**Purpose:** This CISM will work on critical thinking and analysis, while understanding the literary and historical significance of the term Camelot.

**Enduring Question:** Is the quest for a political utopia futile?

**Essential Question:** Should democrats end the quest for “Kennedy’s Camelot?”

**CCGPS:**

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| **ELACC11-12RI1:** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain. |

**SSUSH23 The student will describe and assess the impact of political developments between 1945 and 1970.**

**SSUSH22 The student will identify dimensions of the Civil Rights Movement, 1945-1970.**

**Vocabulary:** persuasion, evocative, anthropologist, empirical, utopia, unsubstantiated, improbable, validated, messianic, compulsive, conjured.

**Suggested Coding for: Democrats Should End Quest for Kennedy’s Camelot.**

\*T- Threat \*H-Hopeful \*-Neutral (OR)

\*M=Much Impact \*L= Little Impact \*C=Cause \*E=Effect

**Materials:**

* The Article: *Democrats Should End Quest for Kennedy’s Camelot*
* Graphic Organizers: directed note taking guide, and writing assignment sheet.

Procedure

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| Suggested Time | Teacher Will | Student will |
| 0-10 minutes | Facilitate discussion on the enduring question. | Breakup into small groups to discuss the question then come together for group discussion. |
| 10-20 | Teacher will front load the article’s vocabulary | Students will define the vocabulary terms either through context clues or searching for the words definition. This may be done via internet search, smart-phone, or dictionary. |
| 20-40 | Teacher will read the text and model the text coding through paragraph 6. After paragraph 6, teacher will read orally stopping at the bold subtitles to discuss coding.  *(Optional popcorn read with students)* | Students will take notes and mark coding. Stopping for group discussion on why they choose any given code.  *(students may practice fluency)* |
| 40-50 |  | Students will fill out their Directed- Note-Taking graphic organizer. |
| 50-55 |  | Students will create “I wonder questions” from the text. |
| 60-75 | Teacher will facilitate answering and discussion activities. \*Deposit/Withdrawal  \*The Lottery  \*Stand and Whip  \*Popcorn |  |
| 80 | Closing activity teacher will post a multiple choice question for the final group discussion | Students will choose the BEST possible answer and discuss. |
| 85 | Teacher will assign final responses | Take home for homework, or do as a warm-up next class. ` |

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| **Using the information from the text to support your answer, which of the following best describes the author’s purpose?**   1. **Camelot isn’t something to aspire to have.** 2. **Camelot wasn’t about politics, it was about imagination.** 3. **Camelot only occurs after death.** |

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| **Extended Writing:**  RAFT Writing assignment:  Role: Political analyst 2. Political Analyst  Audience: Liberal Media Audience: Conservative Media  Format: Speech Format: Speech  Topic: Camelot is found by comprise, Topic: The search for Camelot is the search  and caring for fellow man for moral, and political decline. |
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MAIN IDEAS

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| Main idea | Details |
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When she was 22, the future Jacqueline Kennedy won a Vogue contest with [an essay](http://www.vogue.com/voguepedia/Jacqueline_Kennedy_Onassis) in which she dreamed of being “a sort of Overall Art Director of the Twentieth Century.” As first lady, she proved herself a genius at visual persuasion. She crafted her own image, refined her husband’s, re-created the White House’s, and even shaped America’s abroad.

1

Her most evocative and enduring image-making came when John F. Kennedy was assassinated, 50 years ago this week. She art-directed the funeral’s pageantry and then, in an interview with T.H. White for Life magazine, [memorably linked](http://www.jfklancer.com/pdf/Camelot.pdf) her husband to one of the most powerful legends in the English-speaking world. Jackie created the myth of the Kennedy administration as Camelot: the lost golden age that proved ideals could become real.

2

The Arthurian legends traditionally operate as what the cultural anthropologist [Grant McCracken](http://cultureby.com/) calls “displaced meaning.” Every culture, he observes, maintains ideals that can never be fully realized in everyday life, from Christian charity to economic equality. Yet for all their empirical failings, such cultural ideals supply essential purpose and meaning, offering identity and hope. To preserve and transmit them, cultures develop images and stories that portray a distant world in which their ideals are realized -- a paradise, a utopia, a golden age, a promised land, a world to come. Camelot is such a setting.

4

3

“When they are transported to a distant cultural domain,” McCracken writes, “ideals are made to seem practicable realities. What is otherwise unsubstantiated and potentially improbable in the present world is now validated, somehow ‘proven,’ by its existence in another, distant one.”

5

The Arthurian legends, especially when taken as history, demonstrate the validity of ideals including Christian virtue, power in the service of justice, and unity rather than civil war.

Camelot isn’t a true utopia, however. It destroys itself from within, through adultery, betrayal and dissension, suggesting that such ideals can exist only for [“one brief shining moment.”](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camelot_(musical)) That King Arthur may someday return from his mysterious refuge in Avalon gives the tales a messianic element, preserving their displaced meaning. But the Arthurian legends are a tragic romance -- a narrative full of struggle as well as glory.

6

Not so the Kennedy Camelot. The Kennedy administration ended with sudden violence from without, making Jackie’s analogy doubly potent. It suggested a parallel with a legendary Golden Age while simultaneously implying that, left to itself, this new Golden Age might have continued indefinitely. This Camelot was pure glamour: a frozen moment, its flaws and conflicts obscured.

7

Glamour invites projection. For 50 years, Americans of various persuasions have imagined their ideals embodied in a Camelot that might have been. Advocates of a [vigorous Cold War foreign policy](http://ideas.time.com/2013/10/14/jfk-was-a-political-conservative/) claim John Kennedy. So do their opposites. He did less for the civil-rights movement than his unglamorous successor, Lyndon Johnson, yet in imagination he would have done more. Above all, people imagine that somehow a living Kennedy would have prevented the tumult of the 1960s.

8

What they don’t imagine is what happens to real presidents who live to be re-elected. The downsides of their policies become apparent. Their dirty secrets come out. The public tires of them.

9

Thanks to his sudden, violent death, JFK is forever young and forever whatever his adoring fans imagine him to be. The scandals that would have come -- the [dangerously compulsive womanizing](http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/07/jackie-and-the-girls/309000/), the secret injections and [medical coverups](http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2002/12/the-medical-ordeals-of-jfk/305572/), the dirty tricks -- are historic footnotes. The foreign-policy missteps and domestic political fights of a second term never happened.

10

For a half-century, Democrats have tried to recapture the magic of Camelot, and for a half-century, they have failed. They’ve mistakenly imagined that Camelot was about politics, culture or style. But, like all forms of glamour, Camelot was about imagination and desire. Glamour is a fragile illusion that, like humor, shatters with too much scrutiny.

11

The current president was, as a candidate, the most glamorous American politician since JFK. In 2008, Barack Obama was not just a young, handsome, slightly exotic figure with a beautiful family and a vision of change. He was the embodiment of his supporters’ deepest longings for their country and their president. He was, as a friend said during the campaign, “a kind of human Rorschach test.” Different people projected different, often contradictory ideals onto him, just as they did -- and still do -- onto Kennedy.

12

The realities of politics and policy have punctured Obama’s glamour. He has become yet another embattled second-term president. He hasn’t recaptured Camelot. And for that, all Americans, supporters and opponents alike, should be grateful. Camelot is a myth born from an assassin’s bullet and a widow’s image-making gifts. It never existed in real life. It was conjured only in death.

13

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