***1968 with Tom Brokaw***

The year 1968 is considered one of the most turbulent, and pivotal, twelve month periods in American history. This single year was a flashpoint for many of the social, political, and cultural transformations for which the overall decade of the 1960s is known. During these years, the United States became entrenched in an unpopular war in Vietnam abroad, while unrest, experimentation, violence, and outspokenness raged throughout the nation. The Civil Rights Movement gained momentum, sit-ins and riots became commonplace, leaders were assassinated on a seemingly regular basis, and social experimentation and psychedelic music became the rage in San Francisco and elsewhere. Many consider these years divisive, others shameful, yet some believe they were necessary to galvanize change in America.

The slowly building upheaval of the 1960s reached an apex in 1968. The tension that had been increasingly brewing over the previous years finally came to a head, exploding across 365 days of violence, uprising, and mourning. Robert Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. were assassinated, riots broke out at the Democratic National Convention, and the media coverage of the Tet Offensive exposed the gruesome underbelly of the Vietnam War. Together, these events signaled the powerful cultural, economic, and social changes that still reverberate today.

**ANSWER FOUR OF THE FIRST 7 QUESTIONS**

**+ THE REQUIRED QUESTION #8**

1. What was the Tet Offensive? What did it reveal about the conflict in Vietnam and why was it particularly shocking for Americans?
2. What was at stake for those who dodged the draft? By going to Canada to escape the draft and military service, were people breaking the law? Do you think some draft dodgers were justified, or not? Explain your answer.
3. What incited the various sit-ins and protests at Columbia University? How would you describe the make-up of these protestors and what ultimately happened to them? Do you think that anything of this size and nature could happen today? Why or why not?
4. What were the various reactions to the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.?
5. Why do you think Robert Kennedy was such an influential and widely liked candidate, especially among minority groups such as migrant farm workers? What set him apart from Eugene McCarthy? Finally, why was the Senator assassinated?
6. What were the repercussions (consequences / results) of the riots at the 1968 Democratic Convention? Can you think of any recent event that was covered and exposed so extensively on television?
7. What was the “silent majority” and why were they significant? How did this group ultimately affect the results of the 1968 Presidential Election?

**REQUIRED QUESTION -**

1. Former Nixon speech writer Pat Buchanan considers 1968 one of the most divisive (causing disagreements) years in American History. Do you think this divisiveness (disagreement / argument / conflict) was bad, good, or somewhere in between for America? Why?