

America and the Vietnamese Conflict Unit

Summary

Enduring Understanding:

Students will understand how the United States became involved in the Vietnamese Conflict and its impact on America.

Essential Questions:

Why did America have an adverse reaction to the spread of Communism?

What factors encouraged US involvement in the Vietnamese Conflict?

How did technology evolve throughout the Vietnamese Conflict?

What were the American responses to the Vietnamese Conflict?

How have America's relationships with other countries been affected by the Vietnamese Conflict?

Time Frame

4 class periods of 90 minutes each

Group Size

Small Groups

Life Skills

Thinking & Reasoning, Communication

Materials

History Textbook

Photo Analysis Worksheet (See website link for this)

Photographs of the Vietnam War

Text Excerpts for the Text Analysis sheet

Copies of the Text Analysis Worksheet

Model of or copies of a Venn Diagram

Background for Teachers

Knowledge of the Cold War and America's policies regarding the Cold War.

Student Prior Knowledge

Knowledge of World War II, Korean War, Beginning of the Cold War

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will understand why America had an adverse reaction to the spread of Communism.

Students will understand the factors that encouraged US involvement in the Vietnamese Conflict.

Students will understand how technology evolved throughout the Vietnamese Conflict.

Students will understand the American responses to the Vietnamese Conflict.

Students will understand how America's relationships with other countries have been affected by the Vietnamese Conflict.

Instructional Procedures

- **You may wish to have students do some pre-reading on the Vietnamese Conflict before**

you begin this unit.

It is not necessary, however.

- **Additionally, this unit plan was designed with the idea that students will have already been taught about World War II and the Korean Conflict.**

This will enable students to more easily grasp the connections between those two events and the Vietnamese Conflict.

Begin this unit by asking students to list any names, terms, or events that they know belong to the Vietnamese Conflict. Write these on the board. Allow 10-15 minutes for brainstorming. Then, have students get into groups of two to three people. They will take the list of terms on the board and put them into historical categories of their choice (i.e., weapons, fighting strategies, victories, etc.) Once they are done, have the students share the names of their categories with the class. This activity is a good way for the teacher to find out what they do and do not know about this conflict. It also serves to cement ideas and terminology into the students' brains.

Introduce the students to the Enduring Understanding and the Essential Questions.

Then, begin the lesson with a brief lecture that covers the topics under Essential Question #1 and Essential Question #2. This lecture should allow students to see how the two questions are related/linked. Students should be encouraged to take notes, particularly on the key words that are discussed during the lecture.

Essential Question #1: Why did America have an adverse reaction to the spread of Communism?

- Fear of Soviet Strength
- "Cold War" Fears
- Domino Theory
- Antithesis of democratic values

Essential Question #2: What factors encouraged U.S. involvement in the Vietnamese Conflict?

- Domino Theory
- Communism in China
- Korean War
- "We can save the day" mentality (France and NATO membership)
- South Vietnam's leader was not Communist and he was a Christian (although corrupt) -- his political and religious beliefs made supporting him easier and more appealing.

Assessment of Student Understanding to This Point:

Choice #1: Quick Quiz covering this information.

Choice #2: Students will be asked to recreate the information in the form of a political cartoon to demonstrate their understanding.

Essential Question #3: How did technology evolve throughout the Vietnamese Conflict?

- Warfare (Weapons, Aircraft, Tactics)
- Agent Orange
- Search and Destroy
- Napalm
- Helicopters
- Tunnel Rats
- Medical Care (Surgery, Trauma Care, New Medical Instruments)
- Corpsmen needed to stabilize for helicopter treatment
- Continuation of advances made in the Korean War
- Communication (TV, newspapers, etc.)
- TV brought the war home
- On the scene correspondents
- Discussed body counts each night -- gave Americans a bad taste for war

Students will be completing a photo analysis. Students will be given photos which represent the areas of warfare, medical care, and communication. (Some potential photos are linked below in the Attachments.) They will also be given the photo analysis sheet (See Website Link Below).

The teacher will help students examine three pictures (one for each category) together. First students will be instructed to look at the picture for a full two minutes. Then, the teacher will cover 3/4 of the photograph so that the students can only see one quadrant of the picture. They will again be instructed to look at the photo. After looking at this quadrant, they will be asked to list any details they notice onto the analysis worksheet. Repeat this step for the other three quadrants.

Once they have looked at the whole picture, students will be asked to determine what they can infer from the photograph and to develop some questions that they have about the photograph. The whole class will repeat this process for the other two pictures.

Then students will be broken up into groups of 3-4 students. They will be given a number of photographs to critically study and complete the photo analysis worksheets. (Each group should have different photographs, but they should all cover the same topics.)

Once the groups have fully evaluated their photographs, bring the class together and review the material. Have students identify what they know about warfare, medical care, and communication during the Vietnamese Conflict. The instructor should insert information as needed to clarify or clear up misconceptions students may have. The students will be encouraged to create a chart in their notes that covers this information. They should be filling this in as they discussion continues. The teachers may put key words or terms on the board throughout the discussion to assist in note taking if they desire.

Essential Question #4: What were the American responses to the Vietnamese Conflict?

Protests

Active -- draft dodging, sit ins, violence, music

Passive -- disagreement without action (vocal), reporting

Support for War

ROTC

USO tours

Reporting

Congress (in the beginning)

Letter writing campaigns

Music

Silent Majority

GI Discontent

Drug Use

AWOL (Absent Without Leave)

My Lai Massacre

Music

NOTE #1: Choose readings or songs that connect to the points listed below Essential Question #4. Be sure to select an appropriate number and variety of readings for your students.

NOTE #2: It is suggested that the readings or songs be assigned as homework. This will more easily enable you to do the text analysis work during class.

NOTE #3: A copy of the text evaluation matrix is in the attachments below.

Distribute copies of an article or a song to the students. (The text listed in the bibliography has excellent text and song excerpts that could be used for this assignment.) Once this has been read, complete the first column of the Vietnam Text Evaluation Matrix together. While working on this, help students to understand (or remember) the concept of inference.

Then, put the students in groups of 4-5 people. They will need to have read two more assigned

readings. Together the group will discuss these readings, help one another clarify questions they may have, and complete the two columns for the readings. Once all groups are done, the teacher will lead a review of these readings so that questions may be answered and that clarifications may be made. The students will then be given the rest of the articles to read for homework. They are to be encouraged to take notes after reading the articles or underline or highlight them as needed. They will work with a single partner during the next class to complete the remainder of the columns on the text evaluation matrix. The teacher will circulate while the partners work to answer any questions the students may have.

Once the students have completed all but the last two columns (entitled "Text of Your Choice"), the students will look back at their sheets and identify some areas of American responses they would like to research further. They will then go to the computer lab or the media center to individually find articles relating to the topics of their choice. They will read the articles and complete the last two columns on their own.

When finished, the students will each choose one of the three major topics listed under Essential Question #4 (protest, support, GI discontent). In a 5 paragraph essay the student will need to identify how their topic was a response to the Vietnamese Conflict. They will need to use support from their text evaluation sheets when writing their essay.

Essential Question #5: How have America's relationships with other countries been affected by the Vietnamese Conflict?

Involvement with other countries (We evaluate our situation and roles more carefully)

The U.S. is still mending its relationship with Vietnam

Communism is still "our enemy"

The U.S. reacts strongly to brutality

The U.S. supports fledgling governments and countries to help them succeed and avoid take-over

The U.S. is learning not to simply support the "enemy of our enemy" (South Vietnamese leader, Ngo Dinh Diem/Osama Bin Laden)

The teacher will lead a wrap-up of the Vietnam Conflict. It is suggested that the students take notes on this discussion. Once the end of the Conflict is discussed, the teacher will once again identify Essential Question #5 for the students. The teacher will then ask the students to brainstorm a list of ways America was affected by the Vietnamese Conflicts.

Once this list is created, students will be asked to look at the list analytically with a group of 3-4 other students. This group will be asked to identify how these changes have impacted our relationships with other countries. They will be encouraged to think about current events as well as things that happened in the last 35 years. (They may need to use the media center, computers, or textbooks for some research. So, you may need to factor in some time for this if your students are not savvy in the area of recent events.)

After each group has identified several ways in which our relationships with other countries have been affected, the teacher will ask each of the groups to list some of these ways for the rest of the class. These will be written on the board for everyone to see. (Again, this allows the teacher to clarify misconceptions and to answer questions.)

Once this is complete, the teacher will again ask the students to work with their groups. They will choose one of the events on the board and will compare it to America's involvement in the Vietnamese Conflict. They will use a Venn Diagram to make this comparison in order to accurately compare it to the Vietnamese Conflict.

Assessment Plan

Choices of Assessment for this Unit:

1. Comprehensive Test

--OR--

2. Rewrite the Enduring Understanding into a question. Students will be asked to write an essay answering this question using support from this unit.

--OR--

3. Students will work with a partner to write a two voice poem that fully supports the Enduring Understanding and Essential Questions. They would then present these two voice poems to the class.

--OR--

4. Combination of any of the above options.

Bibliography

The Vietnam War: A Historical Reader.

McDougal Littell, 2000.

Photo Analysis Worksheet. [Online] Available. <http://www.archives.gov/>. August 6, 2002.

Daugherty, Leo J and Greg Louis Mattson. Nam: A Photographic History. Singapore: Barnes and Noble Books, c 2001.

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