

**TEACHER GUIDE**

# 1968 DOC. #4: Humphrey "Some Talk Change" Poster

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Hubert Humphrey was in a difficult position as he began his campaign at the Democratic convention in Chicago during the hot summer of 1968. Like Nixon, he was trying to appeal to young people following the "summer of love." He defined his vision of the way politics ought to be in America as "the politics of happiness, the politics of purpose and the politics of joy" (Roberts 280).

He wanted people to remember his long-standing positions as a leader of progressive causes. Twenty years earlier he had written the liberal pro-Civil Rights plank at the Democratic convention, causing segregationist Southern "Dixiecrats" to walk out in protest. He had also played a key role in lining up the votes for Congress to pass the landmark Civil Rights Act in 1964. He was a labor movement supporter throughout his career.

As Humphrey was being nominated in the convention hall the streets outside erupted into a riot when Chicago police attacked a large group of antiwar protestors. Tear gas filled the streets and crowds chanted "Dump the Hump" and "The Whole World Is Watching," while Humphrey was inside trying to make his stand as "the Happy Warrior." The resulting TV images showing a country at war with its own people were too at odds with the peaceful image that Humphrey wanted to project. Supporters of antiwar candidates Eugene McCarthy and Robert Kennedy also saw Vice President Humphrey as an extension of reviled President Lyndon Johnson despite Humphrey's protests that "the President has not made me his slave."

> **Project** 1968 doc. #4a.

This poster was used by Humphrey during his campaign.

QUESTION **What are the messages in this poster?**

SUGGESTED ANSWER Humphrey is an active leader for change unlike others who are just talk.

EVIDENCE text and simple image of straightforward-looking Humphrey

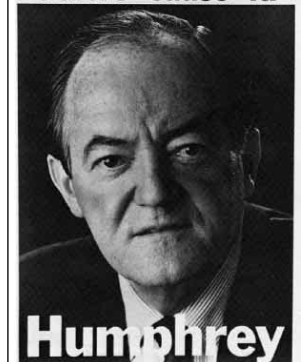
QUESTION **Who is the target audience for this poster? Why do you think so?**

SUGGESTED ANSWER Progressive Democrats who want the programs of the Great Society to continue are the audience.

EVIDENCE Humphrey needed the support of McCarthy and Kennedy backers who might be attracted to his history as a "change maker"

**1968 DOC. #4a**

**Some talk change.  
Others cause it.**

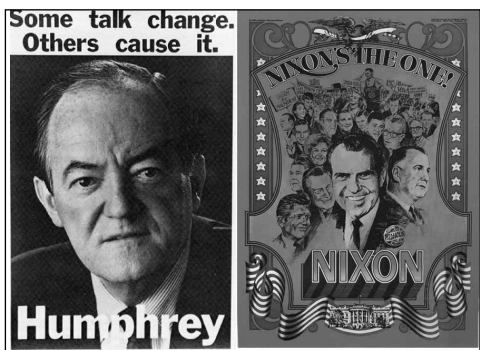


**Humphrey "Some Talk Change" Poster**

**PowerPoint Slide**

> **Project** 1968 doc. #4b, Nixon and Humphrey posters side by side. **Compare** the two posters. Which do you think was more effective and why?

**1968 DOC. #4b**



**Nixon and Humphrey posters side by side.**

**PowerPoint Slide**

**FURTHER QUESTIONS**

Would the "Nixon's the One" poster have worked for Humphrey if he had used the same design? Why or why not?

Why do you think the Humphrey campaign chose the "Happy Warrior" as a campaign motto?

**ADDITIONAL INFO**

Despite the major handicaps of turmoil in the streets and his association with the failed war presidency of Lyndon Johnson, Humphrey was closing in on Nixon in the final days of the campaign and nearly pulled off an upset victory. He later said of his association with Johnson, "I had become like the oldest son – and I couldn't make the break" (Troy 235).

"Black is Beautiful" was a popular civil rights slogan at the time, and the Democratic campaign courted African American voters with a poster of a young African American couple and the words – "Voting is Beautiful/Be Beautiful – Vote Humphrey – Muskie." Both Nixon and Humphrey actively sought the youth vote. Humphrey appeared on a youth-oriented talk show to discuss the "politics of joy" while Nixon appeared briefly on the popular "Laugh-In" skit-comedy show where he played off a frequent catch-phrase on the show by saying "Sock it to me?" According to the producers, at first Nixon refused to take part in the show, and even after he agreed it took six takes before he could deliver the line without sounding angry or offended. Humphrey had also been approached to do a similar cameo, but after consulting with his advisors he turned down the offer feeling that it was beneath his dignity, a decision he is said to have later regretted. Some people credited Nixon's appearance on "Laugh-In" for his win, since it demonstrated that he had a good sense of humor.