

2012-2013 Teaching American History

Extended Discussion/Writing Lesson Plan

Lesson Title: The Vietnam War & its Impact on American Society

Author Name: Sarah Brown

Contact Information: Spanish Springs High School

Appropriate for Grade Level(s): 11th

US History Standard(s)

H2.[9-12].15 Explain the economic, political, and technological impact of the following conflicts on the United States, i.e., Korea, Vietnam, Persian Gulf War, Iraq, and the War on Terror.

H4.[9-12].2 Discuss the key people, ideas, and events of the Cold War era and analyze their impact on economic and political policy in the United States.

CCSS Reading Standards

1. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
2. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS Writing Standards

1. Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.
2. Write arguments focused on *discipline-specific content*.
3. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Discussion Question(s): To what extent did the Vietnam War heighten social, political, and economic tensions in the United States?

Discussion Engagement Strategy: Socratic Seminar – Fish Bowl variation

Student Readings/sources (list): Many of the documents and readings used in the lesson come from the 2008 A.P. U.S. History Exam.

1. Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, 1964
2. Country Joe and the Fish, "I Feel Like I'm Fixin' to Die", 1965
3. Photograph, Mary Beth Tinker, 1965
4. Martin Luther King, Jr., 1967
5. Cartoon, "Money Enough", Washington Post, 1967
6. Cartoon, New Figure on the American Scene", 1971
7. Robert F. Kennedy, 1968
8. James Fallows, 1969
9. Richard Nixon, 1969
10. The War Powers Act, 1973
11. George McGovern, 1973

Description of student writing assignment and criteria/rubric used for assessment of student writing: Students will write a standard AP style DBQ response that will be graded using the standard AP U.S. History DBQ rubric (1-9 scale).

Total Time Needed: 100 minutes + 45 minutes writing

Lesson Outline:

Time Frame (e.g. 15 minutes)	What is the teacher doing?	What are students doing?
20 minutes	The teacher will pass out event strips to the students. Teacher will observe and facilitate student formation of the timeline. Teacher will then lead the class in a discussion of the key events of the war as a quick review.	<i>Timeline of Vietnam Review</i> Students will each be given a strip of paper with an event of Vietnam. They will move around to physically create a chronology of Vietnam.
5-10 minutes	Teacher will pass out the activity packet and review the format and directions with students. Teacher will then direct students to individually or in pairs complete the brainstorm of the discussion question. (Teacher may choose to review this as a whole group.)	<i>Brainstorm the Discussion Question</i> Students will complete a 5 minute brainstorm of the question before analyzing the documents.
15-20 minutes	Teacher will pass out the document packet. Students are instructed to read, analyze and group the documents as they complete that portion of the activity packet. As students analyze, the teacher will be available to answer questions. The teacher will also pass out cards to students indicating what category (social, political, or economic) of the question they will focus their argument on for the discussion. Teacher may choose to discuss documents or ask students if they need clarification on any documents prior to proceeding.	<i>Analyze & Group the Documents</i> Students will analyze each of the documents and indicate which of the three categories it best fits in (social, political, or economic).
10 minutes	Teacher will instruct students to complete the preparation for their argument. Teacher will help students as needed.	<i>Preparing Argument</i> Students will prepare arguments by locating evidence from the documents to support claims. Students will be assigned one of the three categories from the question to focus their claims and argument on.
30 minutes	Teacher will review discussion format and remind students that they must each contribute while in the “fishbowl.” Teacher will instruct the first group to sit on the floor in a circle in the center of the large desk of circles (roundtable). Teacher will instruct the first group to begin discussing the extent to which the Vietnam War heightened tensions in regards to their category. Teacher will instruct students in the roundtable to take notes using the activity packet on the claims and evidence presented by the group in the fishbowl.	<i>Round Table (fish bowl)Discussions</i> One group at a time will enter the “fishbowl” while the rest of the students remain outside in the round table. The group will discuss one of the three categories assigned to them. Students outside of the fishbowl in the round table will take notes on the claims and evidence presented in the discussion they are observing.
10 minutes	Teacher will ask students to complete the reflection question in the activity packet and then lead a whole class discussion. Teacher will then instruct each student to write their own thesis (super claim) response to the essential question.	<i>Reflection Questions & Thesis</i> Students will respond to a reflection question and prepare a thesis statement in response to the essential discussion question.
30–45 minutes	Teacher will instruct students to take out the activity packet and document packet in order to respond in essay format to the essential question.	<i>Write the DBQ</i> The following class period, students will be asked to write a full DBQ response to the essential question.

Vietnam Round Table

Name _____ Period _____

To what extent did the Vietnam War heighten social, political, and economic tensions in the United States?

- ✓ You will first analyze the documents in the DBQ packet and complete the corresponding parts of the worksheet.
- ✓ Next, you will be divided into three groups; social, political, and economic. You will complete the corresponding parts of the worksheet in order to prepare to discuss your topic area.
- ✓ The whole class will sit in a discussion circle (round table).
- ✓ We will have four rounds of discussion. Each of the three groups will discuss separately while the rest of the class listens and takes notes. The fourth round will be a whole class discussion.
- ✓ We will conclude the activity with a time for individual reflection as you complete the rest of the worksheet.

Brainstorming the Question

Analyzing the Documents

Document Letter	Document Category (social, political, or economic)	What does the document indicate about heightened tensions relating to the category?

Which category will you be discussing in the Round Table? _____

How has the Vietnam War heightened _____ (category) tensions in the United States.

Round Table Discussion

To what extent did the Vietnam War heighten social, political, and economic tensions in the United States?

Discussion Notes on Other Category _____	
Claims	Evidence & Examples from the documents, & Reasoning
Discussion Notes on Other Category _____	
Claims	Evidence & Examples from the documents, & Reasoning

To what extent did the Vietnam War heighten social, political, and economic tensions in the United States?

Reflection

Can you identify any one category in society that was more affected by the Vietnam War?
Why or Why not?

Write a thesis statement (claim) in response to the DBQ question.

Lesson Documents

1 Doc. 1

2 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, 1964

3 Whereas the United States is assisting the peoples of southeast Asia to protest their freedom and has no territorial,
4 military or political ambitions in that area, but desires only that these people should be left in peace to work out their
5 destinies in their own way: Now, therefore be it

6 Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the
7 Congress approves and supports the determination of the President, as Commander in Chief, to take all necessary
8 measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression.

9 Doc. 2

10 Country Joe and the Fish, "I Feel Like I'm Fixin' to Die," 1965

11 Well, come on all of you, big strong men,
12 Uncle Sam needs your help again.

13 He's got himself in a terrible jam

14 Way down yonder in Vietnam

15 So put down your books and pick up a gun,
16 We're gonna have a whole lotta fun.

17
18 And it's one, two, three,
19 What are we fighting for ?

20 Don't ask me, I don't give a damn,

21 Next stop is Vietnam;

22 And it's five, six, seven,

23 Open up the pearly gates,

24 Well there ain't no time to wonder why,

25 Whoopee! we're all gonna die.

26
27 Come on Wall Street, don't be slow,
28 Why man, this is war au-go-go

29 There's plenty good money to be made

30 By supplying the Army with the tools of its trade,

31 But just hope and pray that if they drop the bomb,

32 They drop it on the Viet Cong.

33
34 And it's one, two, three,
35 What are we fighting for ?

36 Don't ask me, I don't give a damn,

37 Next stop is Vietnam.

38 And it's five, six, seven,

39 Open up the pearly gates,

40 Well there ain't no time to wonder why

41 Whoopee! we're all gonna die.

1 Well, come on generals, let's move fast;
2 Your big chance has come at last.
3 Now you can go out and get those reds
4 'Cause the only good commie is the one that's dead
5 And you know that peace can only be won
6 When we've blown 'em all to kingdom come.

7
8 And it's one, two, three,
9 What are we fighting for ?
10 Don't ask me, I don't give a damn,
11 Next stop is Vietnam;
12 And it's five, six, seven,
13 Open up the pearly gates,
14 Well there ain't no time to wonder why
15 Whoopee! we're all gonna die.

16
17 Come on mothers throughout the land,
18 Pack your boys off to Vietnam.
19 Come on fathers, and don't hesitate
20 To send your sons off before it's too late.
21 And you can be the first ones in your block
22 To have your boy come home in a box.

23 **Doc 3.**

24 **Photograph, Mary Beth Tinker (*Tinker v. Des Moines*), 1965**



25 **Doc. 4**

26 **Martin Luther King, 1967**

27 ... it became clear to me that the war was doing more than devastating the hopes of the poor at home. It was sending
28 their sons and their brothers and their husband to fight and die in extraordinary high proportions relative to the rest of
29 the population. We were taking the black young men who had been crippled by our society and sending them eight
30 thousand miles away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in southwest Georgia and East
31 Harlem.

32

1 Doc. 5

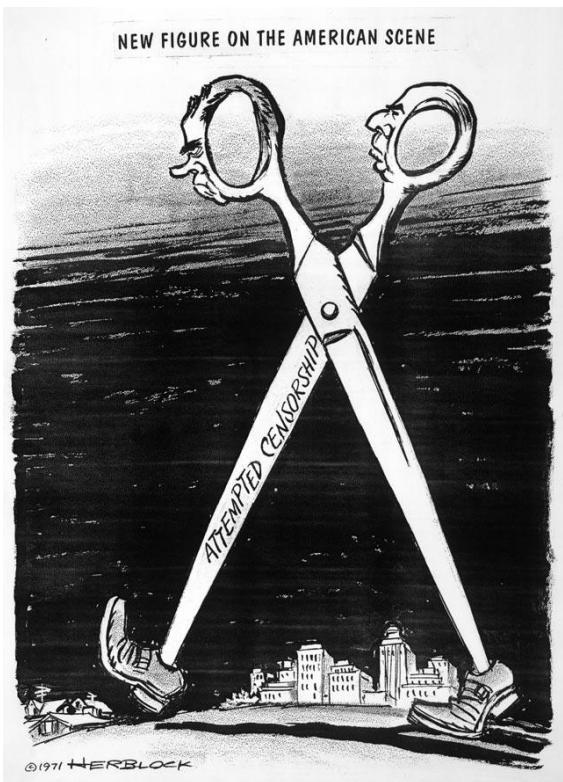
2 Money Enough, Herblock, Washington Post, 1967

"THERE'S MONEY ENOUGH TO SUPPORT BOTH OF YOU
NOW, DOESN'T THAT MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER?"



3 Doc. 6

4 "New Figure on the American Scene", 1971



1 Doc. 7

2 Robert F. Kennedy, 1968

3 For years we have been told that the measure of our success and progress in Vietnam was increasing security and control
4 for the population. Now we have seen that none of the population is secure and no area is under such control...

5 This has not happened because our men are not brave or effective, because they are. It is because we have not
6 conceived our mission in this war. It is because we have misconceived the nature of the war. IT is because we have
7 sought to resolve by military might a conflict whose issue depends upon the will and conviction of the South Vietnamese
8 people. It is like sending a lion to halt an epidemic of jungle rot.

9

10 Doc. 8

11 James Fallows, 1969

12 Even as the last of the Cambridge contingent was throwing its urine and deliberately failing its color-blindness tests,
13 buses from the next board began to arrive. These bore the boys from Chelsea, thick, dark-haired young men, the white
14 proles [working class] of Boston. Most of them were younger than us, since they had just left high school, and it had
15 clearly never occurred to them that there might be a way around the draft. They walked through the examination lines
16 like so many cattle off to slaughter. I tried to avoid noticing, but the results were inescapable. While perhaps four out of
17 five of my friends from Harvard were being deferred, just the opposite was happening to the Chelsea boys.

18 Doc. 9

19 Richard Nixon, Address to the Nation, 1969

20 In view of these circumstances there were some who urged that I end the war at once by ordering the immediate
21 withdrawal of all American forces...

22 From a political standpoint this would have been a popular and easy course to follow. After all, we became involved in
23 the war while my predecessor was in office. I could blame the defeat which would be the result of my action on him and
24 come out as the peacemaker. Some put it to me quite bluntly: This was the only way to avoid allowing Johnson's war to
25 become Nixon's war...

26 But I had a greater obligation than to think only of the years of my administration and of the next election. I had to think
27 of the effect of my decision on the next generation and on the future of peace and freedom in America and in ...

28 I know it may not be fashionable to speak of patriotism or national destiny these days. But I feel it is appropriate to do so
29 on this occasion...

30 Let historians not record that when America was the most powerful nation in the world we passed on the other side of
31 the road and allowed the last hopes for peace and freedom of millions of people to be suffocated by the forces of
32 totalitarianism. And so tonight--to you, the great silent majority of my fellow Americans--I ask for your support...

33 Let us be united for peace. Let us also be united against defeat. Because let us understand: North Vietnam cannot defeat
34 or...

35

36

37

1 Doc. 10

2 The War Powers Act, 1973

3 Section 5(b) Within sixty calendar days after a report is submitted or is required to be submitted pursuant to section
4 4(a)(1), whichever is earlier, the President shall terminate any use of United States Armed Forces with respect to which
5 such report was submitted (or required to be submitted), unless the Congress (1) has declared war or has enacted a
6 specific authorization for such use of United States Armed Forces, (2) has extended by law such sixty-day period, or (3) is
7 physically unable to meet as a result of an armed attack upon the United States.

8 Doc. 11

9 George McGovern, 1973

10 What I propose is that we spend all this necessary for prudent national defense, and no more. I propose that we
11 conserve our limited resources:

12 By no longer underwriting the appalling waste of money and manpower that has become such a bad habit in our military
13 establishment;

14 By rejecting the purchase of weapons which are designed to fight the last war better, with almost no relevance to today's
15 threat;

16 By refusing to maintain extra military forces that can have no other purpose than to repeat our experience in Vietnam, a
17 venture which nearly all of us now recognize as a monstrous national blunder;

18 By repudiating the false world of old discredited myths, made up of blocs, puppets, and dominoes, facing instead a real
19 world of today and the future with multiple ideologies and interests.

20

Model DBQ Essay

America's involvement in the Vietnam War dramatically increased social, political, and economic tensions as evidenced by the growing protest movements and the increasing debates over America's role in the conflict. Political tensions were apparent in the debates that existed over the political goals and objectives regarding involvement and concerns raised over how much power had been given to the president. Additionally, many believed that the war both highlighted and exacerbated class and racial tensions. Concerns also were raised about how much money was being spent wastefully on the war effort while domestic programs of LBJ's Great Society were left with a lack of funding.

Many critics of America's involvement in the Vietnam War argued that there were no clear objectives and goals established. The political protest song by Country Joe and the Fish clearly acknowledge this lack of clarity that leads to increased disillusionment by the public (Doc. 2). Many Americans were asking themselves, "What are we fighting for?" (Doc. 2). It is apparent that even by 1968, many were arguing that America had never really understood its mission in the war demonstrating growing frustration and discontent with a lack of defined objectives (Doc. 7). Additionally, there was increased tension regarding the proper role of the executive and how much power should be given to the executive in times of war. Initially, there was relatively high support for an increase in executive power during times of war as evidenced in the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution which permitted the president to send American troops without Congressional approval (Doc. 1). However, by 1973 there was an attempt to reign in the extension of executive power through the passage of the War Powers Act which requires Congressional approval. This demonstrates the growing political tensions in response to the war.

An increase in social tensions is apparent in the growth of class and race based issues highlighted by the war. According to Martin Luther King, Jr. and James Fallows, poor young men were enlisting and being drafted in much higher proportion relative to the rest of the population (Doc. 4 & 8). This reveals the prevalence of socioeconomic differences in American society and the disadvantages faced by lower class groups. Martin Luther King, Jr. also alludes to the irony that many young black men are being sent to fight a war for freedoms and rights that they themselves are not even granted or guaranteed in America (Doc. 4). Class and race based inequities were made more apparent and led to increased social tensions during the Vietnam War era.

Proponents of the war argued that a huge amount of money was being spent unwisely on a war that did not directly impact Americans while domestic programs necessary for the growth and support of the domestic economy and the welfare of the American people were being underfunded. Domestic and urban programs that LBJ had advocated were not being adequately supported while a tremendous amount of money was being spent on the war effort (Doc. 5). This frustrated Americans including the poor and elderly who relied on the social programs of LBJ's Great Society. Critics argued that while national defense spending was necessary, that it was also necessary to spend wisely, no longer wasting huge sums on poorly fought wars that lacked clearly defined objectives (Doc. 11). The result would be the ability to reign in massive military spending and redirect it to domestic programs which would alleviate some of the economic tensions that had developed.

Clearly the Vietnam War had a profound impact on American society. It greatly heightened the political, social, and economic tensions in American society. Critics were frustrated with the lack of objectives and the expansion of executive power. It also revealed and exacerbated the tremendous class and race based inequity in America and raised questions about the impact of the war on the domestic economy which suffered as a result of increased military spending.

- 1 **1858** - French colonial rule begins.
- 2 **1930** - Ho Chi Minh founds the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP).
- 3 **1941** - ICP organizes a guerrilla force, Viet Minh, in response to invasion by Japan during World War II.
- 4 **1945** - The Viet Minh seizes power. Ho Chi Minh announces Vietnam's independence.
- 5 **1946** - French forces attack Viet Minh in Haiphong in November, sparking the war of resistance against the colonial power.
- 6 **1950** - Democratic Republic of Vietnam is recognized by China and USSR.
- 7 **1954** - Viet Minh forces attack an isolated French military outpost in the town of Dien Bien Phu. The attempt to take the
8 outpost lasts two months, during which time the French government agrees to peace talks in Geneva.
- 9 Vietnam is split into North and South at Geneva conference.
- 10 **1956** - South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem begins campaign against political dissidents.
- 11 **1957** - Beginning of Communist insurgency in the South.
- 12 **1959** - Weapons and men from North Vietnam begin infiltrating the South.
- 13 **1960** - American aid to Diem increased.
- 14 **1962** - Number of US military advisors in South Vietnam rises to 12,000.
- 15 **1963** - Viet Cong, the communist guerrillas operating in South Vietnam, defeat units of the ARVN, the South Vietnamese Army.
16 President Diem is overthrown.
- 17 **1964** - US destroyer allegedly attacked by North Vietnamese patrol boats. This triggers start of pre-planned American bombing
18 raids on North Vietnam. (**GULF OF TONKIN**)
- 19 **1965** - 200,000 American combat troops arrive in South Vietnam.
- 20 **1966** - US troop numbers in Vietnam rise to 400,000, then to 500,000 the following year.
- 21 **1968** - **Tet Offensive** - a combined assault by Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese army on US positions - begins. More than
22 500 civilians die in the US massacre at My Lai.
- 23 **1969** - Ho Chi Minh dies. President Nixon begins to reduce US ground troops in Vietnam as domestic public opposition to the
24 war grows.
- 25 **1970** - Nixon's national security advisor, Henry Kissinger, and Le Duc Tho, for the Hanoi government, start talks in Paris.
- 26 **1973** - Ceasefire agreement in Paris, US troop pull-out completed by March.
- 27 **1975** - North Vietnamese troops invade South Vietnam and take control of the whole country after South Vietnamese
28 President Duong Van Minh surrenders.