

The Assassination of JFK and the Decade of Death (B2)

A – Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.

1. What do you know about the death of John Fitzgerald Kennedy?
2. Have you seen any films or documentaries on the subject?
3. If so, have you formed an opinion about who killed him?
4. Can you name any other influential people who were assassinated in the 1960s?
5. If so, what do you know about their assassinations?

B – Listen and answer - Part 1: The Assassination of JFK

Read these incomplete statements. Then listen (without reading) and fill in the blanks.

1. US president JFK was assassinated on _____, 1963.
2. He was _____ years old at the time.
3. A suspect, Lee Harvey Oswald, was arrested immediately but never reached _____.
4. Oswald was shot dead by Jack Ruby, a _____ owner.
5. In 1964, the Warren Commission concluded that Oswald had _____.
6. Some thought that the US government, the _____, the _____ or Fidel Castro were involved.
7. In 1976, a US House of Representatives committee conducted around _____ interviews.
8. It found there was no conspiracy, but even today _____ per cent of Americans think there was.

C – Read and answer – Part 1: The Assassination of JFK

Read the article and the info box and answer the questions.

1. Why was President Kennedy in Dallas, Texas, on the day of his assassination?
2. What made Lee Harvey Oswald a likely suspect?
3. Why was it unsurprising that Jack Ruby's killing of Oswald led to a conspiracy theory?
4. Where, according to rumours, had other shots come from?
5. What helped old discredited theories return and become firmly established in the 1990s?
6. What did President Biden do recently to try to dispel the conspiracy theories?
7. What proof did Donald Trump have of Ted Cruz's father's involvement in JFK's death?
8. Who does Robert Kennedy Jr hold responsible for his uncle's assassination?

D - Listen and answer - Part 2: Decade of Death

Read these statements. Then listen (without reading) and write T (true) or F (false).

1. Malcolm X was assassinated while leaving a meeting of the Nation of Islam.
2. He had not been aware of having any enemies.
3. Martin Luther King's family suspect that there was a conspiracy to kill him.
4. Robert F. Kennedy's assassin was released from prison for good conduct.
5. Marilyn Monroe died in a hotel room.
6. There is a rumour that her death was not reported immediately.

E - Read and answer - Part 2: Decade of Death

Read the article and the info box and answer the questions.

1. What effect did the series of high-profile deaths of the 1960s have on people at the time?
2. How are conspiracy theories being used nowadays?
3. Why did Malcolm X change his surname?
4. What happened to two of the men who were sent to prison for killing Malcolm?
5. Why do some people claim Sirhan Sirhan was not Robert Kennedy's assassin?
6. Why might the death of Marilyn Monroe have proved embarrassing for the Kennedy brothers?
7. How many attempts to assassinate US presidents have failed?
8. Which two shooters mentioned in the article acted for personal reasons?

F – Learn it! Use it!

Complete these sentences with words from the glossary. (You may have to adapt the expression in some way; e.g. change the verb tense, or change from singular to plural.)

1. Laurie broke the vase on the hall table and _____ it on the dog.
2. Sit down for a bit. You _____ a rest. You've been working in the garden all day.
3. The prime minister is expected to make a _____ about the economy this afternoon.
4. I go for walk in the park every day. It does you good to fill your _____ with fresh air.
5. Allergies are becoming more _____ as a result of air pollution.
6. Police detectives say they are following several _____ but have not yet made an arrest.

G – Ready for the B2 FIRST Certificate in English? (Reading and Use of English, Part 3)

Use the word in brackets to form a word that fits in the space given.

1. President Kennedy was _____ (MORTAL) wounded while riding in an open car.
2. Instead, today's presidential candidates are protected by US _____ (SECURE) forces.
3. One of the more _____ (PREVAIL) rumours about the shooting regarded a second assassin.
4. In 1976, a committee was formed to _____ (EXAMINE) the case.
5. In the end, all _____ (SUSPECT) of the existence of a conspiracy were dismissed.
6. In the immediate _____ (AFTER) of the event, few people believed in a conspiracy.
7. During the 2016 presidential campaign, Trump reignited interest in a _____ (COVER).
8. He implied that his _____ (COMPETE) Ted Cruz's father was involved in the assassination.

H – Talk about it

In pairs or groups.

1. Have there been any unsolved assassinations or bombings in your country?
2. If so, when did they happen? What theories are there regarding them?
3. What are the main conspiracy theories circulating in your country at the moment?
4. Do you think they are all harmful? Why (not)?

Answers

B – Listen and answer – Part 1

1. 22nd November 2. 46 3. trial 4. nightclub 5. acted alone 6. mafia – KGB
7. 25,000 8. 60

C – Read and answer – Part 1

1. He was campaigning to win a second term as president in the 1964 election. 2. Oswald had defected for a time to the Soviet Union and he had a history of psychiatric illness. He was a former marine, so he could use a rifle. 3. Because he had mafia connections. 4. From a nearby grassy knoll. 5. Oliver Stone's movie *JFK* and the expansion of the Internet. 6. He ordered the disclosure of all releasable records on the assassination. 7. He had none. 8. He holds the CIA responsible.

D – Listen and answer – Part 2

1. F – He was shot at a public event. 2. F – He had received death threats. 3. T 4. F – He has been denied parole seventeen times. 5. F – She died in her own home. 6. T

E – Read and answer – Part 2

1. It/They fomented widespread anxiety and mistrust. 2. They are used as weapons of mass manipulation. 3. Because the surname *Little* had been given to his ancestors by their slave master. X represented his lost tribal name. 4. They were exonerated. 5. Because of Sirhan's position at the time of the shooting, and the type and number of bullets fired. 6. Because it is claimed they were both having affairs with her. 7. Three. 8. Charles J. Guiteau, who was disappointed at not getting a diplomatic post, and John Hinckley Jr, whose alleged motive was to impress actor Jodie Foster.

F – Learn it! Use it!

1. blamed 2. deserve 3. statement 4. lungs 5. widespread 6. leads

G – Ready for the B2 FIRST Certificate in English?

1. mortally 2. security 3. prevalent 4. re-examine 5. aftermath 6. suspicions
7. cover-up 8. competitor