

Vietnam and Social Activism

Grade Level: 8

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Length of Unit: 2 Weeks

I. ABSTRACT

This unit covers in detail the Vietnam conflict from the French Indochina War through the withdrawal of American troops. It will also compare the anti-war protests with the social movements of the time, including the feminist movement, a variety of cultural movements, and environmentalism. During this unit, students will develop and practice skills such as using reference materials, read a variety of texts, and develop higher order thinking skills. Students will draw conclusions about the geographical location of Vietnam in Asia.

II. OVERVIEW

A. Concept Objectives:

In learning about major global events in the post World War era, the students will come to understand two main concepts. Firstly, the students will understand the boundary of culture, for example, how a person wants to believe in an ideology, or how a person is limited by that desire of belonging. Secondly, the students will develop an understanding of how humans form political bonds.

B. Specific Content from *Core Knowledge Sequence*:

The topics covered in this unit are outlined in the History and Geography strand of the *Core Knowledge Sequence* for the eighth grade as well as the English strand. This unit contains 8 lessons that take approximately 20 class hours to facilitate.

C. Skills: The following is a list of skills the student will develop and practice during this unit.

- Research reading
- Expository writing
- Scientific method related to research
- Public oration
- Reading comprehension
- Drawing conclusions
- Summarizing
- Note taking
- Synthesis
- Analysis
- Evaluation
- Translating word problems
- Interpret proportions
- Graphing
- Ratios
- Percent
- Critical Thinking
- Problem Solving

III. Background Knowledge:

A. For teachers:

1. Karnow, Stanley. *Vietnam: A History*. Penguin Books: New York, 1997, ISBN 0-14-026547-3. This book provides a history of Vietnam from the Second World War to 1975.
 2. Tuchman, Barbara. *Practicing History: Selected Essays by Barbara Tuchman*. Ballentine Books: New York, 1981, ISBN 0-345-30363-6. The essays particularly in section 3 deal with ideological situations with Vietnam.
- B. For students:
- Students may be familiar with several topics that are included in, or have parallels to, the content of this unit. The following are included in the *Core Knowledge Sequence*.
1. Grade 4: The Holy Wars, American Revolution and Constitutional Government
 2. Grade 5: (Westward) Expansion, Native Americans : Cultures and Conflicts
 3. Grade 6: Industrialism, Capitalism, Socialism, Marxism, Reform Movement
 4. Grade 7: America becomes a world power, World Wars
 5. Grade 8: Cold War, Civil Rights Movement

IV. Resources:

- John F. Kennedy Inaugural Speech. Written by John F. Kennedy. January 1961.
- Vietnam: A Television History Vol. 1-8*. Videocassette. Written and Produced by Austin Hoyt. PBS. 1983. 480 minutes.
- Hammond Atlas of the World*. Concise Edition. Hong Kong: Hammond, 1996, ISBN 0-8437-1178-7.
- US v. William Calley*. 1971.
- Picture Resources Page. available at <http://rockyweb.com/DBK/teacher>
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V. Lessons:

Lesson One: In Country (French Indochina War to US Takes Charge)

- A. Content and Objectives:
1. Content: The History of Vietnam and the Vietminh from 1945 to 1965
 2. Concept Objective: Students will be introduced to diverse political culture.
 3. Skill Objectives: Students will learn the history of the Vietminh from 1945 to 1965. Students will experience a drastic altering of culture and understand the severe shift in life between peacetime living and wartime living. Students are introduced to the geographical location of Vietnam.
- B. Materials: Uniforms, camouflage netting, audio/visual media of Vietnam and the Vietnam Conflict, draft registration card (Appendix A), map of Vietnam, flashing lights, paper, easel, marker (red), and pointer.
- C. Background Notes:
- D. Key Vocabulary: Police action, War, Coup d'tat, Guerilla, Incident, Bloc, Communist, Red Chinese, Vietminh, Domino Theory, Viet Cong, Special Forces, French Indochina War
- E. Procedures:
1. The day of the lesson, teachers dress in a uniform befitting a culture during the 1960's. Most should dress as military types on both sides.
 2. Before school, teachers prepare a classroom by dressing it in camouflage netting, hide flashing lights in corners, dousing neon lighting, setting up the video tape and audio tape. Teachers place a map of Vietnam on the easel.

3. Teachers refuse to let students enter the room until all available students are lined up in the hall. Roll is taken in the hallway. Before roll is taken, students are to be given a fake draft card welcoming them to the lesson and informing them that class will be a bit different today.
 4. When the teachers are ready, they rush the students into the classroom and have them sit, jump, hide, “hit the deck,” etc. The idea is to provide as much shock and confusion to the students as possible.
 5. As the students enter, teachers also play the audiotape that contains a voice over informing the students of the political situation of the Vietnamese people from 1945 to 1965. The audiotape should be done in a very Fifties anticommunist style, and contain the maneuverings of the Vietminh. It must include information from the French Indochina War. It should outline the Domino Theory.
 6. As the students are finally brought to the positions they will be viewing the movie in, the teachers begin the video.
 7. Students are expected to watch the tape quietly.
 8. Again in the style of a military briefing, when the tape is over teachers present the map of Vietnam, and explain to students that they have been drafted. The teachers explain why the class had been so different, and ask how the students felt they were treated.
 9. Teachers ask the students if they think this was fair.
 10. Students are dismissed by their birthdays to represent the draft.
- F. Evaluation:
Teachers will notice a definite response if the procedures were followed correctly.
Examples of questions teachers will have prepared:
- a. Do you know why today’s exercise was conducted in this manner?
 - b. Do you feel you were treated fairly?
 - c. How do you think you would have conducted yourself had this been real?
 - d. Did the Vietnamese have a choice?
 - e. How does Vietnamese culture differ from American culture?
 - f. What were Americans expecting Communists would do?
 - g. In what ways were Americans lied to about the war?

Lesson Two: Incoming! (Official American Involvement)

- A. Content and Objectives:
 1. Lesson Content: An overview of the American involvement in the Vietnam War
 2. Concept Objective: Cultural boundaries create strife
 3. Skill Objective: Students will compare and contrast conventional military tactics with guerrilla warfare. Students will practice note-taking skills.
- B. List Materials: pen, paper, dry erase board, marker, map of Vietnam (Hammond Atlas), map pencils, printer paper (no lines)
- C. Prepare Background Notes:
Read *Vietnam, A History*. Look up battles on websites.
- D. Key Vocabulary:
Special Forces, Tonkin Gulf Resolution, Tet Offensive, My Lai Massacre, Hanoi, Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City), War Powers Act
- E. Procedures/Activities:
 1. Student will locate the map of Vietnam in the Hammond World Atlas (or the one you have) and draw on his/her paper. It is important that

students take their time to make accurate maps to reinforce the location locally and globally of areas of interest. Student will then label the following governmental and physical features: Hanoi, Dien Bien Phu, Lang Son, Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Hue, Da Nang, Can Tho, Bien Hoa, Chau Doc, Nha Trang, Nam Dinh, Gulf of Tonkin, South China Sea, Mekong Delta, Hong (Red) River, Da (Black) River, and the demilitarization zone (DMZ). The student will then color the region north of the DMZ red, and south of the DMZ yellow. This will help him/her identify with the two regions and their cultural differences.

2. Students will take notes over the Vietnam War from the involvement of the US in 1965 to the withdrawal of troops in 1975. Major battles and tactics for each side will be discussed as well as keys to victory.

F. Evaluation/Assessment:

Students will use the battle information in the notes in the problem sets for Lesson 3. Students will also use the notes given in Lesson 2 for culminating activity.

Lesson Three: Vietnam War Statistics

A. Content and Objectives:

1. Lesson Content: Mathematical objectives based on Vietnam armed forces, volunteers, and Medal of Honor recipients
2. Concept Objective: Familiarization with statistical data
3. Skills Objective: Learn to use proportions to calculate for an unknown quantity; translate a word problem into an equation and solve it, graphing data

B. Materials: Statistic Questions (Appendix B), pencil, paper (graph)

C. Background Notes:

D. Key Vocabulary: ratios, proportions, graphs, and percents (math related); posthumously

E. Procedures/Activities:

1. Introduce/review ratios, proportions, graphs, and percents
2. Demonstrate several problem-solving methods for each listed above
3. Discuss with students their current/previous knowledge of Vietnam War subject matter in word problems for clarification of ideas presented
4. Show examples of similar problems to students in order to help facilitate learning
5. Completion of Handout Lesson 3

F. Evaluation/Assessment:

Measure mastery in statistics with Appendix B.

Lesson Four: Green-Clad Barbarians (The Vietnamese View)

A. Content and Objectives:

1. Lesson Content: How the Vietnamese citizen saw the war
2. Concept Objectives: Students will understand how one culture affects another.
3. Skill Objectives: Students will learn the plight of the Vietnamese citizens at the hands of the Americans and at the hands of the Viet Cong.

B. Materials: My Lai information packet (Appendix C), My Lai Questions (Appendix D), paper, markers, pencils, pens.

C. Prepare background Notes:

D. Key Vocabulary: "Vietnamization," My Lai, "Zippo raids," MACV, Geneva Convention, indiscriminate

E. Procedures:

1. The night before the students will be read the information over My Lai.
2. Teachers will pass out information concerning “Vietnamization” and America’s policies towards the Vietnamese people.
3. Students will be asked to list the difficulties in the execution of this policy.
4. Students will observe the dramatization and take notes over a prepared dramatization over the interrogation of William Calley in the My Lai incident.
5. Students will be handed out a list of questions to complete over the dramatization and the My Lai Incident.
6. Students will then be informed that the government of Diem assisted the Americans in covering up the incident.
7. Students will be asked to write a short paragraph on what they would do if a similar incident occurred to American citizens on American soil. How would they feel if the government helped the foreign power conceal the crime?

- F. Evaluation:
Teacher will collect the list of questions and the paragraph from the students. If necessary, the teacher will quiz the students over the day’s activities.

Lesson 5: A Combat Soldiers Culture (both sides)

- A. Content and Objectives:
1. Lesson Content: An overview of how the war impacted both American and Vietnamese Soldiers.
 2. Concept Objective: War has adverse effects.
 3. Skill Objective: Students will understand the differences between Vietnam and previous wars. They will utilize higher order thinking skills as well as note taking skills.
- B. Materials: Venn Diagram (Appendix E)
- C. Background Notes:
- D. Key Vocabulary: Imperialism, Communism, Nationalism
- E. Procedures/Activities:
1. Start the class by taking a count of students who know or have relatives who served in any of the wars.
 2. Take a short time to have students describe stories they know that reflect a wartime event or encounter.
 3. Describe the age of soldiers who were in previous wars with the age of soldiers during Vietnam War.
 4. Give the definition of Imperialism, Communism, and Nationalism. The students will take down the definitions in their notes.
 5. Give background on the situations that led up to the U.S. involvement to the Vietnam War. (i.e. France as an ally, Communist inversion)
 6. Give background information on the countries and the people living there. Keep in mind the North and South Vietnam differences.
 7. Describe the impact that war can have on an individual. Give examples of war stories given by individuals in Vietnam.
 8. Use the Venn diagram worksheet to have the students categorize the ideas on the similarities and differences.
 9. Give an account on how the soldiers were treated after coming back to their country and how they are treated now.
- F. Evaluation/Assessment:

The students will have background on the effects war has on an individual and changes that occur during wartime. They will also have an understanding of the American and Vietnamese culture during the war and after the war.

Lesson Six: Effect of War on US Culture

- A. Content and Objectives:
 - 1. Lesson Content: Vietnam War discussion and formulation of ideas toward its effect on Americans through essay writing.
 - 2. Concept Objective: Formulate and understand cause and effect relationships.
 - 3. Skill Objectives: Participate civilly and productively in group discussion, writing research essays with attention to asking open-ended questions.
- B. Materials: Effects of War on US Culture (Appendix F), pencil, pens, paper
- C. Background Notes:
- D. Key Vocabulary: aggression, military “presence,” communism, draft card, broadcast, military “advisors,” casualties, escalated, engagement, polarized
- E. Procedures/Activities:
 - 1. Determine desired group size (entire class or divided groups).
 - 2. Hand out Appendix F.
 - 3. Discuss questions using handout and previous lessons.
 - 4. Brainstorm ideas for essay.
 - 5. Students answer questions in essay format drawing from handout.
- F. Evaluation
Evaluative Handout Essays

Lesson Seven: Protest This! (Social Activism)

- A. Content and Objectives:
 - 1. Lesson Content: Life at home during the Vietnam War.
 - 2. Concept Objective: Social activism plays a role in government.
 - 3. Skill Objective: Students will analyze individual’s roles and the masses’ role in changing laws and public opinion. Students will compare the Vietnam War activism with other activist groups in the 60’s and 70’s. Students will recognize their importance in today’s world, and how to effectively voice their concerns and play an active role in government.
- B. List Materials: poster board, markers, pen, paper
- C. Prepare Background Notes: Prepare characterizations for each team by reading documents from each organization.
- D. Key Vocabulary: social activism, feminism, liberation, suffrage, Kent State, The Pentagon Papers, “hawks and doves,” Vietnamization, Henry Kissinger, War Powers Act, Watergate, scandal, impeachment, NOW, Betty Friedman, Roe v. Wade, Equal Rights Amendment, Cesar Chavez, American Indian Movement.
- E. Procedures/Activities:
 - 1. Students will draw a number out of a hat as they come into the room that will divide them into groups. They will be given characterizations (American Indian, migrant farmer, women, African-American, veterans, and political parties). Each group will then make a charter with their ideologies/principles on them.
 - 2. Students will design banners/posters with their slogans in order to demonstrate to others their ideas and principles. Students will march around the room trying to convince/persuade others to adopt the principles on *their* poster. The group they are actually marketing their slogan to is the political party group. (Time allotted for this specific exercise should be no more than 10 minutes.)

3. Political party members decide which (if any) slogans they will adopt and the consequences of that slogan where public opinion is concerned. After the first round, students can vote to keep/remove government officials by voting. Newly elected officials (if any) must maintain their original agenda and promote it in a government role.
 4. Second round: repeat step 3, adding “event” cards that change agendas or make “problems” for different groups (i.e. Kent State, Roe v. Wade). Repeat a total of 5 times.
 5. Students are to evaluate the final situation and determine which ideas have been adopted and the political results of each.
 6. Discuss which groups had common agendas, why they possessed their opinions, and what are effective tools to get government officials to adopt agendas. What isn’t effective? Is this accurate in the “real” world?
- F. Evaluation/Assessment:
 Discussion Participation
 Banner and activity
 Students will write an analysis of the activity determining what can be done to improve participation in government, what role “cards” played in the game, and how to manipulate card incidents.

Lesson Eight: Birth of Environmentalism

- A. Concept and Objectives:
1. Lesson Content: An overview of the start of modern environmentalism
 2. Concept Objective: Uncontrolled pollution caused concern.
 3. Skill Objective: Students will demonstrate the ability to identify the cause and effect of a situation. Students will also demonstrate thought process in identifying problems in the environment.
- B. Materials:
Silent Spring by: Rachel Carson
 Environmental Disasters handout
 Pictures of environmental concerns
- C. Background Notes:
- D. Key vocabulary: environmentalism, ecology, Love Canal, Three-Mile Island, Chernobyl, Exxon Valdez, EPA, endangered species, Clean Air and Water Acts
- E. Procedures/Activities:
1. Students will read excerpts from *Silent Spring* calling attention to the effects that neglect had on the nation’s ecology.
 2. The teacher will show pictures demonstrating the effect of pollution on the environment.
 3. The students will brainstorm a list of some cause and effect situations in which pollution was involved.
 4. The teacher will describe the creation of the EPA and its responsibility to protect the people and the environment from toxic chemicals and other related problems.
 5. The teacher will give background history on some laws created relating to the environment, for example, the Clean Air Act (1970) ,and the Clean Water Act (1972).
 6. The students will orally list some animals they think have become endangered, and describe the Endangered Species Act (1973), and the many categories that fall under this act.

7. The teacher will pass out the handout describing the cause and effect of some major environmental disasters. Examples from the worksheet include Love Canal, Three-Mile Island, Chernobyl, and Exxon Valdez.
 8. The students will be able to identify the cause of the disasters, what effect disasters have had on the environment, and steps taken to prevent future disasters.
 9. The students will report orally of some ways they can help protect the environment.
- F. Evaluation/Assessment:
 Oral discussion
 Environmental Disasters Handout

VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITY

The student will conduct a discussion/interview with a veteran. It is proposed to do this on-line in a veteran chat situation at <http://grunt.space.swri.edu/index.htm>. If this is not available as a resource, the student could interview a veteran from his/her community to discuss such topics as involvement in the war, cultural differences, ideological differences, and reactions from home. Students will write a short story on "A Day in the Life of A Soldier."

VII. HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS

Appendix A- Draft Registration Card
 Appendix B- Statistical Word Problems
 Appendix C- My Lai Information Packet
 Appendix D- My Lai Questions
 Appendix E- Venn Diagram: America vs. Vietnamese Cultures
 Appendix F- Effects of War on US Culture
 Appendix G- Environmental Disasters

VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Listed are the resources used to help gather information for the unit:
 Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1994, ISBN 0-395-68329-7.
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Vietnam Veteran's Home Page.

Available at <http://grunt.space.swri.edu/index.htm>

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Vietnam: A Television History Vol. 1-8. Videocassette. Written and Produced by Austin Hoyt. PBS. 1983. 480 minutes.

The My Lai Cases. University of Missouri at Kansas City.

Available at www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/trials/mylai/mylai.htm.

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