

Title:

The Vietnam War

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Abstract:

Despite its vastly superior economic, technological, and military resources, the United States was unable to the Vietnam War. The reasons for this have been debated by historians for several decades. This lesson, intended for a grade 10-12 U.S. History class, will guide students to examine the Vietnam War from a variety of perspectives to assist them to come to their own interpretation. To complete this lesson, it will take about 10 hours. Students will have to conduct primary source research, view selected portions of movies, investigate music of the era, and engage in oral history projects in order to make their own historical conclusions.

State Standard(s):

B. 12.1 Explain different points of view on the same historical event, using data gathered from various sources, such as letters, journals, diaries, newspapers, governments documents, and speeches

B. 12.11 Compare examples and analyze why governments of various countries have sometimes sought peaceful resolution to conflicts and sometimes gone to war

B.12.15 Identify a historical or contemporary event in which a person was forced to take an ethical position, such as a decision to go to war, the impeachment of a president, or a presidential pardon, and explain the issues involved

B.12.16 Describe the purpose and effects of treaties, alliances, and international organizations that characterize today's interconnected world

Essential Historical Question:

Why was the United States unable to win the Vietnam War?

Perspectives on the Question:

Military	How did the United States, while possessing a better trained and equipped military still lose the war?
Social	How did the home front impact the war?
Political	How did the executive branch hinder the military's ability to win the war?
Economic	How do the two countries compare, in terms of population & G.D.P. from 1954-1974?

Learning Targets:

Knowledge

- Military Terms & leaders (DMZ, search-and-destroy, firebase)
- Geographic Terms (Major cities, rivers & other water bodies, battle sites,)
- Political Terms (domino theory, Vietnamization, Geneva Accords,)
- Leaders: Ho Chi Minh, Giap, Diem, American Presidents

Skills and Processes

Note-taking, researching, analyzing sources of information, writing, interpreting maps, chart, graphs, statistics, visual documents.

Reasoning and Critical and Creative Thinking

History Thinking Standard 2. F. Appreciate historical perspectives

History Thinking Standard 3. J. Hypothesize the influence of the past

Dispositions and Attitudes

- Understand that every war is not popular
- Attitudes toward soldiers changes over time
- An awareness of the long-term effects of war
- An awareness of American hubris
- An understanding that there are limits to power
- An understanding that the most powerful country doesn't win always
- An awareness that war requires popular support
- An appreciation for the burdens of war which must be shared equally

Instruction:

Preliminary Activities:

Students will acquire knowledge about the Vietnam War Era from the internet, textbooks, and various resources.

New Learning Activities:

Students will transfer the information that they have acquired into a newspaper format. This format will be directed at the four perspectives of economics, political, social, and military to respond to the essential question.

It will take the form of editorial cartoons, op/ed, graphics, feature articles. (You may include additional features appropriate to areas of interest of your students.)

Post-Learning Activities:

Students will apply this process to the American Revolutionary War, and the Soviet Union/Afghanistan War. After discussion of these incidents, students will be challenged to find at least one additional circumstance of this nature.

Assignment:

Students will create a multi-faceted newspaper on the Vietnam War Era. The newspaper will include a variety of articles, editorial, letters, graphics.

Assessment:

Goal of Performance or Product:

Students will create a Vietnam War Era newspaper as a group project. The newspaper will contain information on the four perspectives: military, social, economically and politically.

Role of Student:

The students will be journalist for a local newspaper. Each student can choose a specific role- editor, reporter, graphic artist, entertainment critic.
(Divide class into groups, or each student can create a newspaper.)

Audience of Performance or Product:

The audiences will be students, instructors, school staff, and parents. The newspapers could be put on the school's website.

Situation:

Teachers can divide class into various time eras of the Vietnam War, or allow each group to decide their own time period.

Criteria Used to Evaluate Performance or Product:

The newspaper will be the finished product.

Scoring Rubric available online.

Resources:

Primary Sources:

George C. Herring, ed., *The Pentagon Papers* (1983)

William A. Williams, ed., *America in Vietnam* (1985)

Secondary Sources:

George C. Herring, *America's Longest War* (1986)

Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam* (1983)

Internet:

Vietnam War Internet Project

<http://www.vwip.org/vwiphome.html>