Did the Cuban Revolution improve life for Cubans?

Supporting Questions

1. What was the Cuban Revolution?
2. How did the Cuban Revolution impact social issues?
3. How did the Cuban government change after the revolution?
4. How did the Cuban Revolution affect the country’s economy?
# Did the Cuban Revolution improve life for Cubans?

**Inquiry Standard**

Social Studies Standards Addressed:
- SS6H3 The student will analyze important 20th century issues in Latin America and the Caribbean. (a. Explain the impact of the Cuban Revolution.)
- SS6H1 Explain conflict and change in Latin America. (c. Explain the impact of the Cuban Revolution and describe the current relationship between Cuba and the United States.)

Language Arts Standards Addressed:
- ELASAGSE6RI1. Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- ELAGSE6W1. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

**Staging the Compelling Question**

Candidate A (Batista) vs. Candidate B (Castro) - Who would you choose?

<table>
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<td>What was the Cuban Revolution?</td>
<td>How did the Cuban Revolution impact social issues?</td>
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**Formative Performance Task**

- Create a story map that highlights the main events, key people, and outcomes of the Cuban Revolution. Select either template to help organize the story map.
- Create an infographic/drawing that shows the social changes that took place after the Cuban Revolution.
- List three quotes from the sources that discuss the political changes in Cuba. Then, complete a Say-Mean-Matter analysis for one selected.
- Make a T-chart to compare the economic changes in Cuba on an individual and national scale. Use specific text evidence from the sources to support the information in your T-chart. Then, make a claim about the changes based on your T-chart.

**Featured Sources**

**Source A:** Introduction to Cuba: Opposing Viewpoints
**Source B:** The Cuban Revolution (for lower Lexile readers)
**Source C:** Story Map Organizer

**Source A:** Education Under Castro
**Source B:** "Cuba's Achievements" by Fidel Castro
**Source C:** Cuban Socio-Economic Indicators in Comparative Perspective
**Source D:** Women and the Cuban Revolution

**Source A:** Freedom Report:
**Source B:** Life in Cuba
**Source C:** Human Rights Watch: Cuba
**Source D:** Say Mean Matter Organizer

**Source A:** An Assessment of the Cuban Revolution
**Source B:** Cuba Under Castro, Building a New Economy

**Summative Performance Task**

ARGUMENT
Did the Cuban Revolution improve life for Cubans?

EXTENSION
Create an educational video or propaganda poster that corresponds to your argument.

**Taking Informed Action**

UNDERSTAND
Identify and describe a human rights issue discussed in the Cuban Revolution and explain how it still impacts the people of Cuba today.

ASSESS
Create a list of possible actions to address the issue. This may include letters, editorials, social media campaigns, videos, ad protests.

ACTION
Choose one of the options and implement it within a small, collaborative group.
Inquiry Description

Description of Inquiry: Students will evaluate primary and secondary sources to determine the positive and negative outcomes of the Cuban Revolution. Based on their interpretation of the information, they will determine whether the Cuban Revolution was a positive or negative event for the Cuban people.

Structure

This inquiry arc asks students to critically analyze a historical event from multiple perspectives in an effort to help them understand that no government, ideology, or historical event can ever be objectively characterized as simply “good” or “bad.” Through primary and secondary documents, students explore the events leading up to and directly following the Cuban Revolution, noting that the Cuban people experienced both positive and negative outcomes from the Cuban Revolution and Castro’s rule. Through story mapping, visual representations, quote analysis, and argumentative writing, students will produce a variety formative and summative products in an effort to address social studies standards and answer the compelling question, “Did the Cuban Revolution improve life for Cubans?”
Staging the compelling question

Provide this scenario to students:

Imagine you are a poor worker in a small village on a tropical island. You have a choice between two candidates to support for leadership of your country.

Candidate A is a military general who has been in power for the past fourteen years. He was originally democratically elected, but two years ago his presidency was threatened, so he forcefully kept power through a military coup. In addition:

- He practices nepotism and favoritism, filling government offices with close friends.
- He has turned your beautiful island into a haven for rich tourists while doing nothing to stop the poverty his own people experience.
- He imprisons and executes people who disagree with his policies.
- He has close ties to organized crime syndicates in foreign countries.
- He uses military might – instead of diplomacy – to keep order.

Candidate B was born to a Spanish immigrant who owned a small plantation. He graduated with a law degree. After practicing law, he ran for election to the House of Representatives. Troops led by Candidate A halted the election and ended democracy in the country. In addition:

- He tried to start a revolution against the dictatorship, because he wanted to improve the lives of the poor citizens of your country.
- He has built up a supportive following of poor citizens on the island.
- He reclaimed property owned by foreigners to redistribute to the poor.
- He promised to improve life for “all” and vowed to improve education and healthcare.
- He and his supporters helped out on local farms and have built small schools to support education on the island.

Teacher note: Do not reveal true identities of candidates during the staging process. This should be a class discussion about which candidate would be the “best” for the most people. (Students can show their support through a Physical Barometer for the two candidates and then share why they chose that position). Students will learn the true identity of the two candidates while answering supporting question 1. Revisit this activity during Supporting Question 1.
Supporting Question 1

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• **Source B**: The Cuban Revolution (for lower Lexile readers)  
• **Source C**: Story Map Organizer |

Students should understand the historical background and the primary factors that led to the Cuban Revolution.

**Formative Performance Task**

Use the Story Map Organizer below - or create your own - for students to map the important events, people, and outcomes of the Cuban Revolution based on the information in the articles.

Use this to ensure students have sufficient background knowledge and are prepared to answer the Compelling Question, "Did the Cuban Revolution Improve Lives for Cubans?"
For more than fifty years, Cuba has been controlled by an authoritarian Communist regime led by Fidel Castro, and for the last few years, by his brother, Raúl Castro.

Before the Cuban revolution of 1959, however, Cuba was ruled by Fulgencio Batista. Batista, who came from a poor farming family, joined the army and became a sergeant. He helped organize an army coup of the democratic government in 1933. He controlled the country from behind the scenes for several years and then was elected president himself in 1940. Upon the end of his term in 1944, he traveled and lived abroad. He orchestrated a coup of the corrupt and widely disliked Cuban government in 1952. His second rule, however, was more brutal and dictatorial. He manipulated presidential elections, cracked down on newspapers, outlawed strikes, and embezzled money from the state. The economy struggled while Batista's secret police carried out a campaign of repressive terror and torture, killing hundreds and perhaps thousands of people.

Though there is no doubt that Batista was a dictator, there has been considerable controversy about how oppressive his rule was, especially in comparison to the Communist regime that succeeded it. In congressional testimony on the Cuban revolution, former ambassador to Cuba Arthur Gardner argued that Cuba under Fidel Castro was more of a police state than it had been under Batista. He also asserted that Batista was an excellent ally to the United States.

"Batista had always leaned toward the United States. I don't think we ever had a better friend. It was regrettable, like all South Americans, that he was known—although I had no absolute knowledge of it—to be getting a cut, I think is the word for it, in almost all the things that were done. But, on the other hand, he was doing an amazing job...."

In the same testimony, Earl T. Smith, also a former ambassador to Cuba, contended that Batista enjoyed wide support in the armed forces and labor, and that under Batista, "nineteen hundred and fifty-seven was one of the best years in the economic history of Cuba."

These views have been echoed by more modern commentators as well. For example, Adolfo Rivero Caro, a Cuban exile and one of the founders of the Cuban Committee for Human Rights, published an article, En defensa del neoliberalismo, in which he argued that on the eve of the revolution, Cuba had a vibrant middle class, as well as life expectancies and average incomes that were well above the average for the region. He admits that the country had many problems, but asks, "Can it truthfully be said that Cuba before Castro was a society without hope and in need of a radical revolution?"

Others, however, have argued that the overthrow of Batista was necessary. During the late 1950s, numerous State Department officials in the United States grew increasingly horrified at Batista's repression and violence. Lyman B. Kirkpatrick, a Central Intelligence Agency officer, said in his 1968 book The Real CIA, "By the time Batista fled Havana, he had lost the support of most of the Cuban people as the result of the progressive tyranny and terror he imposed." As an example of this terror, Kirkpatrick recounts the story of a schoolteacher who was arrested and tortured on suspicion of plotting against the government. Kirkpatrick saw photographs of the woman, taken by a doctor who, according to Kirkpatrick, said that "he had never seen a human body more mistreated."

More recent writers have also emphasized the harshness of the Batista regime. In an August 28, 2006, article at the GlobalResearch website, Stephen Lendman argues that the revolution was prompted and necessitated by Batista's rule. He contends, "Batista, with full backing from the US, instituted a brutal police state that served the interests of capital and turned the island into a casino and brothel."

Lendman believes that the Cuban revolution was an effort to remove the corrupt Batista and rid the island of US imperialism. He argues that as such, it was successful, and that the Cuban people were liberated by, and remain grateful for, Castro's revolution.

The authors in Opposing Viewpoints: Cuba look at other controversies surrounding Cuba in chapters titled...

Source:
The government of Cuba in the first three decades following independence was laden (loaded) with corruption and irresponsible in its handling of administrative matters. Backed by the United States, Fulgencio Batista led a revolt in 1933 that toppled the despotic rule of Gen. Gerardo Machado y Morales, who had assumed leadership in 1925. Batista thus became the most powerful man in Cuba. He ran the government through other officials until 1940, when he was elected president. He retired from office in 1944, but in 1952 he overthrew the civilian government a second time. Suspending the constitution, he made himself chief of state with dictatorial powers. Batista’s rule differed little from the corrupt politics of his predecessors. Years of corrupt government, embezzlement, and terrorism led to a revolt in the fall of 1958 under the leadership of Fidel Castro. Batista fled to the Dominican Republic on Jan. 1, 1959. A week later the Fidelistas were in control of Havana. Castro, at age 32 became premier. At first many Cubans applauded Batista’s downfall and hoped that Castro’s promised reforms would benefit their country. Before long, however, it became evident that the new regime had embraced communism. A visit from the Soviet Union’s First Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan in 1960 brought Cuba a credit of 100 million dollars and a promise that the Soviets would buy 5 million tons of sugar. Offers of loans, trade, and technicians from mainland China and the Soviet satellite countries followed. Many critics of the new regime were put to death by firing squads or were imprisoned. Thousands of anticommunist Cubans went underground or fled the country. The vast majority of the refugees sought exile in the United States. During the 1950s, a young revolutionary named Fidel Castro became the leader of the Cuban Revolution. The revolution overthrew the Cuban government led by Fulgencio Batista in 1959. Castro became the country’s Communist leader. He executed more than seven hundred of his opponents and jailed many more. His government also seized control of much of the country’s land and property. This upset the United States because some of the land and property Castro seized belonged to U.S. businesses. The Cuban Revolution established a Communist government just ninety miles off the coast of Florida. Under a Communist government, the state owns almost all of the property. People have very little freedom. The United States feared Communism. U.S. leaders opposed Castro. They did not want any more Communist countries in the Americas. For almost fifty years, Fidel Castro ruled Cuba, before finally resigning for health reasons in 2008. He handed power over to his brother.

Source:
Copy the link below and paste into your browser to access a PDF option for the Story Map Organizer:

http://sselamgp.wikispaces.com/file/view/Story%20Map_..,

**Source:**
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**Source C**: Cuban Socio-Economic Indicators in Comparative Perspective  
**Source D**: Women and the Cuban Revolution |

Focus on:
- Healthcare
- Education
- Standard of Living

**Formative Performance Task**

Use an infographic generator like [https://venngage.com](https://venngage.com) to allow students to create a graphic that compares and contrasts healthcare, education, and standard of living before and after the Cuban Revolution.

Alternatively, have students create an illustration that shows these changes.

Use this formative task to ensure students understand how the Cuban Revolution had both positive and negative effects for Cubans regarding healthcare, education, and standard of living.
"Many of Castro’s government’s programs after the revolution tackled the problem of education. The education of people in rural areas became vitally important. The year 1961, saw the start of a massive literacy campaign, where over 300,000 adults and children were sent to rural areas of Cuba to teach. In the first year of the revolution, "the illiteracy rate went down from 23.6% for Cubans aged over 10 (and in the countryside the figure was double that rate) to 3.9%”(Brenner, 1989, 114) Making people literate was not the sole goal of this campaign. Rather, the government saw that if these people were educated, then they would be able to integrate into the ‘new society’(Brenner, 1989, 114). When this campaign ended, another program started. Primary and secondary education was offered in factories, farms, offices and night schools, and this encouraged all adults, who had missed out on an education to have an opportunity to learn (Thomas, 1984, p. 49). The next government program, entitled "The Battle for the Sixth Grade”, aimed at ensuring that every adult in Cuba attained the education level up to sixth grade. This target was reached in the late 1970s. In Castro’s educational reforms, education was provided free. Before the revolution, education was expensive. Only the rich were able to afford to send their children to school and children with disabilities would not receive an education at all (Garcia, 2006, Pg 150). Castro believed that the cost of education was deterring many people from educating their children. After the revolution, education was made free for all children and adults, at every stage of education from infant day-care to university (Suárez, 1967, p. 46). Under Castro’s government, students no longer had to pay for books, uniforms, stationery. The government provided everything that was necessary for school (Garcia, 2006, Pg 74). This was a change from the education system under Batista where, “Educational opportunities were restricted by birth, wealth and privilege” (Del Aguila, 1984, Pg 11). This opened up the education system to all Cubans."

Source:
"It has brought free education to 100% of the country’s children.

It has the highest school retention rate –over 99%– between kindergarten and ninth grade– of all of the nations in the hemisphere.

Its elementary school students rank first worldwide in the knowledge of their mother language and mathematics.

The country also ranks first worldwide with the highest number of teachers per capita and the lowest number of students per classroom.

All children with physical or mental challenges are enrolled in special schools.

The average Cuban citizen today has at the very least a ninth-grade level of education.

Infant mortality has been reduced from 60 per 1000 live births to a rate that fluctuates between 6 and 6.5, which is the lowest in the hemisphere, from the United States to Patagonia.

Life expectancy has increased by 15 years. Infectious and contagious diseases like polio, malaria, neonatal tetanus, diphtheria, measles, rubella, mumps, whooping cough and dengue have been eradicated; others like tetanus, meningococcal meningitis, hepatitis B, leprosy, hemophilus meningitis and tuberculosis are fully controlled.

Today, in our country, people die of the same causes as in the most highly developed countries: cardiovascular diseases, cancer, accidents, and others, but with a much lower incidence.

A profound revolution is underway to bring medical services closer to the population, in order to facilitate access to health care centers, save lives and alleviate suffering.

Cuba is today the country with the highest number of doctors per capita in the world, with almost twice as many as those that follow closer.

Our scientific centers are working relentlessly to find preventive or therapeutic solutions for the most serious diseases.

Cubans will have the best healthcare system in the world, and will continue to receive all services absolutely free of charge.

In Cuba, 85% of the people own their homes and they pay no property taxes on them whatsoever. The remaining 15% pay a wholly symbolic rent, which is only 10% of their salary.

Illegal drug use involves a negligible percentage of the population, and is being resolutely combated.

Discrimination against women was eradicated, and today women make up 64% of the country’s technical and scientific workforce."

Source:
## Supporting Question 2

### Cuban Socio-Economic Indicators in Comparative Perspective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>1960</th>
<th>1990</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life Expectancy at Birth (Years)</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>75.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank in Latin America</td>
<td>#4</td>
<td>#1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under Five Child Mortality, per 1000 live births</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank in Latin America</td>
<td>#3</td>
<td>#2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant Mortality (Under One Year), per 1000 live births</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank in Latin America</td>
<td>#3</td>
<td>#1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Literacy</td>
<td>(1970)</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank in Latin America</td>
<td>#5</td>
<td>#2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Primary and Secondary School Enrolments</td>
<td>(1970)</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank in Latin America</td>
<td>#5</td>
<td>#2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real GDP per capita (purchasing power parity terms)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>$2,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank in Latin America</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>#14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Development Index</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>0.711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank in Latin America</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>#10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank in the World</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>#75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNDP Human Development Reports 1990, 133; and 1992, 135-136

UNDP Human Development Reports 1990, 133; and 1992, 135-136
"In the immediate aftermath of the Revolution, Fidel pledged that Cuba would become free of illiteracy. This campaign was a triumph for women, who constituted over half of the volunteers and ‘55 percent of those who learned to read and write’. It successfully challenged the prevailing gender norm that women “belonged” in their home. In 1953, one in five women could neither read nor write, and of all those over the age of twenty-five, only one in 100 had a university-level education. As the most marginalized in pre-revolutionary society, women were the principal beneficiaries of the expansion of education. The transformation of the educational system was remarkable in scope, as well as content. The Cuban Revolution was determined to remove any underlying discrimination from the curriculum. For example, courses in woodwork and home economics were unified, with children taught identical skills regardless of gender expectations. A highly skilled workforce emerged of ‘previously home-bound women’. Alongside the education overhaul, the Cuban Revolution initiated a transformation of healthcare and social services. Amendments to healthcare contributed to ‘improvements in women’s reproductive health’, including rural maternal facilities and a program of pap smears. In control of their reproduction, Cuban women have the freedom to enter the labour force, defying expectations of motherhood and domesticity. Furthermore, services were implemented catering to the working mother, to encourage the pursuit of external employment. These included straightforward daycare centers and laundries, and the innovative Plan Jaba whereby working women were given ‘preferential treatment in grocery stores’. The Revolution was committed to incorporating women into production, and as a result of Castro’s far-reaching policies, the female workforce more than doubled between 1960 and 1980."

Source:
### Supporting Question 3

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**Focuss on:**

- Individual political rights
- Autocratic Form of Government
- Voting Rights
- Participation in Political Process

**Formative Performance Task**

After selecting quotations, students should choose one to analyze in a Say-Mean-Matter (see attached sources for organizer) to help students understand how changes in government during the Cuban Revolution affected the political rights of Cuban citizens.
Cubans cannot change their government through democratic means. In January, members of the National Assembly were elected in a process with a reported turnout of 98.35 percent of 7.8 million registered voters. Reportedly, there were only 601 candidates for an equal number of seats. Opposition and dissident groups were forbidden from presenting their own candidates. The National Assembly is vested with the right of legislative power, but, when not in session, this faculty is delegated to a 31-member council of state elected by the Assembly and chaired by Castro.

In Cuba, all political and civic organization outside of the PCC is illegal. Political dissent, spoken or written, is a punishable offense, and those so punished frequently receive years of imprisonment for seemingly minor infractions.

Cuba under Castro still has one of the highest per capita rates of imprisonment for political offenses of any country in the world. Most political prisoners are held in cells with common criminals, and many are convicted on vague charges such as "disseminating enemy propaganda" or "dangerousness." Since 1991, the United Nations has voted annually to assign a special investigator on human rights to Cuba, but the Cuban government has refused to cooperate. Groups that exist apart from the state are labeled "counterrevolutionary criminals" and are still subject to systematic repression, including arrests, beatings while in custody, and confiscations and intimidation by uniformed or plainclothes state security forces.

Source:
Excerpt

There are many good reasons to live in Cuba. School is free and open to all students. There is very little crime, and no guns, and drug use is little. Some things, though, should be changed. The country is communist and should be changed to a democracy so the citizens have freedom of speech and can choose what they want to do. Communism is a theory/system, which is based on all people sharing all wealth and property equally. This idea can have drawbacks, however. Currently, Fidel Castro, the leader of Cuba tells people what they have to do, and people can get arrested and hurt if they disobey. In the US, people can speak against the president, and nothing will really happen to them. It is hard for Cuba’s economy to grow when everything is shared and even hard work won’t gain a person more money. Therefore, a lot of technology in Cuba is really old. Cars are run-down and used. Very few people have cell phones, and the towers don’t give a lot of signal. Only people with money can purchase computers, and there is no Wi-Fi and it is hard to send emails.

Source:

https://www.oneworldeducation.org/life-cuba
The Cuban government continues to repress dissent and discourage public criticism. While in recent years it has relied less on long-term prison sentences to punish its critics, short-term arbitrary arrests of human rights defenders, independent journalists, and other critics have increased dramatically. Other repressive tactics employed by the government include beatings, public acts of shaming, and the termination of employment.

The government controls all media outlets in Cuba and tightly restricts access to outside information, severely limiting the right to freedom of expression. Only a very small fraction of Cubans are able to read independent websites and blogs because of the high cost of, and limited access to, the Internet. While people in cities like Havana, Santiago de Cuba, or Santa Clara have access to the Internet, people in more rural areas are not able to go online.

Cubans who criticize the government continue to face the threat of criminal prosecution. They do not benefit from due process guarantees, such as the right to fair and public hearings by a competent and impartial tribunal. In practice, courts are “subordinated” to the executive and legislative branches, denying meaningful judicial independence.

Source:

https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chap..
| Featured Source D | Say Mean Matter Organizer |

**Excerpt**

Copy the link and paste into your browser to access a Say Mean Matter Organizer:

http://envisionindepth.weebly.com/uploads/2/0/4/6/..

**Source:**

http://envisionindepth.weebly.com/uploads/2/0/4/6/..
Supporting Question 4

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Focus on:

- GDP  
- Embargo  
- Unemployment  
- Wage increases  
- Poverty

**Formative Performance Task**

Students should be able to use the source information to create a T-chart illustrating the small and large scale economic changes that took place during the Cuban Revolution, and they should be able to discuss how these changes affected the lives of Cuban citizens.
The final element of this assessment relates to the economy. The revolution had deep and lasting consequences for Cuba’s national economy. Following the revolution in 1969, the US, essentially in opposition to socialism, placed an economic embargo on Cuba. (Amnesty International, 2010). Cuba’s economy had been dependent on the export of sugar to the US and was fundamentally threatened by this. Due to ideological similarities, the Soviet Union agreed to take up the importation of Cuban sugar, switching the dependence of Cuba’s economy from the US to the Soviet Union. With the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 Cuba was plunged into economic crisis. Although the US embargo and its ultimate consequences were outside the control of Castro the economic isolation of Cuba and subsequent economic decline can be directly related the revolution. A full assessment of the economic impact of the revolution must also include an analysis of social equality and the division of individual wealth. Before the revolution there was much social inequality. This can be linked to discrimination, which“...was based not only on race but more importantly on class, leading many scholars to define the pre-revolutionary period as that of a colour/class system” (Jorquera, 1998). Many people were excluded from educational opportunities on the grounds of race and class and therefore unemployment rates were extremely high. (Jorquera, 1998). This social inequality in turn led to a poor distribution of wealth and a low standard of living for many. After the revolution Castro focused on eliminating discrimination on the grounds of class and race. Consequently, “[with] the revolution...came the end... [of the] authority of the ruling class; the revolution gave it's people an opportunity to end...much of the discrimination and miseries of Batista’s Cuba” (Cuba Socialista, 1994). This, in creating social equality, reduced unemployment and led to improved distribution of wealth and a better standard of living despite the damage sustained to the national economy.

Source:

https://cliojournal.wikispaces.com/An+Assessment+o..
With most Cubans united behind his government, Castro completed the transformation of Cuba's economy. The government centralized and coordinated all economic decisions. It provided every Cuban with work and set salaries that distributed wealth more equitably among workers. To inspire the population, revolutionary leader Che Guevara, a close associate of Castro, introduced the New Man Theory. This doctrine proposed that people would work not for their own material advancement, but to benefit the community. Castro and Guevara attempted to use the New Man Theory to motivate Cubans to work harder for the revolution. It did not prove successful. Although working-class and poor Cubans supported the goals of the revolution, many were not willing to work long hours without increased financial compensation.

In 1962 the economy collapsed due to poor government planning and a decline in trade with the United States resulting from the embargo. The amount of goods available, especially food and clothing, declined sharply. Inflation followed, since Cubans had money but little to buy. The government imposed price and wage freezes and rationed food, clothing, and gasoline. The black market offered scarce items at high prices.

Despite the shortages in goods during the 1960s, the government successfully redistributed wealth more equitably and provided a better quality of life for most Cubans. The government provided schools, medical clinics, retirement pensions, and public transportation. It also reduced rents and utility charges, lowering the cost of living. The poorest 40 percent of the population saw their per capita income rise, despite the faltering economy and the scarcity of many goods.

By the end of the 1960s, stabilizing the economy had become the government's first priority. The reforms of the revolution and Castro's ability to implement independent policies depended upon Cuba building an economy that could support extensive social reforms. To this end, Castro pledged that Cuba would produce 10 million tons of sugar in the 1970 harvest. As early as 1968, resources, both human and material, were being mobilized for sugar production. Cubans were pressured into "volunteering" their time to perform unpaid work in the sugar fields. Approximately 1.2 million workers from all sectors of the economy joined 100,000 members of the army and 300,000 sugar workers in the fields. In the end, the effort failed. On July 26, 1970, Castro informed the Cuban people that the nation had produced only 8.5 million tons. The consequences of the failure were harsh. All sectors of the economy declined sharply because labor and resources had been diverted to the harvest.

Source:

http://www.countriesquest.com/caribbean/cuba/histo..
Summative Performance Task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compelling Question</th>
<th>Did the Cuban Revolution improve life for Cubans?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argument</td>
<td>Did the Cuban Revolution improve life for Cubans?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension</td>
<td>Create an educational video or propaganda poster that corresponds to your argument.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Argument**

Prompt:

Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution had drastic and far-reaching effects on the citizens of Cuba. Think about the social, political, and economic changes that took place during the Cuban Revolution and answer the compelling question, "Did the Cuban Revolution improve lives for Cubans?" Be sure to include details and evidence from your analysis to support your claims.

Possible argument stems:

The Cuban Revolution improved the lives of Cubans through greater access to healthcare and education, an increase in the general standard of living, and progress toward gender equality.

The Cuban Revolution did not improve the lives of Cubans because it resulted in economic instability, political corruption, and loss of individual freedoms.

**Extension**

Students who require an extension to the summative task can create a propaganda poster or video in support of their argument.

Use examples on Google of propaganda posters from the Cuban Revolution for inspiration.
Taking Informed Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understand</th>
<th>Identify and describe a human rights issue discussed in the Cuban Revolution and explain how it still impacts the people of Cuba today.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assess</td>
<td>Create a list of possible actions to address the issue. This may include letters, editorials, social media campaigns, videos, ad protests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Choose one of the options and implement it within a small, collaborative group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students should be able to use what they have learned to analyze and address a current human rights issue in Cuba.