

The year of 1968 essay examples

[Politics](#), [Civil Rights](#)



Some of the major events that took place in 1968 include the following; the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King in U. S. A., stripping two Olympic protestors of their medals in Mexico and the influenza pandemic worldwide. Most of these events involved bravery. Some also led to death threats, injuries and deaths of the people.

On April 4 1968, the Civil Rights Movement nearly came to an end with the assassination of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who was advocating for civil rights in an African American Hotel's balcony . This assassination had a major impact on the Negroes nationwide. African Americans took to the streets. This time round, they neither dressed up in church attires nor marched silently through downtown Selma. The protest that erupted was of a different kind. The Black people held matches and kerosene bottles that were staffed with rags. Many grabbed guns, knives and bricks and engaged the police. More than 100 American cities experienced violent disturbances since the black people firebombed businesses as well as anything which reflected white racism . Apparently, more than 100, 000 blacks participated in the attempts to burn the entire country down.

The riots made President Johnson B. Lyndon call out 50, 000 National Guardsmen. This was the highest number that was ever appointed during a civil emergency. A dusk to dawn curfew was enforced by Washington DC. The riots led to the locking down of Pennsylvania Avenue. What followed was a week of anarchy which ended with 4, 000 people injured, 46 people dead, massive arrests and damages worth approximately \$ 500 million. Different methods were used by cities to contain the riots. Mayor Richard Daley, in Chicago, issued a ' shoot to kill' for the rioters and for the looters, he issued

a 'shoot to maim' order. In Cleveland, the mayor called for the National Guardsmen to be on full alert and keep watch as the violence ensued. In Philadelphia, blacks who caught outside during the curfews were arrested. Many incidents of use of excessive force were captured on film .

On July 13 1968, the first outbreak of influenza was recorded. This was also known as the Hong Kong flu. It was one of the deadliest influenza pandemics ever recorded in history. Its main cause was H3N2 influenza ' A' virus strain, descended from H2N2 via antigenic shift . This involves a genetic process that takes place in genes from several subtypes re-assorted, thus forming a new virus. Extensive outbreaks of the influenza pandemic were reported in Singapore and Vietnam by 30 July 1968. The flu reached Europe, Philippines, India and Northern Australia by September 1968 . In the same month, it was detected California and attributed to the Vietnam War Troops. However, it did not spread widely in U. S. until December. Virus descriptions and public warnings were issued to the public in several countries. The symptoms of the flu lasted 5 days and those who were most likely to die were persons above 65 years old. As compared to other pandemics, this flu resulted in low death rates. The case fatality ratio was below 0. 5%, placing the flu at category 2 in the Pandemic Severity Index. Apparently, fewer people passed away during this flu pandemic as compared to the previous two influenza pandemics. This pandemic infected approximately 500, 000 residents of Hong Kong, about 15 % of the entire population. Approximately 33, 800 people died in the U. S. This was the first outbreak of H3N2 strain that was ever known .

1968 also marked one of the most controversial Olympic moments in history and a milestone in the Civil Rights Movement in America. Two men, John

Carlos and Tommie Smith, were stirred by Harry Edwards' suggestions. Harry Edwards asked Black American athletes to join together and take part in Olympic Games boycott. Edwards hoped that the protest would bring attention to the idea that Civil Rights Movement of America had not gone far enough in eliminating the injustices that black Americans faced. The Olympic Project for Human Rights (OPHR) received support from many world-class athletes as well as leaders of civil rights. However, the all-out boycott did not materialize .

Carlos and Smith, still impassioned by the words of Edwards, planned a protest that was non-violent in the manner of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Smith won gold medal while Carlos won bronze medal in the 200-meter race. As the flag of America rose and the Star-Spangled Banner was playing, Carlos and Smith bowed their heads, closed their eyes and started their protest. Smith raised his right fist that was covered with black gloves to represent the black power in America. Conversely, Carlos raised his left fist that was covered with black gloves to represent unity among the black Americans. They both formed an arch of power and unity. The black scarf around the neck of Smith symbolized black pride while their black socks stood for black poverty in America. Their actions were met by the white people's outrage . They were stripped of their medals and faced suspension from the national team effectively banning them from the Olympic Village. Several people thought that the statements which were political and did not have a place in the Olympic Games that were supposedly apolitical. Those who opposed the protest claimed that their actions were militant and had really disgraced Americans. The duo even received death threats which included their

families. However, those who were moved by the protest praised the duo for their bravery. Interestingly, Peter Norman of Australia, a white man who won silver medal in the 200 meter race, also took part in the protest that evening. He wore Olympic Project for Human Rights badge .

In conclusion, the major events that occurred in 1968 had colossal impacts on the people. While others died, many were injured on the course of fighting for their rights. The year can be credited with the genesis of some of the essential historical changes as a result of those memorable events.

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