

HISTORY'S MYSTERIES READERS

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**The Assassination of JFK:
11/22/63**

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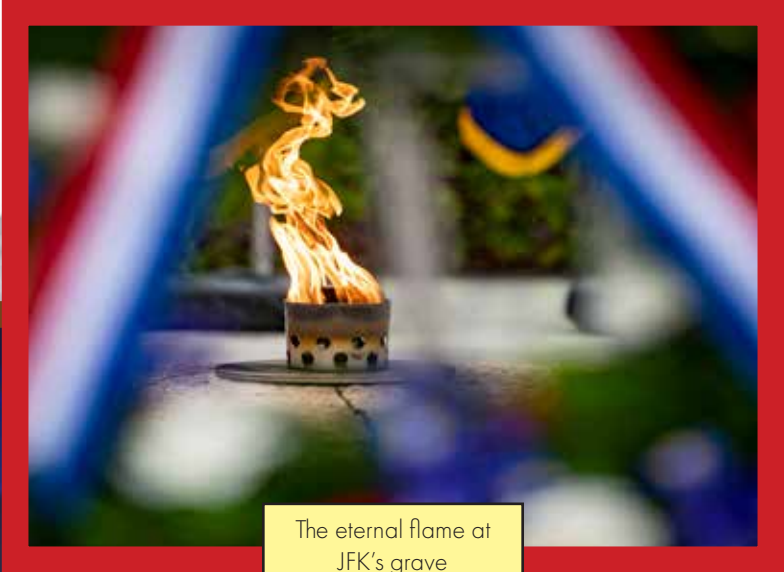
John F Kennedy's headstone



President John F. Kennedy, July 1963



Lee Harvey Oswald's mugshot



The eternal flame at JFK's grave

He was one of the United States' most popular presidents, shot and killed during a typical campaign event in a motorcade parade. His killer, a lone gunman with a mysterious background...or simply the face of a conspiracy that could have involved foreign powers, organized crime, and possibly even the US government?

INTRODUCTION

John Fitzgerald “Jack” Kennedy (May 29, 1917 – November 22, 1963), commonly referred to by his initials JFK, was an American politician who served as the 35th President of the United States from January 1961 until his assassination in November 1963, a day still shrouded in mystery and conspiracy to this day.

Introductory Questions

1. Have you ever heard of John F. Kennedy?
2. What do you know about John F. Kennedy?
3. Do you know of any famous people that were assassinated?
4. What does the word *conspiracy* mean to you?
5. What do you think this famous quote by JFK from his inaugural address at winning the presidency means? “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.”
6. What else do you know about JFK? Can you think of anything important he did?
7. What do you know about any other U.S. Presidents? What is one important thing they did?

CONTENTS

Introduction	iii
Biography.....	5
JFK’s Final Tragic Day	6
Timeline of JFK’s Tragic Day	7
Lee Harvey Oswald	9
The Single Bullet Theory	13
Learn More.....	14
How Health Issues Impacted JFK in Life and Death	15
Discussion Questions.....	20
Projects.....	21
References	25

BIOGRAPHY

John Fitzgerald Kennedy, also known as JFK, was a famous and influential US president who was born on May 29, 1917 in Brookline, Massachusetts. He came from a rich and powerful family and went to Harvard University where he did well in school.

After college, JFK joined the Navy during World War II and helped save his crew when their boat was attacked by the enemy. After the war, he got into politics and became a Congressman and then a Senator. In 1960, he ran for president as a Democrat and won against a Republican named Richard Nixon. His famous inauguration speech said that people should focus on helping their country instead of just themselves.



Kennedy while serving as Ensign in the U.S. Navy

Inauguration, 20 Jan. 1961



Kennedy, his wife Jacqueline, and children Caroline and John Jr.

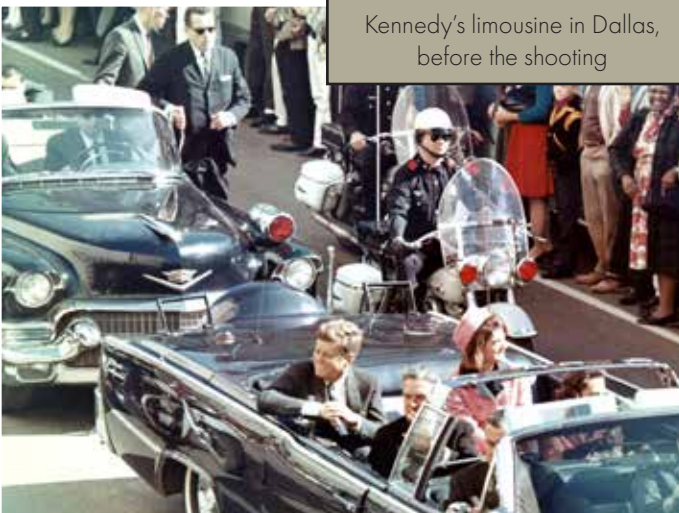


As President, JFK had to deal with problems both inside and outside of the United States. He worked hard to make sure everyone was treated fairly and he also made good choices when it came to other countries.

Tragically, JFK's life was cut short on November 22, 1963 when he was assassinated while riding in a motorcade in Dallas, Texas. His death shocked the nation and the world, leaving a legacy of hope, inspiration, and the question of what might have been.

JFK'S FINAL TRAGIC DAY

It was a cloudy morning on Friday, November 22, 1963. A big crowd of supporters was waiting outside the Fort Worth Texas Hotel where the President and his wife had stayed the night before. The President came out to give a short speech and shake hands with the audience. He talked about important issues and achievements like the military and space exploration, and thanked the people of Texas for all their support. Then he and his wife got in a convertible to go to Dallas for another event.



Kennedy's limousine in Dallas, before the shooting

As they were driving through Dealey Plaza in the president's motorcade, shots suddenly rang out. The President and Governor were both hit by bullets and rushed to the hospital.

TIMELINE OF JFK'S TRAGIC DAY

November 22nd, ~12:30 p.m. CST: President Kennedy's motorcade enters Dealey Plaza in Dallas, Texas as he travels with his wife, Jacqueline Kennedy; Texas Governor John Connally; and Connally's wife, Nellie Connally.

12:30 p.m. Gunshots ring out as the motorcade passes through Dealey Plaza. President Kennedy is struck by two bullets, one in the upper back and one in the head. Governor Connally is also hit by a bullet.

~12:34 p.m. The motorcade rushes to Parkland Memorial Hospital, where President Kennedy is pronounced dead at 1:00 p.m. CST.

~12:40 p.m. Lee Harvey Oswald, a former Marine and the presumed assassin, leaves the Texas School Book Depository where he worked.

1:15 p.m. Dallas Police Officer J.D. Tippit is fatally shot by Lee Harvey Oswald in the Oak Cliff neighborhood of Dallas.

~1:45 p.m. Oswald is arrested at the Texas Theatre in Oak Cliff after being spotted by a movie theater employee who recognized him from a police description.

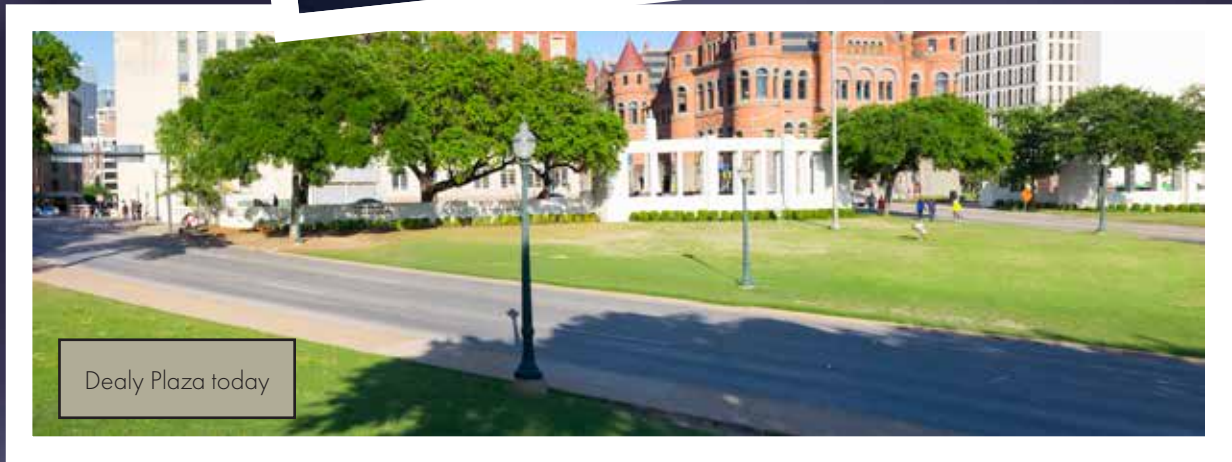
2:38 p.m. Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson is sworn in as the 36th President of the United States aboard Air Force One before it departs from Dallas.

November 24th: Lee Harvey Oswald is shot and killed by Jack Ruby, a local nightclub owner, while in police custody at the Dallas Police Department. Oswald dies at Parkland Memorial Hospital at 1:07 p.m. CST.

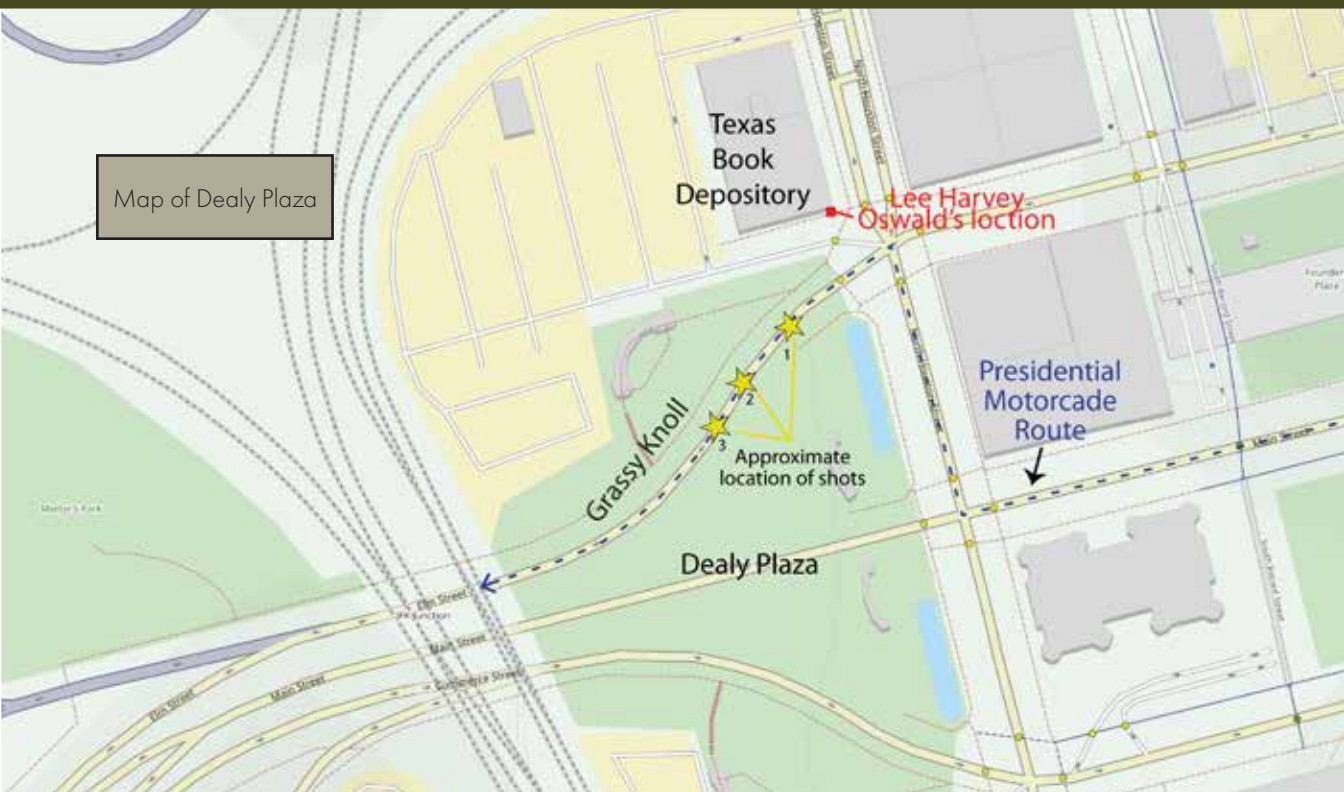
November 23rd: Johnson declares November 25th a national day of remembering JFK.



The former Texas Book Depository



Dealy Plaza today



Map of Dealy Plaza

guys, the government, or people from Cuba. A survey done in 2017 found that only about one third of Americans think Oswald was the only one responsible for killing Kennedy.

THE SINGLE BULLET THEORY



The single bullet

The term “single bullet theory” is used to explain how President John F. Kennedy was killed. The theory says that one bullet hit Kennedy in the back and then also hit Texas Governor John Connally. This bullet was supposedly fired by Lee Harvey Oswald from the Texas Book Depository. It entered Kennedy’s back, exited through his throat, and then hit Connally’s chest, wrist, and thigh. The bullet was later found on a stretcher at the hospital.

This theory is important because it supports what the Warren Commission believed—that Oswald acted alone. Some people don’t believe this theory because they think the bullet couldn’t have caused all the

injuries it did and still stay almost whole. Skeptics call it the “magic bullet theory”! But even with these doubts, the single bullet theory is still a big part of the official explanation for JFK’s assassination and is talked about by many people today also connected to a possible conspiracy.

In recent years, thousands of documents that had never been seen before were released by the National Archive. A large release was made in March of 2025 that included unedited versions of previously released documents. Still the mystery remains.

The assassination of President Kennedy led to lots of investigations, theories, and arguments about how he died. Official reports like the Warren Commission say Oswald was the only one involved but this is still disputed and we may never know for sure what really happened as alternative theories persist to this day.

LEARN MORE

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THE THEORIES

Oswald didn't act alone

The single (or "magic") bullet theory critics argue that the bullet's trajectory and the extent of the damage it caused make it unlikely to have caused all the injuries attributed to it. This single bullet is the second of two bullets alleged to have hit JFK and one of three fired by Oswald in total.

Additionally, skeptics question whether a single bullet could have remained largely intact after causing such extensive damage.

The mafia did it

They had him killed because Kennedy was unsuccessful in overthrowing Fidel Castro in Cuba, meaning mafia-run casinos there remained shutdown.

Robert Kennedy, the President's brother, was also cracking down on the mob in his role as attorney general. He was pursuing a case against Jimmy Hoffa, a union leader suspected of being involved with organized crime. Robert himself would be assassinated only 5 years later

The US government was involved

Some rogue element in the CIA could have been angry over the unsuccessful Bay of Pigs invasion in Cuba. This attempted coup of Communist dictator Fidel Castro and his government was an embarrassing military failure for US intelligence and JFK was blamed at some for not providing appropriate support.

Some government officials may have been concerned about Kennedy pulling out of the Vietnam War.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

JFK's assassination marked the beginning of our modern era of conspiracy theories that continues to this day, as seen with the many COVID-related conspiracy claims. Conspiracy theorists often have distrust in the government and doubt the official stories of many important events. Here are just five of many examples that have taken place in the USA and abroad since JFK's assassination:

Famous Conspiracies Theories

1. Moon Landing Hoax (1969)

Theory: Some people believe the Apollo moon landings were staged by NASA with the help of Hollywood, as part of a Cold War space race propaganda effort.

Claim: The footage was filmed on a sound stage, and various anomalies like the flag waving or inconsistent shadows are cited as "proof."

2. Watergate Scandal (1972-1974)

Theory: While the Watergate scandal led to President Nixon's resignation, conspiracy theorists believe it was just the tip of a larger iceberg of government corruption and cover-ups involving multiple agencies and secret operations beyond what was revealed.

Claim: The break-in was part of a broader strategy involving deeper conspiracies between political operatives and intelligence agencies.

3. Iran-Contra Affair (1980s)

Theory: The U.S. government was secretly involved in illegal arms sales to Iran and funneling money to Nicaraguan Contras despite public denials and legal prohibitions. The full extent of CIA involvement remains a subject of speculation.

Claim: Some believe the affair was a small part of a much larger network of clandestine operations run by the U.S. to influence foreign governments.

FUN FACTS

Claims and misinformation about JFK's assassination continue to this day. As recently as the 2020 election, Republican candidate and President Donald J. Trump even accused his competitor Ted Cruz's father of being involved in the JFK Assassination!

JFK's Assassination has been fodder for lots of famous media, including:

The Trial of Lee Harvey Oswald (1977) — This made-for-TV movie imagines what would have happened if Lee Harvey Oswald had survived and gone to trial for Kennedy's assassination.

Oliver Stone's film's *JFK* (1991) — This film details many of the conspiracy theories about the assassination. This film is one of the most famous dramatizations of the assassination. It follows New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison as he investigates a conspiracy behind Kennedy's death, suggesting involvement from various government agencies. The movie sparked renewed public interest in the assassination and pushed for the release of classified government documents.

In popular science fiction, the idea of being able to change the past has been depicted in many forms such as the famous novel (and TV limited series) *11/22/63* by Stephen King is about Jake Epping, a high school teacher who finds a way to travel back in time to 1958. His mission is to stop the assassination of President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963. The story explores whether changing the past is worth the risk and the impact it has on the present and Jake's life. It's a mix of history, time travel, and love.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

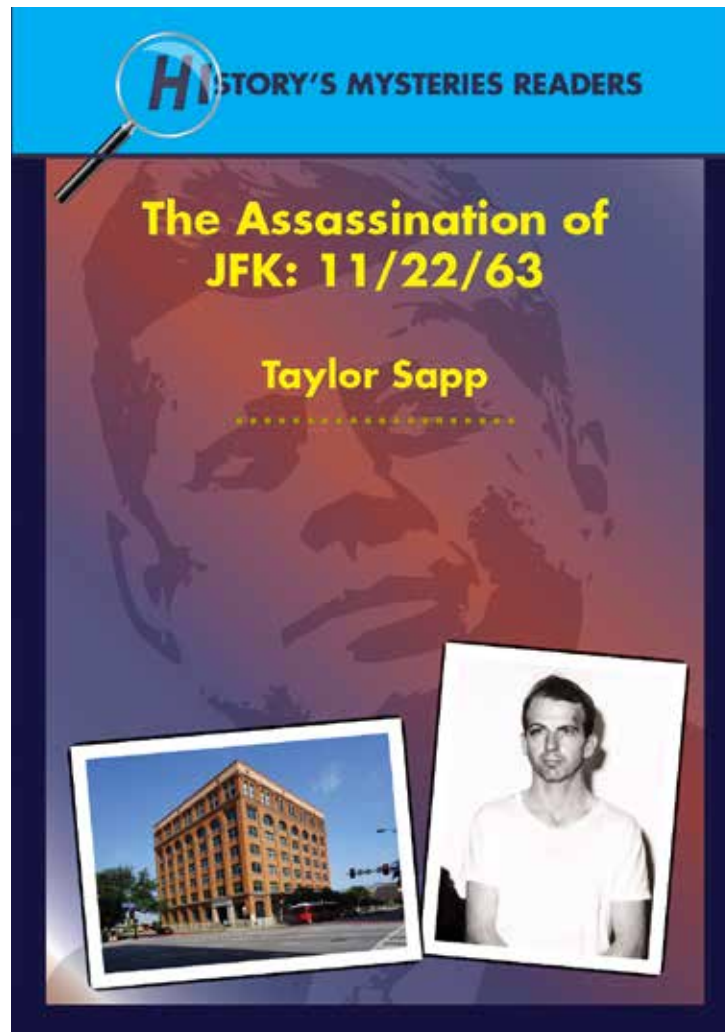
1. Why do you think a lone gunman like Lee Harvey Oswald would want to kill JFK?
2. Why do lone killers sometimes want to kill famous or important people?
3. Compare the conspiracy theories about JFK's assassination.
 - Which seems the most likely?
 - Which seems the most unlikely?
4. Do you think JFK was an important American president?
5. What other American presidents do you think were important? Why?
6. Do you know of any other political assassinations in history? In your own country or area?
7. How can leaders be protected from assassination?
8. Has it become easier or more difficult to protect leaders in the modern age? Why do you think so?



PROJECTS

1. Find one source that claims the JFK assassination was a conspiracy, and one that claims it wasn't. Compare the biases in each one? Which is more believable?
2. Research about JFK: Write about 1 page and answer 1 or both questions below.
 - What were his greatest achievements?
 - Do you believe in 1 shooter (Oswald) or a conspiracy?
3. What if JFK had lived? Research at least 1 theory or idea on what he might have done.
4. Rank the theories about the assassination from likely to unlikely as presented in the chapter.
5. Non-fiction essay—Was JFK's assassination a conspiracy, or did Lee Harvey Oswald act alone?
6. Write a story! Write about a page about the day of the assassination. Here are some questions to consider as you write:
 - Can you save the president?
 - Who are the real assassins? Is it just Oswald or are there other conspirators?
7. Webquest: See the next pages for details.

The Assassination of JFK: 11/22/63



<https://www.alphabepublishingbooks.com/book/assassination-jfk>

Inside find:

- The story of the fateful day in November and the people involved
- Interesting facts and connections to other conspiracies
- Research projects and writing prompts
- A web quest about the assassination
- Historical images of Lee Harvey Oswald, Jack Ruby, President Kennedy's inauguration, the funeral procession, and more, bringing history alive!