degenerating democracy—a democracy that permits the voice of the mob to dominate the affairs of government. ...

I believe in Constitutional dissent. I believe in the people registering their views with their elected representatives, and I commend those people who care about their country to involve themselves in great issues. I believe in legal protest within the Constitutional limits of free speech, including peaceful assembly and the right of petition, but I do not believe that demonstrations, lawful or unlawful, merit my approval. ...

Think about it. Small bands of students are allowed to shut down great universities. ... The mature and sensitive people of this country must realize that their freedom of protest is being exploited by avowed anarchists and communists who detest everything about this country and want to destroy it. ...

Abetting the merchants of hate are the parasites of passion. These are the men who value a cause purely for its political mileage. These are the politicians who temporize with the truth by playing both sides to their advantage. They ooze sympathy for "the cause" but balance each sentence with equally reasoned reservations. Their interest is personal, not moral. They are ideological

eunuchs whose most comfortable position is straddling the philosophical fence, soliciting votes from both sides. ...

This is what is happening in this nation. We *are* an effete society if we let it happen here. ...

Will Congress settle down to the issues of the nation and reform the institutions of America as our President asks? Can the press ignore the pipers who lead the parades? Will the heads of great universities protect the rights of all their students? Will parents have the courage to say no to their children? Will people have the intelligence to boycott pornography and violence? ...

Will we defend fifty centuries of accumulated wisdom? For that is our heritage. Will we make the effort to preserve America's bold, successful experiment in truly representative government? Or do we care so little that we will cast it all aside?

Because on the eve of our nation's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday, we have reached the crossroads. Because at this moment totalitarianism's threat does not necessarily have a foreign accent. Because we have a home-grown menace, made and manufactured in the U.S.A. Because if we are lazy or foolish, this nation could forfeit its integrity, never to be free again.

*Source:* Alexander Bloom and Wini Breines, eds., "*Takin' to the Streets*": *A Sixties Reader* (New York: Oxford UP, 1995), 356-8.

## Lesson 2

### ***Student Handout 2.3—Address to All Workers and Charles De Gaulle’s Televised Speech to the Nation***

*In May 1968 students poured into the streets of Paris, initially to demand university reforms. The list of political, social, and economic grievances soon multiplied, and French workers, joining the students, called a general strike. The protests surged in proportion to the violence police used to regain control of the city. Hundreds of thousands of people marched on May 30. That day a group of radical French students wrote the statement titled “Address to All Workers,” which called for a worldwide movement against capitalist leaders and others who, in their view, were harming society. On the same day, French President Charles De Gaulle made a televised address to appeal to the French public to support his proposals for governing France firmly and responsibly in the face of student and worker protests. He resolved to remain in power and to restore order. He declared his intention to dissolve the National Assembly and call for new general elections. In June the protests and strikes, which threatened revolution and massive army intervention, lost some of their fervor and order gradually returned. De Gaulle resigned the presidency in the spring of 1969.*

#### **Address to All Workers**

Enragés-Situationist International Committee, Council for Maintaining the Occupations  
Paris, 30 May 1968

What we have already done in France is haunting Europe and will soon threaten all the ruling classes of the world, from the bureaucrats of Moscow and Peking to the millionaires of Washington and Tokyo. Just as we have *made Paris dance*, the international proletariat will once again take up its assault on the capitals of all the states and all the citadels of alienation. The occupation of factories and public buildings throughout the country has not only brought a halt to the functioning of the economy, it has brought about a general questioning of the society. A deep-seated movement is leading almost every sector of the population to seek a real transformation of life. This is the beginning of a revolutionary movement, a movement which lacks nothing but *the consciousness of what it has already done* in order to triumph.

What forces will try to save capitalism? The regime will fall unless it threatens to resort to arms (accompanied by the promise of new elections, which could only take place after the capitulation of the movement) or even resorts to immediate armed repression. If the Left comes to power, it too will try to defend the old world through concessions and through force. ...

At the present moment, with the power they hold and with the parties and unions being what they are, the workers have no other choice but to organize themselves in unitary rank-and-file committees directly taking over the economy and all aspects of the reconstruction of social life, asserting their autonomy vis-à-vis any sort of political or unionist leadership, ensuring their self-defense and federating with each other regionally and nationally. In so doing they will become

the sole real power in the country, the power of the *workers councils*. The only alternative is to return to their passivity and go back to watching television. The proletariat is “either revolutionary or nothing.”

What are the essential features of council power?

Dissolution of all external power

Direct and total democracy

Practical unification of decision and execution

Delegates who can be revoked at any moment by those who have mandated them

Abolition of hierarchy and independent specializations

Conscious management and transformation of all the conditions of liberated life

Permanent creative mass participation

Internationalist extension and coordination

*Source:* Situationist International Online, <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/address.html>. Translated from the French by Ken Knabb.

### **De Gaulle’s Speech to the Nation**

De Gaulle’s Televised Speech to the Nation, October 30, 1968

Men and women of France.

As the holder of the legitimacy of the nation and of the Republic, I have over the past 24 hours considered every eventuality, without exception, which would permit me to maintain that legitimacy. I have made my resolutions.

In the present circumstances, I will not step down. I have a mandate from the people, and I will fulfill it. ...

I am today dissolving the National Assembly.

I have offered the country a referendum which would give citizens the opportunity to vote for a far-reaching reform of our economy and of our university system and, at the same time, to pronounce on whether or not they retained their confidence in me, by the sole acceptable channel, that of democracy. I perceive that the present situation is a material obstacle to that process going ahead. For this reason, I am postponing the date of the referendum. As for the general elections, these will be held within the period provided for under the Constitution, unless there is an intention to gag the entire French people to prevent them from expressing their views

as they are being prevented from carrying on their lives, by the same methods being used to prevent students from studying, teachers from teaching, workers from working. ...

Civic action must now be organized, everywhere and at once. This must be done to aid the government first and foremost, and then locally to support the prefects, constituted or reconstituted as commissioners of the Republic, in their task of ensuring as far as possible the continued existence of the population and preventing subversion at any time and in any place.

France is threatened with dictatorship. There are those who would constrain her to abandon herself to a power that would establish itself in national despair, a power that would then obviously and essentially be the power of totalitarian communism. Naturally, its true colors would be concealed at first, making use of the ambition and hatred of sidelined politicians. After which, such figures would lose all but their own inherent influence, insignificant as that is.

No, I say! The Republic will not abdicate. The people will come to its senses. Progress, independence, and peace will carry the day, along with freedom.

*Source:* Virginia Tech, Digital History Reader, European History,  
[http://www.dhr.history.vt.edu/modules/eu/mod05\\_1968/evidence\\_detail\\_08.html](http://www.dhr.history.vt.edu/modules/eu/mod05_1968/evidence_detail_08.html).

## Lesson 2

### *Student Handout 2.4—Action Program of the Czech Central Committee, April 1968*

*Early in 1968 Alexander Dubček rose to the office of First Secretary of Czechoslovakia's Communist Party. Responding to popular sentiment urging changes to make Czechoslovakia a politically freer and socially more open society, Dubček and his allies embarked on a program of liberalizing reforms to end censorship and allow new political parties to compete with the Communist Party, among other measures. The Soviet Union, leader of the Warsaw Pact countries, which included Czechoslovakia, solidly opposed the reforms. When Dubček failed to back down, the Soviets sent tanks into Prague, the Czechoslovakian capital. Despite popular resistance, the invaders forced the reformers out of power. This selection is part of a statement of the reformers' Action Program to institute "socialism with a human face" in Czechoslovakia.*

As a representative of the most progressive section of society—and therefore the representative of the prospective aims of society—the [Communist] party cannot represent the full range of social interests. The National Front, the political face of the manifold interests of society, expresses the unity of social strata, interest groups, and of nations and nationalities in this society. The party does not want to and will not take the place of social organizations; on the contrary, it must ensure that their initiative and political responsibility for the unity of society are revived and can flourish. ...

We must reform the whole political system so that it will permit the dynamic development of social relations appropriate for socialism, combine broad democracy with scientific, highly qualified management, strengthen the social order, stabilize socialist relations, and maintain social discipline. The basic structure of the political system must, at the same time, provide firm guarantees against a return to the old methods of subjectivism and highhandedness ...

The implementation of the constitutional freedoms of assembly and association must be ensured this year so that the possibility of setting up voluntary organizations, special interest associations, societies, and other such bodies is guaranteed by law, and so that the present interests and needs of various sections of our society are tended to without bureaucratic interference and free from a monopoly by any individual organization ...

Legal standards must also set forth a more explicit guarantee of the freedom of speech for minority interests and opinions (again within the framework of socialist laws and following the principle that decisions are taken in accordance with the will of the majority) ... Our entire legal code must gradually come to grips with the problem of how to protect, in a better and more consistent way, the personal rights and property of citizens, and we must certainly remove statutes that effectively put individual citizens at a disadvantage with the state and other institutions ...

The democratization program of the economy places special emphasis on ensuring the independence of enterprises and enterprise groupings and their relative independence from state bodies; the full implementation of the right of consumers to determine their consumption patterns and lifestyles; the right to choose jobs freely; and the right and opportunity of various groups of working people and different social groups to formulate and defend their economic interests in shaping economic policy ... We will actively pursue a policy of peaceful co-existence vis-à-vis the advanced capitalist countries. Our geographical position, as well as the needs and capacities of an industrialized country, compel us to pursue a more active European policy aimed at the promotion of mutually advantageous relations with all states and with international organizations, and aimed at safeguarding the collective security of the European continent.

*Source:* Jaromir Navratil, ed., *The Prague Spring 1968: A National Security Archive Documents Reader* (Budapest: Central European Press, 1998), 92-5.

## Lesson 2

### ***Student Handout 2.5—National Strike Council statement, student testimony, and government response to events on October 2, 1968***

*Paralleling movements in several other countries, university and high school students, as well as labor union members and other citizens, rallied and marched in Mexico City in the summer of 1968 to demand national political, social, and educational reforms. Moreover, the government of President Díaz Ordaz violated the traditional self-governance of Mexico's universities, angering students and faculty. Tensions ran high because the government feared that public protests might disrupt the Olympic Games, which were scheduled to start in Mexico City in October. Nevertheless, students formed the National Strike Council, which announced a set of six reform demands and called for a "silent march" on September 13. This mass demonstration went off peacefully, but violence against students continued in the following weeks. On October 2 government forces fired on protesters gathered in Mexico City's Tlatelolco neighborhood, killing or wounding hundreds. The Olympics being just ten days away, the government moved quickly to minimize and cover up the massacre.*

### **Announcement of the National Strike Council in the Mexican newspaper *El Día* on September 13, 1968**

To the People:

The National Strike Council invites all workers, peasants, teachers, students, and the general public to the Great Silent March. In support of our six-point petition:

1. Freedom of all political prisoners.
2. Revocation of Article 145 of the Federal Penal Code [which legalized the arrest of anyone attending a meeting of three or more people considered a threat to public safety].
3. Dissolution of the corps of *granaderos* [riot police].
4. Dismissal of police officials Luis Cueto, Raul Mendiola, and A. Frías.
5. Payment of indemnities to the families of all those killed and injured since the beginning of the conflict.
6. Determination of the responsibility of individual government officials implicated in the bloodshed.

We have called this march to press for the immediate and complete satisfaction of our demands by the Executive Power.

We repeat that our Movement has no connection with the Twentieth Olympic Games to be held in our country or with the national holidays commemorating our Independence, and this Committee has no intention of interfering with them in any way. We insist, once again, that all negotiations aimed at resolving this conflict must be public.

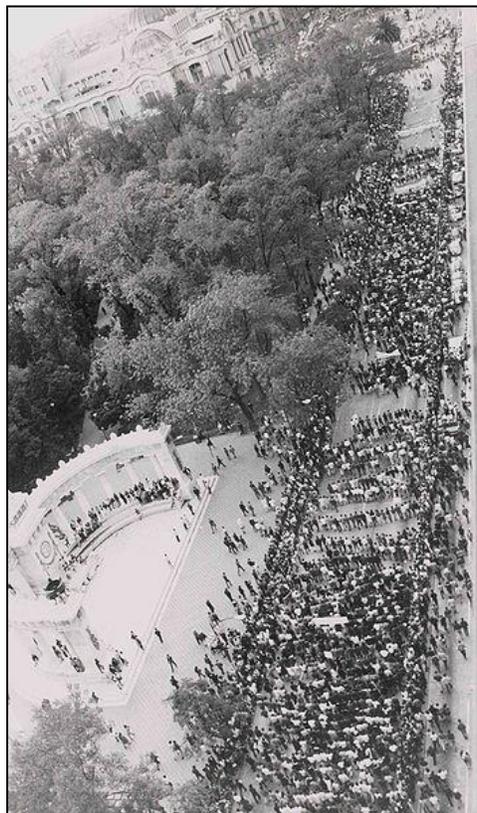
The march will begin today, Friday, the thirteenth, at four p.m. at the National Museum of Anthropology and History and will end with a public meeting in the Plaza de la Constitución.

The day has come when our silence will be more eloquent than our words, which yesterday were stilled by bayonets.

**Testimony of Roberta Avendaño Martínez, delegate from the Faculty of Law, National Autonomous University of Mexico, to the National Strike Council. Avendaño Martínez made this statement while she was in prison.**

The day the plans were drawn up for the Silent Demonstration, it was suggested that someone from the Faculty of Law ought to explain why Article 145 was illegal and unconstitutional, and since I was the representative from the Law School who was present that day, they called on me to speak. The committee appointed to study Article 145 was made up of all the CNH [National Strike Council] representatives from the Law School—me and five other comrades. We were fools enough to believe that the government was willing to have a dialogue with us—I say that because when the *granaderos* hit us over the head with nightsticks and truncheons they kept on saying, “Go ahead and have your dialogue, go ahead and have your dialogue!” So we thought we should be prepared to have a discussion about legal technicalities, but what happened was that they gave us an illegal and antidemocratic clubbing over the head and the dialogue turned out to be a monologue in the form of a sixteen-year prison sentence and a fine of 1,987,387 pesos. ...

*Source of both excerpts:* Elena Poniatowska, *Massacre in Mexico* (New York: Viking Press, 1971), 53-4, 56, 216-17.



**Student march in Mexico City on August 27, 1968**

*Source:* Wikimedia Commons, Photo by I, Cel-Í

*Statement of Luis Echeverría Alvarez, Secretary of the Department of Internal Affairs, as reported in a news story by Rubén Porrás Ochoa titled "According to the Secretary of the Department of Internal Affairs, the Dialogue with the Students Has Already Been Initiated by Díaz Ordaz in his Annual Message on September 1," La Prensa, October 3, 1968.*

### **Statement from the Mexican Government**

It is my opinion that the dialogue has already begun, and that in his Annual Message the President of the Republic discussed in detail each of the six points contained in the petition drawn up by the so-called CNH [National Strike Council], as well as other subjects of fundamental interest and transcendent importance. Surely the most important of the problems confronting us is the restructuring of higher education in Mexico.

Thus the dialogue has already begun, for the president's remarks were delivered from the highest tribunal in Mexico, amid great solemnity, and reached as large an audience as possible, for this Annual Message was heard not only by those present, but was also broadcast over the radio and the television networks and later published in the national press. Thus the president has now taken part in the dialogue, answering each of the points in the petition.

*Source: Elena Poniatowska, Massacre in Mexico (New York: Viking Press/Richard Seaver, 1971), 311.*

**Lesson 3**  
***Debate on Meaning of Revolutions of 1968:***  
***DeGroot v. Kurlansky***

**Introduction**

After having analyzed what happened in four cities in 1968, students should look at how historians have interpreted these events by playing the roles of two particular historians or joining in as members of the audience.

**Activities**

1. Assign homework to read the selections by Kurlansky and DeGroot (Student Handout 2.6). Ask students to prepare brief written answers to the following questions:
  - a. How would you describe Kurlansky's perspective?
  - b. How would you describe DeGroot's perspective?
  - c. How do you think these perspectives differ?
  - d. Based on the investigation of the four city documents in the jigsaw activity, which perspective do you think is more persuasive?
2. Distribute Student Handout 3.1 and set up an ad hoc debate. Explain that most of the class will act as an audience, listening to the two positions and, both using the knowledge that they have learned in Lessons 1 and 2 and evaluating the persuasiveness of the debaters, to vote on which view better describes the events. After setting up the sides, give the class ten minutes to prepare. Debaters need to prepare their positions and the audience members to develop questions. Have each side give a two minute opening, allow time for questions from most of the class and time for rebuttal. Then each side will close for two minutes.
3. Allow five minutes at the end of the class for audience members to vote and for debaters to assess themselves.

**Assessment**

1. Ask debaters to assess themselves, and then the teacher should do it.

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2. Grade results of jury members in terms of their questions, their notes, and the logic of their position. Students may vote for either DeGroot or Kurlansky as long as they intelligently support their opinion.

**Lesson 3*****Student Handout 3.1—Readings from Kurlansky and DeGroot***

Excerpt from Mark Kurlansky, 1968: *The Year that Rocked the World*

By the end of the year 1968, many people felt weary, angry, and longing for a news story that was not abysmally negative. At the very end of the year, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, NASA, provided that story. Only seven years earlier, when America seemed much younger; when political assassinations seemed to be something that happened in other, poorer, less stable countries; when the generation that was to fight, die, and protest over Vietnam were still schoolchildren—President Kennedy had promised that man would reach the moon by the end of the decade. ...

The new sixties generation thrilled to the early space shots which were covered by radio and broadcast in the school classrooms. There was a sense of living in a new age of exploration, comparable to that of the fifteenth century. But somehow space exploration seemed to fade away, or at least everyone's focus had shifted. Young men weren't going to the moon, they were going to Vietnam. Occasional articles said the NASA budget had to be cut to divert money to the Vietnam War. Kennedy's prediction that getting to the moon would be expensive was accurate; from the creation of NASA on October 1, 1958 to its tenth anniversary on October 1, 1968, it spent \$44 billion on space missions. ...

Less romantic, but of more immediate impact, on December 18, exactly ten years after the first satellite transmission with Eisenhower's greeting, Intelsat 3—the first of a new series of communications satellites that would extend live television transmission to the entire world—was launched. ...

Just before 1968 was over, there was a tremendous excitement about the future. It was an instant when racism, poverty, the wars in Vietnam, the Middle East, and Biafra—all of it was shoved aside and the public felt what astronaut Michael Collins felt the following summer when he orbited the moon while his teammates landed:

I really believe that if the political leaders of the world could see their planet from a distance of, let's say, 100,000 miles, their outlook could be fundamentally changed. That all-important border would be invisible, that noisy argument suddenly silenced. The tiny globe would continue to turn, serenely ignoring its subdivisions, presenting a unified façade that would cry out for unified understanding, for homogeneous treatment. The earth must become as it appears blue and white, not capitalist or Communist; blue and white, not rich or poor; blue and white, not envious or envied.

And so the year ended like Dante's traveler who at last climbed back from hell and gazed on the stars.

To get back up to the shining world from there  
My guide and I went into that hidden tunnel:

And following its path, we took no care

To rest, but climbed: he first, then I—so far  
Through a round aperture I saw appear

Some of the beautiful things that Heaven bears,  
Where we came forth, and once more saw the stars.

Dante, *The Inferno*

Source: Mark Kurlansky, 1968: *The Year that Rocked the World* (New York: Random House, 2005), 381-3.

Excerpt from Gerard J. DeGroot, *The Sixties Unplugged: A Kaleidoscopic History of a Disorderly Decade*.

The music was great, the drugs colorful, the dreams transcendent. Unfortunately that was not enough. The counterculture started from the assumption that changing the world begins with changing oneself. Metamorphosis is not, however, as easy as lighting a stick of incense. In any case the soul is seldom a match for machines. In the Sixties, fantasy worlds were built on a flimsy understanding of how the real world works; in consequence, they had as much logic as a drawing by M. C. Escher. No wonder, then, that “Reality sucks” became a popular expression in the Seventies.

It was not enough just to imagine, as John Lennon once urged. Nor, it seems, was all you needed. “It was important to explain to overwrought eighteen-year-olds that the world crushes naïve idealists,” writes William McGill, chancellor of the University of California at San Diego, who witnessed a student setting fire to himself in protest against the Vietnam War. While McGill admits he did not remotely succeed in steering the young away from their quest for simplistic utopias, he still believes that “there was something undeniably beautiful about their crusade.” ...

The power of the faith, and the equal and opposite zealotry of those who reject it, have impeded rational assessment of the decade. Quite simply, the Sixties have invested with far too much uniqueness. For the faithful, it was a time of hope and promise, an example to us all. Thus, every glowing ember of that spirit is carefully nurtured, in the vain hope that it will someday flare again. On the other side, the Sixties is used as a morality tale, an example of what happens when freedom is allowed to run amok, and as a convenient scapegoat for all the ills that followed.

Books and documentaries devoted to the decade seldom mention Biafra, Jakarta, the Cultural Revolution, Curt Flood, Telstar, or the Six-Day War. In other words, the links to our times have been cut, allowing the decade to float like a balloon. Those who bemoan the betrayal of the Sixties spirit are in effect arguing that the decade had no effect on our present, that it was a delightful interlude between the conformist Fifties and the self-indulgent Seventies. Yet this denies the law of historical continuity—the fact that everything develops from which precedes it. The Sixties was important, but not in ways that worshippers (or critics) of the myth like to admit. If the Sixties seem strange to us today, it is probably because we tend to look at the wrong things. ...

The survival of the Sixties myth says something about the resilience of our spirit, if not about the reality of our world. The decade brought flowers, music, love, and good times. It also brought hatred, murder, greed, dangerous drugs, needless deaths, ethnic cleansing, neocolonialist exploitation, sound bite politics, sensationalism, a warped sense of equality, a bizarre notion of freedom, the decline of liberalism, and the end of innocence. Bearing all that in mind, the decade should seem neither unfamiliar nor all that special.

Source: Gerard J. DeGroot, *The Sixties Unplugged: A Kaleidoscopic History of a Disorderly Decade* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2008), 447-50.

**Lesson 3*****Student Handout 3.2—The Meaning of the 1960s Protests: A Debate***

Organize a classroom debate around two groups of two to four students. One group will represent Kurlansky's perspective, the other DeGroot's perspective. Debaters should draw on what they learned in completing Lessons 1 and 2

As we conclude the first unit of the course on the 1960s, this debate will help clarify the answers to the Unit's key questions, as well as to expand on global issues that emerged:

1. What issues led up to the events of 1968 in the environment around the protesters?
2. In what ways did the events of 1968 lead to a divide in the world among its supporters and opponents?
3. What effects did these events have on political and social values?
4. What was their role in the development of civil rights movements?
5. What effect did they have in generational conflicts of the 1960s and beyond?

Four volunteers are needed: two to represent Kurlansky and two to represent DeGroot. You will have ten minutes to prepare!

### **Lesson 3**

#### ***Student Handout 3.3—Vote***

As members of the audience, you will need to listen carefully to the opinions presented so that you will decide whether one position makes more sense about the meaning of the 1960s.

Kurlansky's arguments:

DeGroot's arguments:

Your vote:

Your reasons:

## *Lesson 4*

### *Discussion of Legacies*

#### **Introduction**

Now it is time to make sense of how a number of groups and individuals—who argued, debated, and ultimately fought with each other for their vision of “truth:” non-violent community-based reformers, “peace-loving” countercultural activists, distraught conservatives opposed to change, “visionary” national or international reformers, and single-minded politicians willing to use violence to achieve their goals—met their immediate or long-term goals. Of course people are complicated and many of those active in the events of the 60s fell into more than one group. The identification of the groups and individuals helped to differentiate people’s goals and methods.

#### **Activities**

1. Ask students to write short essays in response to the questions on Student Handout 4 (Protests and Reactions in 1968: Quiz).
2. Conduct an open-ended discussion with the class about the issues raised in the music lyrics and the readings. Ask students in what ways the events of 1968 might be relevant today.

**Lesson 4*****Student Handout 4—Protests and Reactions in 1968: Quiz***

1. Think about the debate over the ideas of Kurlansky and DeGroot. Who did you predict would win? Why?
2. What was one of the major reasons why students demonstrated at Columbia University in New York City in the spring of 1968?
3. What was the major method that the Columbia students used to protest?
4. What was one of the major reasons why students demonstrated at the University of Paris in the spring of 1968?
5. What was the major method that the Parisian students used to protest?
6. What was one of the major reasons why reformers wanted to change the Czech government in Prague in the spring of 1968?
7. What was the major method that the Czech reformers used to protest?
8. What was one of the major reasons why students demonstrated in Mexico City in the summer of 1968?
9. What was the major method that the Mexican students used to protest?
10. What was the response of all four governments to these protests? Were the responses quite similar or quite different from one another?

**Summative Unit Assessments**

Ask students to write essays on the historical significance of the events of 1968. Alternatively, ask them to construct a series of posters that illustrate the historical meaning of those events.

## This unit and the Three Essential Questions

 <p>HUMANS &amp; the ENVIRONMENT</p>	<p>Research evidence for student awareness of environmental problems in 1968. Are environmental problems such as air pollution or industrial waste-dumping voiced in student protest demands in any countries?</p>
 <p>HUMANS &amp; other HUMANS</p>	<p>How did women's rights and equality figure in the agendas of student and worker protesters in 1968?</p>
 <p>HUMANS &amp; IDEAS</p>	<p>Research in books or on the Internet examples of public protest posters that appeared in the late 1960s or early 1970s in a number of different countries. Discuss with classmates the messages that the posters aim to convey and analyze their meanings.</p>

## This unit and the Seven Key Themes

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This unit emphasizes:

Key Theme 3: Uses and Abuses of Power

Key Theme 4: Haves and Have-Nots

Key Theme 5: Expressing Identity

## **This unit and the Standards in Historical Thinking**

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### Historical Thinking Standard 1: Chronological Thinking

The student is able to (C) establish temporal order in constructing historical narratives of her own.

### Historical Thinking Standard 2: Historical Comprehension

The student is able to (I) draw upon visual, literary, and musical sources including: (a) photographs, paintings, cartoons, and architectural drawings; (b) novels, poetry, and plays; and (c) folk, popular and classical music, to clarify, illustrate, or elaborate upon information presented in the historical narrative.

### Historical Thinking Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation

The student is able to (D) draw comparisons across eras and regions in order to define enduring issues as well as large-scale or long-term developments that transcend regional and temporal boundaries.

### Historical Thinking Standard 4: Historical Research Capabilities

The student is able to (A) formulate historical questions from encounters with historical documents, eyewitness accounts, letters, diaries, artifacts, photos, historical sites, art, architecture, and other records from the past.

### Historical Thinking Standard 5: Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-Making

The student is able to (E) formulate a position or course of action on an issue.

## **Resources**

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Bloom, Alexander and Wini Breines. *“Takin’ to the Streets”: A Sixties Reader*. New York: Oxford UP, 1995. An excellent reader; almost every document is worth considering for classroom use.

Crossley, Pamela Kyle, et al. “The Many Dialects of Rebellion, 1960-1975.” In *Global Society: The World since 1900*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008. A good short overview for students and teachers alike.

DeGroot, Gerard J. *The Sixties Unplugged: A Kaleidoscopic History of a Disorderly Decade*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2008. A book with a clear political agenda.

Galeno, Eduardo, trans. Mark Fried. *Mirrors: Stories of Almost Everyone*. New York: Perseus Books, 2009. A highly engaging book with short vignettes to get students to think about different meanings of the past; choose carefully and students will “get” it.

Gassert, Phillip and Martin Klimke, eds. *1968: Memories and Legacies of a Global Revolt*. Washington, DC: German Historical Institute, 2009. Excellent essays by former participants and historians alike.

“How to Train a Stuffed Goose” and “Why We are Fighting.” in James Overfield, ed. *Sources of Twentieth Century Global History*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002: 312-13.

Kurlansky, Mark. *1968: The Year that Rocked the World*. New York: Random House Trade Paperbooks, 2005. A readable account, perfect for teachers and students, about the range of activism in the 1960s; highly recommended for classroom use. It was the text for the Global Issues course that I taught.

Navratil, Jaromir, ed. *The Prague Spring 1968: A National Security Archive Documents Reader*. Budapest: Central European Press, 1998. An excellent reader, but some documents are long and dense.

Poniatowska, Elena, trans. Helen R. Lane. *Massacre in Mexico*. New York: Viking Press, 1971. An excellent reader and one of the few available in English translation from Spanish.

## **Correlations to National and State Standards**

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### ***National Standards for World History***

Era 9: The 20<sup>th</sup> Century since 1945: Promises and Paradoxes. 2F: The student understands worldwide cultural trends of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### ***California: History-Social Science Content Standard***

Grade Ten, 10.9.5. Describe the uprisings in ... Czechoslovakia (1968). ...

## Conceptual links to other teaching units

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### **Big Era Nine Panorama Teaching Unit** **Paradoxes of Global Acceleration, 1945 to the Present**

Since World War II global networks of communication have continually advanced in size, complexity, and speed. Consequently, human society has in many ways become more uniform culturally. At the same time, people try to shelter themselves against hurricanes of change by strengthening their ties with others who share their national loyalty, religion, and ethnic traditions, as well as their political beliefs, occupations, and popular cultural styles.



### **Big Era Nine Landscape Teaching Unit 9.7** **Globe-Girdling Cultural Trends**

The electronic revolution of the post-World War II decades has meant that everyone in the world is potentially in close contact with everyone else. One consequence has been that new forms of popular culture—fashion, cuisine, music, movies, electronic gear, and many other phenomena—may become rapidly globalized. New ideas of political and social change may also find global expression in music, literature, and styles of living.



### **Big Era Nine Closeup Teaching Unit 9.7.1** **1968: A Year of Global Protest**

The movements for political and social reform, even revolution, that radiated out from colleges and universities in the 1960s found almost simultaneous expression in the mass demonstrations and uprisings that took place in 1968.