# TEACHER’S GUIDE

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Materials in the Unit

• The video program Vietnam

• Teachers Guide

This teacher's guide has been prepared to aid the teacher in utilizing materials contained within this program. In addition to this introductory material, the guide contains suggested instructional procedures for the lesson, answer keys for the activity sheets, and follow-up activities and projects for the lesson.

• Blackline Masters

Included in this program are ten blackline masters for duplication and distribution. They consist of, classroom activities, information sheets, take-home activities, Pre-Test, Post-Test, and the text to the Video Quiz.

The blackline masters are provided as the follow-up activities for each lesson. They will help you determine focal points for class discussion based on the objectives for the lesson.

The blackline masters have a three-fold purpose: to reinforce the program; to provide an opportunity for the students to apply and analyze what they have learned from the program; for use as diagnostic tools to assess areas in which individual students need help.

Introduction and Summary of Series

America in the 20th Century is a comprehensive series designed to provide a clear overview of the people and events that distinguished the 20th century. Rare archival footage and photographs, authentic recordings, and other primary source documents, bring history to life, while stunning graphics and engaging narration lend context and clarity to the subject.

The series has been developed specifically for classroom use. It is organized around established standards and thoughtfully divided into chapters, with each volume functioning well as a full-length program or as focused support for specific study areas.

Introduction and Summary of Program

Vietnam was the longest war in American history, the most distant and the most divisive in a century. Even today, more than three decades after the last U.S. personnel were withdrawn, America’s long involvement in Southeast Asia remains misunderstood. Images of anti-war
protests and draft card burnings are so pervasive in popular culture that it's easy to forget why America initially became embroiled in Vietnam.

From the late 19th century until the outbreak of World War II, Vietnam was part of the French colony of Indochina. When Germany invaded France in 1941, its Axis partner, Japan seized control of Vietnam. During this period of upheaval, a Vietnamese expatriate named Ho Chi Minh saw an opportunity to win Vietnamese independence. Ho had fled Vietnam in the early years of the century and became a prominent voice among Vietnamese expats living in Paris. After Western leaders, including U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, spurned his appeal for support, Ho turned to Socialism before embracing Communism. He established the Communist Party of Vietnam and traveled to Moscow where he encountered Stalin and Trotsky whose revolution had overthrown the Russian monarchy. It was there, in the newly forged Soviet Union, that Ho Chi Minh glimpsed the power and influence that could liberate Vietnam. He would later write, “It was patriotism, not Communism, that inspired me.”

Ho returned to Vietnam in 1941 to head up a nationalist group called the Viet Minh. During World War II, Ho and the Viet Minh gathered intelligence on Japanese troop movements for the American OSS—the forerunner to today’s CIA. They even helped rescue American aviators who had been shot-down over the jungles of Vietnam. Ho believed that his allegiance would be rewarded. He appealed to President Roosevelt to recognize Vietnam’s national sovereignty and to support its bid to escape colonial rule. Roosevelt did not respond, but his correspondence from the period reveal his antipathy for European colonialism. He wrote, "There are 1.1 billion brown people. In many eastern countries they are ruled by a handful of whites and they resent it. Our goal must be to help them achieve independence. 1.1 billion potential enemies are dangerous."

Roosevelt did not live to see the war’s end. He was struck down by a massive coronary in April 1945. But even before FDR’s death, U.S. foreign policy had begun to anticipate the dynamic of the post-war world. By the time the atomic bomb brought a swift end to the war against Japan, in August 1945, the Soviet Red Army had imposed Communist rule on most of Eastern and Central Europe. The new American President, Harry S. Truman, was girding for what would become an epic struggle between the Western democracies and the Soviet Union. Patriot or not, Ho Chi Minh was on the wrong side of the emerging Cold War.

The program is 70 minutes in length. Viewed in its entirety, “Vietnam” will provide students with an excellent overview of the entire conflict, its most important events and the people who influenced the struggle over the course of nearly half a century. The program is organized into video chapters. These can be viewed independently or in any combination.

The program is organized into three video chapters.
Chapter 1 - “Indochina” Describes Vietnam’s long history of occupation and resistance, focusing on the period of French colonization beginning in the 19th century.

Chapter 2 - “Two Vietnams” explains the domino principle which guided U.S. policy in Vietnam and compares the “two Vietnams”—North and South—established following the First Indochina War.

Chapter 3 - “Quagmire” traces the deepening American commitment to Vietnam under President Kennedy.

Chapter 4 - “America’s War” explains the escalation of events during 1964-1965 including the Gulf of Tonkin incident and subsequent Gulf of Tonkin resolution.

Chapter 5 - “In Country” follows the commitment of America ground troops as the Johnson administration sought to “Americanize” the war in Vietnam.

Chapter 6 - “Home Front” chronicles the changing American domestic view from 1964 through 1967.

Chapter 7 - “Tet 1968” explores the military, political and domestic fallout from the 1968 Tet Offensive.

Chapter 8 - “Peace with Honor” follows the Nixon administration’s military and political efforts to find a solution to Vietnam.

Chapter 9 - “Fall of Saigon” chronicles the “final offensive” that ended the war in Vietnam.

Chapter 10 - “Ghosts of Vietnam” analyzes the consequences of the Vietnam war from the American and Vietnamese perspectives.

Individually, the chapters can be used to facilitate more focused study of their subjects. It is important to remember that this was a politically charged, exuberant era and much of its history was influenced by partisan politics, the Cold War and its accompanying threat of nuclear annihilation, McCarthyism and the rapidly changing social and cultural views of the time. Indeed, the Cold War set the framework for global politics for 45 years after the end of World War II and strongly influenced many facets of American life including, domestic politics, foreign affairs, the role of government in the economy, science, education, religion and many others.

Several other America in the 20th Century programs will provide additional context for Vietnam. These include World War II, The Cold War, and The Civil Rights Movement.

Standards

Era 9: Postwar United States (1945 to early 1970s)

STANDARD 2:
How the Cold War and conflicts in Korea and Vietnam influenced domestic and international politics.

**Standard 2C**

The student understands the foreign and domestic consequences of U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

**Benchmarks:**

**Grade level: 7-12**
Assess the Vietnam policy of the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon administrations and the shifts of public opinion about the war. [Analyze multiple causation]

**Grade level: 9-12**
Explain the composition of the American forces recruited to fight the war. [Interrogate historical data]

**Grade level: 5-12**
Evaluate how Vietnamese and Americans experienced the war and how the war continued to affect postwar politics and culture. [Appreciate historical perspectives]

**Grade level: 9-12**
Explain the provisions of the Paris Peace Accord of 1973 and evaluate the role of the Nixon administration. [Differentiate between historical facts and historical interpretations]

**Grade level: 9-12**
Analyze the constitutional issues involved in the war and explore the legacy of the Vietnam war. [Formulate a position or course of action on an issue]

**Instructional Notes**

It is suggested that you preview the program and read the related Suggested Instructional Procedures before involving your students in the lesson activities. By doing so, you will become familiar with the materials and be better prepared to adapt the program to the needs of your class.

You will probably find it best to follow the program and lesson activities in the order in which they are presented in this Teacher’s Guide, but this is not necessary.

It is also suggested that the program presentation take place before the entire class and under your direction. The lesson activities focus on the content of the programs.

As you review the instructional program outlined in the Teacher's Guide, you may find it necessary to make some changes, deletions, or additions to fit the specific needs of your students.
Read the descriptions of the Blackline Masters and duplicate any of those you intend to use.

Suggested Instructional Procedures

To maximize the learning experience, teachers should:

- Preview the video Vietnam
- Read the descriptions of the blackline masters.
- Duplicate any blackline masters you intend to use.

Students should be supplied with the necessary copies of blackline masters required to complete the activities. By keeping students informed of current events, teachers can extend any of the lessons on the program.

Student Objectives

After viewing the program Vietnam and participating in the follow-up activities, students will be able to:

- Accurately trace the origin of the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War.
- Describe the expansion of U.S. military involvement under President Johnson.
- Compare and contrast the tactics, weapons and troops in this war with those in WW II.
- Analyze the impact of the war on American society.
- Trace the roots of opposition to the war.
- Give examples of the turmoil of 1968 and its relation to the war.
- Explain how and why the United States removed itself from the Vietnam War.

Follow-Up Activities

Blackline Master #1: Pre-Test is an assessment tool intended to gauge student comprehension of the Objectives prior to the launching of Vietnam lesson, which includes the video and the ensuing activities. The results of the Pre-Test may be contrasted with the results of the Post-Test to assess the efficacy of the lesson in achieving the Student Objectives.

Blackline Master #2: Quiz is intended to reinforce the salient points of the video immediately following its completion and may be used for assessment or as a catalyst for discussion.
Blackline Master #3a-d: Post-Test is an assessment tool to be administered after the lesson (Pre-Test, video and follow-up activities) has been completed.

Blackline Master #4: Discussion Questions not included in this printing

Blackline Master #5a-5c: Vocabulary Terms is a list of pertinent terms and definitions

Blackline Master #6a-6b: Legacy of Ashes
Divide the class into five groups and assign each group one of the following Presidents: Dwight Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford

Instruct the groups to use the Internet and/or library resources to determine the President’s policies and actions with regard to Vietnam. They can summarize their findings on the Legacy of Ashes worksheet. When all groups have finished their summaries, reassemble the class and discuss the findings. What conclusions can be drawn based on this information?

Blackline Master #7: Heros and Heroines
Instruct students to use the Internet or library resources to research a Vietnamese hero or heroine and write a brief biography of him/her. Some suggestions include:

- The Trung Sisters
- Trieu Trinh
- Le Loi
- Le Thanh Tong
- Phan Boi Chau
- Trieu Da

Discuss as a group the individual biographies and the impact of history, ancestry and nationalism in the Vietnam war.

Blackline Master #8a-8b: Songs of Protest Have students read the lyrics or listen to a song about the Vietnam war. Some suggestions include:

- "The Ballad of the Green Berets" - Barry Sadler
- "Fixin' to Die Rag" - Country Joe McDonald
- "Masters of War" - Bob Dylan
- "Ball of Confusion" - The Temptations
- "Ohio" - Neil Young
- "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" - Pete Seeger
Instruct students to complete Blackline Master #8 and then convene a group discussion.

**Blackline Master #9: The Great Debate** The Vietnam War was one of many sources of instability in the United States during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The nation was also buffeted by urban riots, assassinations, changing attitudes toward sexuality and drug use, an increasingly vocal younger generation, and efforts by African Americans, women, and others to secure equal treatment.

Watch the video segment Vietnam: The Great Debate and instruct students to take notes on each person’s point of view. Then, working individually or in small groups, the students should conduct research to answer the questions posed on the Student Worksheet.

- Who was the individual speaking?
- Were they speaking for or against the war?
- Was the speaker from the political left (liberal), right (conservative), or was it impossible to determine (NA)?
- In the student’s opinion, does “who” the speaker is in any way reflect what they said?

As an extension of this activity, as a class, assemble a booklet entitled "Vietnam: The Great Debate," consisting of statements by people who lived at that time. Each student should choose one such person—either a prominent person or a member of the student’s family—and obtain a quotation from this person regarding the war in Vietnam.

Students should read their selection to the class and reproduce it (accompanied by an appropriate illustration) on a sheet of paper. Combine the sheets into a booklet.

**Blackline Master #10: 1968: The Whole World Was Watching** 1968 was among the most tumultuous years of the 20th century. Vietnam, civil equality, the Cold War and political assassinations erupted in year of protest and near anarchy. In this activity students will construct a timeline of that pivotal year.

Divide the class into twelve groups and assign each group one month of the year. Each group should research what happened in their assigned month with regard to:

- the war in Vietnam
- the Cold War
- the Civil Rights Movement
- world affairs
- American politics, especially the 1968 presidential election
- other significant events
Using the Student Worksheet, students should record the month and day of the event and a brief description of what happened for each of their entries. You may also instruction students to find photos to illustrate as many of their entries as possible.

Convene the class to construct the 1968 timeline. Discuss the inter-relationship of events and how they affected the Vietnam War.

**Internet Resources**

http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/1968/

PBS’s American Experience for the series, Vietnam: A Television History

**Answer Key**

**Blackline Master #1: Pre-Test**

1. true  6. true  
2. true  7. false  
3. false  8. true  
4. true  9. true  
5. false  10. false

**Blackline Master #2: Video Quiz**

1. false  11. false  
2. true  12. true  
3. true  13. true  
4. true  14. false  
5. true  15. true  
6. true  16. false  
7. false  17. true  
8. true  18. false  
9. false  19. true  
10. false  20. false

**Blackline Master #3: Post-Test**
The following answers may vary.

26. The Gulf of Tonkin incident was a controversial event in which an enemy warship was alleged to have attacked the American battleship U.S.S. Maddox. The event probably never occurred, but it led the President to seek and Congress to grant far-reaching war powers to the executive branch without a formal declaration of war and without adequate oversight by Congress. President Johnson used this authority to dramatically escalate American involvement in Vietnam.

27. Vietnamization was the policy implemented by the Nixon administration whereby responsibility for day to day ground combat would be shifted to America’s South Vietnamese allies. This didn’t end U.S. involvement in the war, but it did gradually bring to an end the aspect of the war that drew the most domestic criticism.

28. The “body count” was the unofficial method by which American military leaders justified that the U.S. was “winning” the war. Even though enemy casualties exponentially outnumbered American casualties, the “body count” did not take into account the fact that the enemy had seemingly unlimited capability to replace lost soldiers with new recruits. The U.S. and its allies in South Vietnam were unwilling to make similar sacrifices.

29. By the time of the Tet Offensive in early 1968, the official U.S. government maintained that the enemy was nearly defeated and there was “a light at the end of the tunnel.” The Tet Offensive, however, proved that the enemy was still strong and willing to continue the war indefinitely. Even though the U.S. and its allies “won” the Tet Offensive in short order, the sheer scale and magnitude of the attack convinced many Americans that their government had been lying about the true prospects in Vietnam. Some say the result was a psychological victory for the enemy in the sense that it turned the American public against the war in far greater numbers than before and widened the already apparent credibility gap that existed.

30. The Paris Peace Accords resulted in a settlement that would, in some regards, allow the U.S. get out of Vietnam without admitting defeat. Nixon and Kissinger wanted only a “decent interval” between their exit and the inevitable downfall of South Vietnam in order to “save face.” To America’s allies in South Vietnam it was an altogether unacceptable settlement.
which allowed communist guerillas to remain in the South. The communists in North Vietnam were still intent on reunifying the country under their rule.

31. the credibility gap
32. self-immolated or set himself on fire
33. longest
34. military action or acts of war
They said Vietnam was a war against Communism.

PRESIDENT DWIGHT EISENHOWER:

“Today the communists reach ruthlessly for domination over Southeast Asia and are trying to break our will to foil the attempt.”

They said we were defending a free nation from foreign aggression.

PRESIDENT LYNDON JOHNSON:

“We just cannot leave those who trusted us to the terror and repression and murder that would follow.”

They said we must demonstrate American resolve.

PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON:

“If when the chips are down, the world’s most powerful nation, the United Sates, acts like a pitiful, helpless giant, then the forces of totalitarianism will threaten free nations and free institutions throughout the world.”

The Vietnam war was the longest military engagement in American history, the most distant...

COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA BROADCAST:

“You are a long, long way from Fort Riley now…”

…and among the most divisive.

ANTI-WAR DEMONSTRATION:

“End the war…end the war…end the war…”

Americans remember the images, the anguish and the ending.

PRESIDENT GERALD FORD:

“These events, tragic as they are, portend neither the end of the world, nor of America’s leadership in the world…”

But few know the whole story of America’s long involvement in the place called Vietnam.
CHAPTER 1 - INDOCHINA

1.1 - FRENCH INDOCHINA

Vietnam is a land of extremes—both mysterious and magical.

It is restless place whose people have been shaped by centuries of struggle and warfare.

European explorers discovered the region in the 1600s. They came first to spread Christianity, then to trade, then to plunder and, finally…to conquer.

By the end of the 19th century, the three regions of Vietnam—Cochinchina, Tonkin, and Annam were joined with Cambodia and Laos to form French Indochina.

Vietnam’s rice, rubber and other resources became fuel for the expanding French empire. The native peasants were forced to work in slave labor conditions.

But even under the iron fist of French rule, the Vietnamese remained defiantly independent.

FRENCH ADMIRAL BONARD, 1862 (CHARACTER VOICEOVER):

“We have had enormous difficulties enforcing our authority. Rebel bands disturb the country everywhere…destroying everything and then disappear into nowhere.”

The French eventually tamed the resistance but, according to one account from the period, it was only through acts of incredible brutality.

1.2 - HO CHI MINH

While some Vietnamese continued to resist subjugation, many embraced the trappings of Western culture and held positions within the French administration. Others grew restless for an end to foreign occupation and fled the country.

Among them, the future leader of Communist Vietnam—Ho Chi Minh.

Philosopher, poet, nationalist, revolutionary…

Ho Chi Minh arrived in Paris around 1919 and became a leading voice among 100,000 Vietnamese expatriates.

Inspired by American President Wilson’s pledge of “self-determination for all nations,” Ho brought his dreams of autonomy to the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919…

…and only to learn that Wilson’s new world order did not include did not extend to Asia.

Ho then turned to Socialism, before embracing Communism. He established the Communist Party of Vietnam and traveled to Moscow where he encountered Stalin and Trotsky whose revolution had
overthrown the Russian monarchy. It was here, in the newly forged Soviet Union, that Ho Chi Minh glimpsed the power and influence that could liberate Vietnam. He would later write.

“It was patriotism, not Communism, that inspired me.”

1.3 - WORLD WAR II & THE VIETMINH

At the outbreak of World War II, the Axis Powers of Germany, Italy and Japan seemed unstoppable. With the fall of France, Japan seized control of the French colonies in Indochina.

For Ho Chi Minh, it was an opportunity to rekindle the fight for Vietnamese independence. He returned to Vietnam and formed a national liberation movement called the Vietminh to oppose the Japanese occupation and fight for an end to French colonial rule. control of Vietnam to lead a nationalist group called the Viet Minh, who opposed both the Japanese and the French.

Within four years, Ho Chi Minh had built the Vietminh into the most influential political group in Vietnam.

During this time, Ho wrote repeatedly to U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt, appealing for diplomatic recognition. The American president was openly critical of French imperialism and had openly opposed a resumption of colonial rule. Ho felt sure to receive a positive response.

The war's end came quickly in August 1945. With their empire in ruins, Japanese troops abandoned Vietnam. The Viet Minh quietly seized the cities. Ho Chi Minh declared Vietnam's independence and established a provisional government in Hanoi. For the first time in its modern history, Vietnam was free of foreign domination and united from north to south.

Ho reached-out to the United States.

But by this time, President Roosevelt was dead and American political objectives had shifted. Halting the forward march of Communism became the post-war obsession for Western nations. And, while patriotism may have inspired Ho Chi Minh, in the eyes of America he was just another Communist--caught on the wrong side of the emerging Cold War.

had quickly replaced fascism as America's arch-enemy and Ho’s connection to the Soviet Union proved political poison. His repeated appeals for support were ignored by President Truman.

But events unfolding in Europe would turn America against Ho Chi Minh and rob Vietnam of its new-found freedom.

The Soviets were enslaving the countries of Eastern Europe.

And containing the spread of Communism became the obsession of the US and its allies.

While patriotism may have inspired Ho Chi Minh, in the eyes of America he was just another Communist, caught on the wrong side of the emerging cold war.
1.4 - THE FIRST INDOCHINA WAR

Vietnam’s newly proclaimed independence was fleeting.

France reasserted its authority in the South and moved to re-conquer the rest of Vietnam.

The eight-year conflict that followed between the Vietminh and the French is known as the First Indochina War. It began as an isolated war of independence to determine who would rule Vietnam.

The U.S. feared that a Viet Minh victory would allow Communism to spread throughout the region. They began to send money and arms to support the French. In turn, Communist China began to arm the Viet Minh.

1.5 - DIENBIEN PHU

By 1953, the fighting had consumed nearly 400,000 French and Vietnamese lives and France was searching desperately for a way out.

In November 1953, 12,000 French paratroopers descended into the valley of Dienbienphu, in northwest Vietnam. Their mission was to draw the Viet Minh into a final, decisive battle to end the war.

French commanders considered the base to be un-takable—they assumed the Vietminh had neither the men nor the munitions to mount an offensive.

But they had both and Dienbienphu would become the greatest military defeat in French history. Over 50,000 Vietminh troops scaled the steep hills many pulling massive artillery pieces behind them.

When it came, the Viet Minh attack was overwhelming.

The French airstrip and artillery positions were quickly destroyed. With no way in or out, the besieged garrison became, in the words of one soldier:

“...hell in a very small place.”

Two months later, the French defense collapsed and the ten thousand remaining soldiers surrendered.

Humiliated, the French were forced to abandon North Vietnam and negotiate for peace.

1.6 - GENEVA 1954

Ho Chi Minh was welcomed in Hanoi as a national hero. His victory earned him widespread support—not just in the North but throughout the country.

By the time the peace conference was convened in Geneva Switzerland, the United States was footing nearly the entire French war bill.
In Geneva Switzerland, world leaders gathered to discuss the problems of Indochina and work towards a peaceful settlement for Vietnam.

The growing Cold War cast its shadow over the conference. Amid fears that continued fighting might draw the superpowers into the conflict, the Viet Minh were forced to concede what they had won on the battlefield.

The cease-fire agreements, known as the Geneva Accords, called for Vietnam to be temporarily divided at the 17th parallel. The Communist government of Ho Chi Minh would rule the North from Hanoi, while a Western-backed administration would govern the South from Saigon. National elections would be held in two years, to reunite the country and allow the Vietnamese people to choose their own government.

The Geneva Accords ended the First Indochina war, but did nothing to address the underlying problems in Vietnam. The country would remain divided and a new war would begin—even more horrible than the first.

**CHAPTER 2 - TWO VIETNAMS**

2.1 - THE DOMINO THEORY

**PRESIDENT DWIGHT EISENHOWER:**

"Finally, you have broader considerations that might follow what you would call the "falling domino" principle. You have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly. So you could have a beginning of a disintegration that would have the most profound influences."

In 1954, President Eisenhower believed that Vietnam was the first domino. And he believed that if Vietnam and its neighbors fell to Communism, the rest of Southeast Asia would follow—leaving Japan and the South Pacific exposed to the advancing threat.

2.2 - SOUTH VIETNAM & NGO DINH DIEM

The Eisenhower administration moved quickly to bring South Vietnam under its influence.

For Prime Minister, they backed a former Vietnamese official named Ngo Dinh Diem.

**NGO DINH DIEM (ARCHIVAL):**

"Mr. President it is a great joy for me to be again in Washington, and a great honor to be welcomed by you. I thank you very much."

**PRESIDENT EISENHOWER SOT:**

“You are indeed welcome.”
Diem was far from perfect. He was aloof, corrupt and a nepotist. The White House conceded:

“...we knew of no one better.” (Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles)

The Eisenhower administration pledged $300 million to prop-up the new government in South Vietnam.

Even with the aid, Diem faced enormous challenges.

He was a Catholic, ruling a nation of Buddhists. His military was riddled with incompetence and corruption. And, his capital city—Saigon—was splintered by political rivalries and organized crime.

Diem claimed to represent true democracy for South Vietnam, but he treated the country as his personal fiefdom. He remained isolated from the population and unsympathetic to the needs of the people. As American support grew, Diem’s government became even more detached and brutal.

With American encouragement, Diem refused to participate in the national elections called for in the Geneva accords. He then launched a campaign to hunt down and eliminate his enemies.

Nearly one hundred thousand South Vietnamese were killed or imprisoned. While some were former Vietminh living in the South, many innocent people were caught in the dragnet as well.

As villagers witnessed their families and neighbors suffer from Diem’s brutality, they increasingly turned away from the Saigon government and supported the Vietminh.

2.3 - NORTH VIETNAM UNDER HO CHI MINH

Similar atrocities took place in the North. Following the war with the French, Ho Chi Minh’s government initiated land reforms that were designed to take from the rich and give to the poor. But the programs touched-off random violence throughout the North. Countless thousands were labeled as traitors and executed or imprisoned.

Unlike Diem, Ho recognized that mistakes had been made and promised to bring those responsible to justice. But, he conceded:

“One cannot reawaken the dead.”

Though Ho could be ruthless in pursuit of his beliefs, to his people he remained the kindly Uncle Ho—the patriot, the “man of the people”—selflessly dedicated to the reunification of Vietnam.

2.4 - NLF & VIET CONG

By 1959, Ho’s Communist followers in the South were on the verge of being completely wiped-out by Diem.

Finally, after urging restraint and patience for five years, Ho authorized them to strike back. Guerilla attacks were launched against government targets in the South.
The campaign gained strength. Other revolutionary groups joined with the Communists. In 1960, the various factions opposed to Diem organized themselves for armed struggle. They established the National Liberation Front, or the NLF, with the stated goal of overthrowing the American-backed government in Saigon and reuniting the country.

Diem viewed the NLF as yet another challenge to his power. He called the Communists Vietcong or VC for short. The name stuck.

In 1961, as President Eisenhower welcomed the new President to the White House, Vietnam was little more than a footnote to U.S. foreign policy.

But John F. Kennedy--with all his style and air of confidence--had inherited a powder keg.

And the war in Vietnam was about to turn hot, bloody and expensive.

CHAPTER 3 - QUAGMIRE

3.1 - THE BEST AND THE BRIGHTEST

PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY:

“We shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty.”

In 1961, America had a new president, and a new torchbearer in the Cold War.

President John F. Kennedy was committed to saving South Vietnam from Communism, but he wasn’t prepared to “pay any price” as he boasted during his inaugural address.

He rejected the idea of sending Americans into combat. Instead he sent substantially more money and military equipment to help South Vietnam defend itself.

American military advisors trained Diem’s South Vietnamese army to fight a guerilla war. In military terms, it was called counterinsurgency.

Seven hundred advisors in 1960 swelled to 3000 in late 1961 and to over 17,000 two years later. Officially, their role was limited to combat training and support operations. But Americans played an increasingly active role in fighting the Communists.

Beginning in 1962, American helicopters were used to carry the fight to the enemy. For the first time, the South Vietnamese army could penetrate even the most remote Viet Cong sanctuaries.

But even with the advantage of American technology, they were losing ground to the Communists. The Viet Cong won the support of the people. They received food, shelter and information. Most peasants detested Diem’s army and resented the American presence.
American officials ignored this battle for the “hearts and minds” of the people and instead focused on rosy reports from Saigon.

In October 1962, Defense Secretary Robert McNamara reported optimistically that “every quantitative measurement…shows that we are winning the war.”

3.2 - STRATEGIC HAMLET

To sever the link between villagers and Communist guerillas, the Diem government forced millions of South Vietnamese to leave their homes and relocate to fortified villages called “strategic hamlets.”

SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT FILM, 1962:

“We are building strategic hamlets to bring peace throughout the country. //Volunteers from every class and age, men and women and children, began the hard, physical work of construction…”

The hamlets were devised to starve insurgents of peasant support, but they became virtual prisons for their inhabitants. Many young men left anyway—to join the Communist rebels.

3.3 - DECEMBER 1962

Hardliners on the President’s staff called for the commitment of American combat troops; a few counseled for a complete withdrawal from Vietnam.

But Kennedy believed the middle ground was the right course and that progress was being made.

PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY:

“In some phases the military program has been quite successful. There is great difficulty, however, in fighting a guerrilla war; you need ten-to-one, or eleven-to-one, especially in terrain as difficult as South Vietnam. But I’m, uh... so we’re not, uh... we don’t see the end of the tunnel; but, I must say, I don’t think it’s darker than it was a year ago -- in some ways, lighter.”

3.4 - THE BUDDHIST CRISIS

By 1963, Diem’s inflexibility and corruption had brought his government to the verge of collapse. Saigon seethed in protest that summer with Buddhist monks demonstrating against harassment.

On June 11th, a monk named Quang Duc sat down in the middle of a busy Saigon street, doused himself with gasoline, and lit himself on fire.

Images of the burning monk shocked the world.
Diem imposed martial law in the capital and ordered crackdowns against Buddhist sanctuaries igniting anti-government demonstrations.

Diem’s sister-in-law, Madame Nhu, made the Saigon government seem even more insensitive.

MADAME NGO DINH NHU (ARCHIVAL):
“...the only thing they have done, they have barbecued one of their monks whom they have intoxicated, whom they have abused the confidence, and even that barbecuing was done not even with self-sufficient means because they used imported gasoline.”

PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY:
“In the final analysis, it is their war.”

WALTER CRONKITE:
“Do you think this government still has time to regain the support of the people?”

PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY:
“I do. With changes in policy and perhaps with personnel I think it can. If it doesn’t make those changes, I would think that the chances of winning it would not be very good.”

3.5 - THE END OF DIEM
The Buddhist crisis sealed Diem’s fate. The United States could no longer claim to be fighting for democracy while supporting a despotic regime.

With American consent, a military coup was launched on November 1st, 1963. With the Presidential palace under siege, Diem escaped—only to be recaptured within hours.

By the following morning, he was dead.

Three weeks later, President Kennedy was assasinated.

Diem’s murder would haunt American leaders in the years ahead--and the nation’s complicity in his demise would draw the United States ever-deeper into the quagmire that was Vietnam.

CHAPTER 4 - AMERICA’S WAR
4.1 - LBJ’S WAR
Following the overthrow of Ngo Dinh Diem, Saigon melted into chaos.

A seemingly endless succession of corrupt officials and military juntas ascended to power.
Diem’s successor, General Duong Van Minh, was ousted after just three months when the United States learned he was considering a negotiated peace with the Communists. Washington was resolute:

UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE GEORGE BALL:

“Nothing is further from [our] mind than a neutral solution for Vietnam. We intend to win.”

American taxpayers were shelling-out two million dollars a day to help a foreign army fight a civil war that was going badly and getting worse. The new President, Lyndon Johnson viewed the crisis through the lens of history.

…He had seen how appeasing Hitler failed to prevent World War II…

…and how the “loss” of China to Communism had undermined President Truman’s administration.

Johnson feared that if he abandoned South Vietnam there would be a:

“…mean and destructive debate . . . that would shatter my presidency, kill my administration, and damage our democracy.”

PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON (AUGUST 3, 1965):

“If this little nation goes down the drain and can’t maintain her independence, ask yourself, what’s going to happen to all the other little nations?

4.2 - GULF OF TONKIN

In August 1964, a controversial incident involving two American war ships supplied the rationale needed for the President to commit the country to war.

The U.S.S. Maddox was patrolling in the Gulf of Tonkin off the coast of North Vietnam when it was fired upon by enemy patrol boats. Two days later the Maddox returned to the Gulf with another destroyer… and reported a second attack.

These two events came to be known as the Gulf of Tonkin Incident.

PRESIDENT LYNDON JOHNSON:

“Renewed hostile actions against United States ships on the high seas in the Gulf of Tonkin have today required me to order the military forces of the United States to take action in reply.”

The President seized on the attacks as a way to justify escalating the war. He asked Congress for authority to “take all necessary measures” to defend South Vietnam.
But by the time the Tonkin Gulf Resolution was signed on August 10th, Johnson and his advisors knew the second attack never occurred.

But the deed was done. By an overwhelming majority, Congress had given the President a virtual blank check to wage war in Vietnam without further authorization.

4.3 - ROLLING THUNDER

The President was ready for war, but he wasn’t ready to admit it to the American people. As he campaigned for reelection in the fall of 1964, he told his military advisors:

“Just let me get elected and then you can have your war.”

At the same time, Hanoi stepped-up its support for the Viet Cong. Attacks became bigger, bolder and increasingly aimed at American installations.

Finally, an enemy attack on a U.S. airbase in February 1965 provoked an American response.

President Johnson authorized the sustained bombing of targets in North Vietnam. Operation “Rolling Thunder,” was slated to last eight weeks. Instead, it lasted over three and-a-half years.

Over 7,000,000 tons of ordnance were dropped on Vietnam—at a cost of billions of dollars to U.S. Taxpayers. But even at that price, the air war failed to make a dent in the resistance.

4.4 - BOOTS ON THE GROUND

UNITED NEWSREEL:

“United States Marines head for security duty in South Vietnam. Their landing is at a beach, north of Danang, where they will guard the American jet airfield against attack by Vietcong guerrillas and infiltrators from North Vietnam only 80 miles away.”

In March 1965, President Johnson committed the first American combat troops to Vietnam.

By the end of the year 200,000 American servicemen were in-country, with more on the way.

PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON (JULY 28, 1965)

“We do not want an expanding struggle with consequences that no one can foresee. Nor will we bluster or bully or flaunt our power. But we will not surrender. // I have asked the commanding general, General Westmoreland, what more he needs to meet this mounting aggression. He has told me, and we will meet his needs.”

4.5 - AMERICANIZING THE WAR

South Vietnam was violently transformed as the United States laid-in the military apparatus to wage war.
Engineers built roads, bridges, fuel and arms depots, helicopter pads and airfields.

Harbors were dredged to accommodate American warships.

The country was wired for communications and undersea cables were laid to connect Washington and Saigon.

By 1967, one million tons of supplies each month were pouring into South Vietnam.

The US sought to limit casualties through the use of the latest military technology. Long range artillery and the extensive use of air power saved countless thousands of American lives. Those who were injured in battle, could be evacuated and on the operating table within minutes—dramatically reducing the number of fatal injuries.

At the height of the war, the skies over South Vietnam were the world’s busiest. Fighter-jets, helicopters, carpet bombers and “puff the magic dragon” - a hot-rodded transport plane that could spew 18,000 ammunition rounds per minute.

U.S. pilots flew nearly 2,000,000 combat missions during the conflict and dropped nearly every bomb in the American arsenal—phosphorous bombs, napalm bombs and cluster bombs that spawned hundreds of lethal fragments.

It was the greatest congregation of military power in the history of modern warfare.

With the growing US presence, the war was changing. Hanoi ordered regular troops of the North Vietnamese Army—the NVA—to move south and join the fight.

Now, American forces prepared to meet their adversary, face-to-face, in large scale combat for the first time.

**CHAPTER 5 – IN COUNTRY**

5.1 - NVA JOINS THE FIGHT

Lyndon Johnson was gambling his political career that American military power would convince Ho Chi Minh to abandon support for the Viet Cong. Instead, Ho prepared his people for the long fight.

**HO CHI MINH:**

“They may bring in 500,000 troops, one million or even more...If the war lasts ten, twenty years or longer, the Vietnamese people will not be intimidated. Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom.”

Through 1964, the Vietnam war was fought in South Vietnam between Southern combatants: the American-backed South Vietnamese army against the Communist-backed Viet Cong.
But as American troops poured into Vietnam in 1965, Hanoi ordered its own forces—the North Vietnamese Army—to begin infiltrating to the South.

5.2 - BATTLE OF IA DRANG VALLEY

By late Summer, they were massed in the Ia Drang Valley near Pleiku.

The US Army's sky rangers—the First Cavalry Division Airmobile—were sent to confront the enemy and block their advance. It was the first time large units were pitched into action by helicopter.

American forces clashed with the NVA at the Battle of Ia Drang in November 1965. The firefight spanned four days and influenced the strategy for much of the war that followed. The combination of American air mobility and massive firepower killed more than two thousand Communist fighters—ten times the number of Americans who fell.

5.3 - OPPOSING STRATEGIES

This favorable “kill ratio” convinced America’s commanding General, William Westmoreland that he could fight and win a war of attrition by grinding away at the enemy until he surrendered.

Despite their casualties, the North Vietnamese army did not view Ia Drang as a defeat. From the experience, they adapted their strategy to avoid large scale confrontations—and built on the techniques of guerilla warfare they had employed for centuries—engaging the enemy at close range, by surprise when possible, and then fleeing before air and artillery support could be called in.

5.4 - WAR OF ATTRITION

As America went to war, officials maintained it was a battle for the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese people. But General Westmoreland’s war of attrition was pure muscle.

For three years, the American war machine unleashed massive destruction on Vietnam.

Operations with aggressive names like “search and destroy” targeted suspected enemy strongholds…

Others were less discriminate: vast areas of South Vietnam were turned into “free-fire” zones…

…destroyed with chemical crop defoliants, such as Agent Orange…

…or simply leveled.

The campaigns inflicted enormous casualties on the enemy, but innocent South Vietnamese were caught in the crossfire and suffered horribly. They lived in constant fear of widespread bombing. Herbicides poisoned their children, livestock and crops. They were forced from their homes and watched as their villages were destroyed.

One soldier expressed the futility of the American strategy:
“If they weren’t pro-VC when we got here, they sure were when we left.”

U.S. officials used the growing “body count” as proof that it was winning the war. But the numbers told only part of the story. The enemy was able to withstand ghastly losses and rebuild to fight again.

5.5 - HO CHI MINH TRAIL

There was a seemingly endless number of willing recruits eager to join the fight. Many came from North Vietnam by way of the Ho Chi Minh trail. This web of supply routes snaked through Laos and Cambodia, into South Vietnam. The trail was the target of daily American bombing. But, at night, women and children emerged to repair the damage. During the French war it had been little more than a footpath, but by the mid-1960s the Ho Chi Minh trail was a major artery for troops and supplies traveling South into the war zone.

5.5 - LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

General Westmoreland was forced to ask the President to authorize more and more reinforcements troops just to keep pace with the enemy. By late 1967, there were nearly 500,000 American combat personnel in Vietnam (FC), but Westmoreland’s war of attrition—which had failed to grind down the Communists—was exhausting his own troops and slowly wearing away at the patience of the American people.

At President Johnson’s urging, Westmoreland painted a different picture:

GENERAL WILLIAM WESTMORELAND:

“In 1968 a new phase is now starting. We have reached an important point when the end begins to come into view.”

The end of the war was in fact nowhere in sight. Even as Westmoreland spoke, the enemy was preparing for an epic offensive against the government and people of South Vietnam—designed to deal a knockout blow, regardless of the cost.

CHAPTER 6 - HOME FRONT

6.1 - THE GREAT SOCIETY

PRESIDENT LYNDON JOHNSON (LBJ 1964 STATE OF THE UNION):

“This administration today, here and now, declares unconditional war on poverty in America.”

Lyndon Johnson had prepared his entire political life to fight the war against America’s social ills. He called his sweeping vision “The Great Society.”
“It will not be a short or easy struggle, but we shall not rest until that war is won.”

But, from the very beginning, the President was torn between the Great Society and his other war - Vietnam.

PRESIDENT LYNDON JOHNSON:

“If I left the woman I loved—the Great Society—in order to get involved with that (bitch of a) war on the other side of the world, then I would lose everything at home. But if I let the Communists take over South Vietnam, then I would be seen as a coward and my nation as a appeaser, and we would both find it impossible to accomplish anything // anywhere on the entire globe.”

6.2 - PUBLIC SUPPORT & THE CREDIBILITY GAP

By an overwhelming margin, Americans stood behind the President in 1964—they backed his domestic programs and America’s continued involvement in Vietnam. Domestic opposition to the war was limited to campus demonstrations and teach-ins.

STUDENT:

“I think we should stop letting President fight an armchair war from the White House and turn it over to our generals who know how to fight a war.”

Life magazine voiced the enthusiasm shared by many major news outlets at the time:

“The war is worth winning...victory is within sight.”

But within two years attitudes had changed. There was a widening gap between official US statements of progress and the facts on the ground—which were decidedly less optimistic. Some called it a “credibility gap.”

In 1967, Life declared America had gone into Vietnam for:

“…honorable and sensible purposes.”

But the undertaking had proven:

“…harder, longer, more complicated than anticipated.”

The war was:

“…no longer worth winning.”

It was no longer something:

“…to ask young Americans to die for.”
6.3 - ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT

That sentiment was repeated on the streets of New York, Washington and Chicago....

As more and more Americans died in Vietnam, the antiwar movement gathered momentum and expanded.

In 1967, Nearly half a million people gathered in New York's Central Park. 75,000 demonstrated in San Francisco. 50,000 marched from Washington to Arlington, determined to “shut down” the pentagon.

Young men burned their draft cards...

...others vilified the President.

“Hey, hey LBJ, how may kids did you kill today? Hey, hey LBJ, how may kids did you kill today?”

SENIOR CHARLES GOODELL:

“Not only are we bleeding our men having them die in Vietnam, but we are spending at the rate of about 30 billion dollars a year. Now that’s more than we spend on our entire housing program, that’s more than we spend on our entire poverty program—in a year.”

President Johnson initially believed the nation could afford to fight the war in Vietnam and the war on poverty. But as the cost of both escalated, it was not sustainable. Taxes rose. Inflation soared. The economy faltered. The President was forced to scale back the Great Society to pay for the Vietnam.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who had rallied support for Johnson’s domestic programs—condemned the injustices he saw.

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. (02/25/1967):

“The bombs in Vietnam explode at home. They destroy the dream and possibility for a decent America. It is estimated that we spend three hundred and twenty-two thousand dollars for each enemy we kill in Vietnam, while we spend, in the so-called War On Poverty in America, only about fifty-three dollars for each person classified as poor.”

SAM BROWN, ANTI-WAR ACTIVIST:

“Until the president stands up and says we’re bring them home, bringing them home now, I think the anti-war sentiment is going to grow. You have to bring them home. We have to bring them home immediately.”

Opposition to the war did grow among Americans from all walks of life. But at the same time, the anti-war movement merged with the counterculture of the 1960s and became fragmented and militant. Long-haired hippies and yippies represented much of what middle-class America despised: sex, drugs and rock-n-roll.
Even as the war became increasingly unpopular, Americans still feared Communism more.

**CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR, RONALD REAGAN:**

"Ending the war is not so simple as just calling it off and coming home, because the price for that kind of peace could be a thousand years of darkness for generations yet unborn."

**NEW YORK GOVERNOR, NELSON ROCKEFELLER:**

"Can you imagine a protestor in hanoi—if he wanted to protest North Vietnam sending troops into South Vietnam or Laos or Cambodia. He’d end up in the jug.”

By 1968, America was more divided than at any time since the Civil War. And it was about to get much, much worse.

**CHAPTER 7 - TET 1968**

7.1 - THE TET OFFENSIVE

By the end of 1967, the American military machine had pounded away at the enemy for more than three years. But the resistance remained strong, and the Communists were infiltrating more troops than ever down the Ho Chi Minh trail in preparation for their greatest offensive.

In the early morning hours of January 30, 1968, the enemy launched a coordinated assault against virtually every military and political center in South Vietnam. From Quang Tri to Saigon and beyond, the initial surge was stunning in its ferocity and planning.

The Tet Offensive—as it would come to be called—would, within sixty days, destroy the presidency of Lyndon Johnson, force a reassessment of the war at the highest levels of government and bring to a climax the gravest crisis in the American memory. It would become the US obituary in Vietnam.

7.2 - BATTLES FOR HUE & SAIGON

In one of the longest and bloodiest battles of the entire war, US marines fought for an entire month to retake the imperial city of Hue, which had been captured by Communist guerillas.

"What’s the hardest part of it?...the whole thing stinks really.”

In the capital city of Saigon, guerillas blasted their way onto the US embassy grounds, killing five American GIs.

**REPORTER:**

“You’ve got two more alert forces who are trying to push him out…”

Through 1967, few television reports contained footage of close combat.
Tet was different. Now the entire Saigon press corps watched--and reported from the scene.

REPORTER:
“...have gone into the embassy and are trying to get the snipers out…”

TV viewers saw the chaos and destruction up close. Communists even tried to comandeer the airwaves.

REPORTER:
“This is the main Vietnamese radio station in Saigon, and right now there are an undisclosed number of VC inside occupying the station.”

Trapped the rebels exploded a bomb, destroying the station and killing themselves.

7.3 - Fallout from Tet

The Tet Offensive was designed to trigger a popular revolt against the Saigon government and the South Vietnamese army. But these events failed to take place and much of the bold campaign was snuffed-out within a matter of days. The Viet Cong lost many of their best fighters in the incursion.

Of the roughly 84,000 enemy troops who participated, more than half were killed. Nearly as many the United States lost in the entire war.

But the sheer scale and boldness of the attacks delivered a fatal blow to the political support for the war in the U.S.—thanks, in part, to the American media.

Instead of reporting the near-fatal damage to the enemy, the media indicted the Johnson administration’s war policy and declared Tet to be a psychological victory for the enemy.

And so it was. American opinion changed almost overnight.

In a special CBS News broadcast, Walter Cronkite stepped beyond his role as a reporter:

WALTER CRONKITE ARCHIVAL:
“To say that we are mired in stalemate seems the only realistic, if unsatisfactory conclusion, but it is increasingly clear to this reporter, that the only rational way out then will be to negotiate, not as victors, but as an honorable people who lived up to their pledge to defend democracy and did the best they could. This is Walter Cronkite. Goodnight.”

Hearing this President Johnson, replied:

PRESIDENT LYNDON JOHNSON:
“If I’ve lost Cronkite, then it’s over. I’ve lost the country.”
And he had.

7.4 - LBJ QUITS

Public opinion following the Tet Offensive reflected the disillusionment. The President had brazenly escalated the war and failed to win it.

Even within his inner circle, minds had changed. Defense Secretary Robert McNamara resigned and was replaced by Clark Clifford, who would argue for an American withdrawal.

The President lamented:

**PRESIDENT LYNDON JOHNSON:**

“...everybody is recommending surrender.”

But in the end, it was Johnson himself who surrendered:

**PRESIDENT LYNDON JOHNSON:**

“I will not seek, and I will not accept the nomination of my party for another term as your President”

7.5 - A NATION DIVIDED

Lyndon Johnson’s abdication had a note of finality. But the President presided over the remaining months of 1968--some of the most tumultuous weeks in the nation’s history.

In April, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was cut-down by an assassin in Memphis. Violence erupted on the streets of America’s inner cities.

Two months later, the anti-war movement lost its last, best hope. Presidential favorite Robert Kennedy was shot and killed in Los Angeles.

America’s cities were ignited.

In this climate of near-anarchy the Democrats held their nominating convention in August 1968.

7.6 - CHICAGO 1968

**CHICAGO MAYOR RICHARD J. DALEY:**

“The mayor and the people of Chicago are proud to welcome...who come here to shape the future of the nation.”

Thousands of anti-war demonstrators converged on the site of the Democratic National Convention hoping to galvanize public opinion against the war.
Chicago police and federal troops were waiting.

With the eyes of the nation focused on Chicago, the city erupted in violence...

FRANK SULLIVAN (CHICAGO POLICE SPOKESPERSON):

“These people are revolutionaries bent on the destruction of the government of the United States of America. They’re a pitiful handful.”

“They have almost no support. But by golly, they get the cooperation of the news media.”

CBS CORRESPONDENT, DAN RATHER:

“Don’t push me. Take your hands off of me unless you plan to arrest me. Wait a minute. Wait a minute.”

Inside the convention, the mood was equally contentious.

The chaos of Chicago was symbolic of the divisions within the Democratic party.

7.7 - 1968 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Vice President Hubert Humphrey emerged from the convention as the Democratic nominee. He would ultimately distance himself from President Johnson by promising a bombing halt in Vietnam. But it would be too little too late.

The Republican nominee Richard Nixon won the November election on the promise to crack down on violent anti-war protesters and restore law and order.

REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT, RICHARD NIXON:

“And as Abraham Lincoln has said, no one is above the law no one is below the law and we’re going to enforce the law and Americans should remember that if we’re going to have law and order in this country.”

CHAPTER 8 - PEACE WITH HONOR

8.1 - NIXON & KISSINGER

By the time President Richard Nixon reached the White House, he had ruled out a military victory in Vietnam. But he wasn’t about to admit defeat. The new President promised to secure “peace with honor” and would demonstrate that the American war machine was far from finished.

His point-man on the war was National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger. Together, the two men led the nation through its final, painful chapter in Vietnam.
8.2 - VIETNAMIZATION & EXPANDING THE WAR

At the core of the White House strategy was the policy of “Vietnamization” which really meant the U.S. was handing the war back to South Vietnam. American money and air support would continue, but the burden of ground combat would shift to the South Vietnamese army. It would not end the war for the U.S., but it would end the most unpopular aspect of it.

But even as the first contingent of American troops were leaving Vietnam, Nixon plotted to expand the war. With peace negotiations at a standstill, he encouraged his advisors to think big—to consider new options, even nuclear weapons. Kissinger advocated for a “savage blow” adding:

U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR, HENRY KISSINGER:

“I refuse to believe that a little fourth-rate power like North Vietnam doesn’t have a breaking point.” Another advisor said such harsh military action would amount to “shooting our way out of the saloon.”

8.3 - CAMBODIA

Nixon decided to launch air raids against enemy sanctuaries in neighboring Cambodia—bragging that he would “bomb the Communists back to the bargaining table.” He hid the illegal operations from the American people and Congress for three years.

A year later Nixon announced that American forces were invading Cambodia on a mission to destroy Communist command and control centers. The President said the country remained committed to its mission in Vietnam.

PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON:

“If when the chips are down, the world’s most powerful nation, the United States of America, acts like a pitiful, helpless giant, the forces of totalitarianism and anarchy will threaten free nations and free institutions throughout the world.”

8.4 - 1971 PROTESTS, KENT STATE

Nixon’s announcement triggered the angriest protests of the war.

At Kent State University, demonstrators faced-off with Ohio National Guardsmen. Before it was over, four students were dead.

Ten days later, the was repeated in Mississippi.

President Nixon had campaigned on the pledge to end the war and win the peace. But he had extended the conflict into Cambodia and fanned the flames of dissent at home.

Nixon was stuck in Vietnam—no way to win, no way to save face.
8.5 - 1972 EASTER OFFENSIVE

In March 1972, with only 6,000 American troops remaining in South Vietnam, the North Vietnamese army launched their largest assault since the Tet Offensive four years earlier.

The “Easter Offensive” as it was called, quickly crushed South Vietnamese defenses in the Northern province of Quang Tri. [map here] A second wave swept across the Central Highlands to the coast; a final thrust hit the area just north of Saigon. More than one million South Vietnamese fled to escape the attacks.

With American arms and massive American air support, the South Vietnamese army blocked the enemy offensive. But it took six full months to recapture the territory lost to the Communists.

Saigon escaped the destruction of the “Easter Offensive.”

8.6 - PEACE IS AT HAND

Without the knowledge of the South Vietnamese Henry Kissinger had been secretly negotiating with his counterpart from North Vietnam, Le Duc Tho. After more than two years, they had reached an agreement for a cease-fire. The Saigon government protested they had been “sold out” by the Americans and flatly rejected the truce.

With his elusive “peace with honor” slipping away, Nixon ordered a final, ferocious round of bombings. Over eleven days in December, American B-52s dropped more than 40,000 tons of bombs on North Vietnam. The administration claimed their targets were purely military. But, civilian centers were hit as well. One White House aide called it:

“...calculated barbarism.”

The carnage was enough to restart negotiations. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho returned to Paris on January 8th. The following day, they reached an agreement to end the fighting in Vietnam.

PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON (JANUARY 23, 1973):

A cease-fire, internationally supervised, will begin at 7:00 pm this Saturday, January 27, Washington time. Within 60 days from this Saturday, all Americans held prisoners of war throughout Indochina will be released. There will be the fullest possible accounting for all of those who are missing in action. During the same 60-day period, all American forces will be withdrawn from South Vietnam. The people of South Vietnam have been guaranteed the right to determine their own future without outside influence.

CHAPTER 9 - THE FALL OF SAIGON

9.1 - THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

The United States had come to Vietnam to help the South Vietnamese government had come to Vietnam to fight foreign aggression...
...to stop the spread of communism...

...to defend freedom and democracy.

Now, just as foreign invaders had done for centuries, they were leaving.

For the Vietnamese, the struggle continued. In accordance with the cease-fire agreements, North Vietnam’s troops were allowed to remain in the South. South Vietnam prepared for more bloodshed in what it called the “third Indochina War.” President Nixon promised American aid would continue and that the US would “respond with full force” if the Communists violated the cease-fire.

9.2 - WATERGATE

But Nixon’s presidency was coming unraveled. Congressional hearings revealed the President and his staff had waged an illegal war on the home front: against political opponents, members of the media, leaders of the anti-war movement. Crimes had been committed. Congress threatened impeachment.

HOUSE COMMITTEE:

Representative Peter Rodino: We have reached a moment when we are ready to debate resolutions/calling for the impeachment of Richard M. Nixon...

COMMITTEE VOTES:

Mr. Danielson: AYE
Mr. Drinan: AYE
Mr. Rangle: AYE
Miss Jordan: AYE
Mr. Smith: NO
Mr. Sandman: NO
Mr. Railsback: AYE
Mr. Rodino: AYE

For President Nixon, it was the end of the line.

PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON, AUGUST 1974:

I shall resign the presidency, effective at noon tomorrow. Vice President Ford will be sworn in as President at that hour, in this office.

9.3 - THE FINAL OFFENSIVE

With the American government in turmoil, the Communist leaders in Hanoi saw their opportunity to reunite the country by force.
They launched what be be their final offensive in early 1975.

The North Vietnamese army struck first at Banamethuot, the first step in cutting the South in half. South Vietnamese defenses collapsed almost immediately.

The new American President, Gerald Ford, petitioned Congress for aid to help South Vietnam defend itself. He said it was America’s “moral responsibility.”

Congress refused.

The Communists rolled on. By the end of March they had captured Tam Ky, Quang Ngai and Hue.

The NVA severed the main artery south of Hue and a million refugees fled for Danang.

By March 25, Communist rockets were falling on Danang as a million refugees were streamed toward Danang. Trapped by the advancing Communist army, terrified citizens jammed airports, docks and beaches. Only 50,000 escaped before the city was overrun by the North Vietnamese.

The capital city of Saigon was in panic. Thousands jammed the courtyard of the US embassy, desperate for protection.

On April 29, with the Saigon airport already under Communists control, the U.S. set-in motion the largest helicopter evacuation in history. Over the next day, Marine helicopters shuttled more than 7,000 people from the beleaguered capital to US aircraft carriers waiting offshore.

The next day, the Communists arrived in Saigon and stormed through the gates of the Presidential palace.

It had taken more than twenty years, but they had achieved their goal of victory, independence and unity.

**Chapter 10 – Ghosts of Vietnam**

10.1 – Costs & Legacy – U.S.

**President Gerald Ford:**

“THE GREATEST CHALLENGE OF CREATIVITY, AS I SEE IT, LIES AHEAD. WE OF COURSE ARE SADDENED BY THE EVENTS IN INDOCHINA. BUT THESE EVENTS, TRAGIC AS THEY ARE, PORTEND NEITHER THE END OF THE WORLD NOR OF AMERICA’S LEADERSHIP IN THE WORLD.

Vietnam was the longest military engagement in American history, the most distant, the least relevant to the nation’s concerns and the most divisive in more than a century.
The war affected every American. It cost more than $130 billion dollars, siphoned money away from domestic programs and destabilized the economy to the point of crisis. It proved that not even the richest, most powerful nation in the world had unlimited strength and resources.

Two million Americans served in Vietnam. 58,000 died there. More than 300,000 were wounded. Countless veterans suffer the chronic anxiety and depression of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, alcoholism and substance abuse.

Exposure to the chemical “Agent Orange” caused long term medical ailments, including cancer, in thousands of vets.

POW groups contend that some of the 2500 servicemen listed as “missing in action” continue to be held in Vietnam against their will. No compelling evidence has proven this to be true.

In 1982, the country took a step towards healing with the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC. It has become a site of pilgrimage for veterans and all Americans.

Vietnam revealed the limits of American power and eroded Americans’ confidence in themselves and their government. In the years following the war, the United States questioned its role in world affairs and viewed each foreign engagement through the lens of Vietnam. This reaction came to be called the “Vietnam Syndrome.”

Vietnam ushered in a decade of conflict between Congress and the Executive Branch that lasted well into the 1970s. Congress rolled-back the President’s war-making authority by repealing the Tonkin Gulf Resolution in 1969. And with the passage of the 1973 War Powers Act, which limits the President’s ability to commit military forces without Congressional approval.

For the US military, the “defeat” forced a complete reevaluation from within that resulted in the modern, technology based fighting force of the 1980s and beyond.

The armed services also introduced new policies for dealing with the news media. Reporters and journalists would cover future conflicts, but they would never again have the unfettered access they enjoyed in Vietnam.

10.2 - COSTS & LEGACY - VIETNAM

America’s losses, however painful, paled in comparison to those of Vietnam.

By the end of the war, the country was physically ruined.

Nearly 3 million Vietnamese perished in the fighting—half were civilian casualties. were innocent peasants and others caught in the crossfire. Millions of others were injured, maimed or left homeless.
In neighboring Cambodia, the US invasion triggered a Civil War and unleashed a reign of terror by the Communist Khmer Rouge faction. By 1979, one in five Cambodians had become victims in the genocide of the “killing fields.”

Millions fled political persecution in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos and took to the sea. To the world, these “boat people” symbolized the tragedy and desperation of Vietnam.

With the fall of Saigon in 1975, Vietnam was reunited under Communist rule as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The country had defeated the United States and was free of foreign occupation for the first time in a century but, as Vietnam’s Prime Minister recognized:

**PRIME MINISTER, PHAM VAN DONG:**

“...we are plagued by problems. We do not have enough to eat. We are a poor underdeveloped nation. Waging a war is simple, but running a country is very difficult.”

Under Communist rule, millions of former South Vietnamese were persecuted.

At the insistence of the United States, the international community turned away from Vietnam.

Alienated by the world community and faced with enormous problems, Vietnam relied increasingly on the Soviet Union for aid.

But in 1986, Vietnam declared Communism a failed experiment and vowed radical change.

10.3 - A NOBLE CAUSE?

**REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT, RONALD REAGAN:**

“Well, it’s time that we recognized that ours was in truth a noble cause. Let us tell those who fought in that war that we will never again ask young men to fight and possibly die in a war our government is afraid to let them win.”

Was Vietnam a noble cause? An unfortunate mistake? Or was it an immoral act of aggression?

Decades after the fall of Saigon, these questions remain unanswered....

…and the ghosts of Vietnam endure.
Blackline Masters

- Blackline Master #1: Pre-Test
- Blackline Master #2: Quiz
- Blackline Masters #3a-3d: Post-Test
- Blackline Master #5: Vocabulary
- Blackline Master #6: Legacy of Ashes
- Blackline Master #7: Heroes and Heroines
- Blackline Masters #8: Songs of Protest
- Blackline Master #9: The Great Debate
- Blackline Master #10: The Whole World Was Watching
DIRECTIONS: Read the questions carefully and circle the correct answer.

1. The Vietnam war was fought between North Vietnam, backed by the Soviet Union and communist China, and South Vietnam, backed by the United States.
   A. true
   B. false

2. The French colony of Indochina comprised Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.
   A. true
   B. false

3. The United States intervened in Vietnam after the defeat of the British in 1954.
   A. true
   B. false

4. For much of the Vietnam war, the leader of America's opponent was Ho Chi Minh.
   A. true
   B. false

5. The United States became involved in Vietnam during the 1960s.
   A. true
   B. false

6. The majority of the American public and the media supported U.S. involvement in Vietnam for many years before turning against the war in the late 1960s.
   A. true
   B. false

7. The Vietnam War ended during the Nixon presidency.
   A. true
   B. false

8. American leaders feared an enemy victory in Vietnam would result in the spread of communism throughout Southeast Asia and the Pacific.
   A. true
   B. false

9. The Tet Offensive of 1968 was a major turning point in the war.
   A. true
   B. false

10. The United States won the Vietnam War in 1975.
    A. true
    B. false
DIRECTIONS: Read the following statements, and circle whether they are true or false.

1. Beginning in the 19th century, Vietnam was a colony of Great Britain.
   A. true   B. false

2. Ho Chi Minh appealed to the United States for support before turning to the Soviet Union.
   A. true   B. false

3. The Viet Minh won a decisive victory at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954.
   A. true   B. false

4. At the Geneva Conference, Vietnam was temporarily divided at the 17th parallel.
   A. true   B. false

5. Under President Kennedy, the U.S. expanded its military commitment to South Vietnam.
   A. true   B. false

6. "Counterinsurgency" is the military term for defending against guerilla warfare.
   A. true   B. false

7. South Vietnam's Ngo Dinh Diem assumed power following a military coup.
   A. true   B. false

8. The Tonkin Gulf Resolution granted the President broad war-making authority.
   A. true   B. false

9. The first American combat troops were sent to Vietnam in 1967.
   A. true   B. false

10. The "body count" was used to force the enemy to the negotiating table.
    A. true   B. false

11. To defoliate vast areas of forest, American planes sprayed DDT.
    A. true   B. false

12. The Ho Chi Minh Trail was an enemy supply route that stretched from North Vietnam, through Laos and Cambodia and into South Vietnam.
    A. true   B. false
13. President Johnson feared that a withdrawal from Vietnam would destroy his presidency.
   A. true               B. false

14. The disparity between official government statements and news reports from Vietnam became known as the “Johnson treatment.”
   A. true               B. false

15. Some American men burned their draft cards to protest America’s war in Vietnam.
   A. true               B. false

16. A massive enemy assault in January 1968 is known as the Easter Offensive.
   A. true               B. false

17. President Nixon pledged to achieve “peace with honor” in Vietnam.
   A. true               B. false

18. The Nixon-Kissinger strategy to shift the burden of ground combat to the South Vietnamese army was known as "Strategic Withdrawal."
   A. true               B. false

19. An enemy offensive in early 1975 resulted in the fall of Saigon.
   A. true               B. false

   A. true               B. false
True/False

DIRECTIONS: Read each of the following statements and circle true or false.

1. At the Versailles Conference following World War I, Ho Chi Minh appealed to President Woodrow Wilson for recognition and support for Vietnam’s independence.
   A. true               B. false

2. In 1960, former members of the Viet Minh regrouped to form the SLA or Symbionese Liberation Army.
   A. true               B. false

3. Under President Kennedy, the United States expanded its military commitment to South Vietnam.
   A. true               B. false

4. The Strategic Hamlet program was an overwhelming success.
   A. true               B. false

   A. true               B. false

6. President Johnson reduced the number of American troops committed to Vietnam.
   A. true               B. false

7. Operation Rolling Thunder was a U.S. air campaign targeting North Vietnam.
   A. true               B. false

8. The Ho Chi Minh Trail was a supply route that stretched from North Vietnam, through Laos and Cambodia and into South Vietnam.
   A. true               B. false

9. The Tet Offensive resulted in a military victory but psychological defeat for the enemy.
   A. true               B. false

10. During the Nixon administration, American air raids targeting Viet Cong sanctuaries in Cambodia violated U.S. laws.
    A. true               B. false
Activity: Post-Test (3b)  Name ____________________________
Subject: Vietnam  Date ____________________________

**Multiple Choice**

**DIRECTIONS:** Read each of the following statements. Then circle the best answer.

11. The communist Viet Minh opposed France in
   a. the French Revolution
   b. World War I
   c. the First Indochina War
   d. the Great Patriotic War
   e. none of the above

12. U.S. relations with Vietnam were influenced by
   a. the death of President Franklin Roosevelt
   b. the beginning of the Cold War
   c. the resumption of hostilities between France and Vietnam
   d. all of the above
   e. none of the above

13. In 1954, Vietnam was temporarily divided at the:
   a. Maginot line
   b. 17th parallel
   c. 38th parallel
   d. Mekong river
   e. Yalu river

14. Following the Geneva Conference, Ho Chi Minh was the leader of __________________ and Ngo Dinh Diem was the leader of _________________.
   a. Vietnam, Cambodia
   b. Vietnam, communist China
   c. North Vietnam, South Vietnam
   d. Cambodia, Laos
   e. none of the above

15. The first American combat troops were sent to Vietnam in
   a. 1962
   b. 1965
   c. 1967
   d. 1968
   e. none of the above
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<th>Number</th>
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<th>Answer Options</th>
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| 16     | The communist guerillas attacked American forces using                     | a. booby traps  
|        |                                                                          | b. land mines  
|        |                                                                          | c. handmade weapons  
|        |                                                                          | d. B and C are correct  
|        |                                                                          | e. all of the above |
| 17     | “VC” was short for:                                                        | a. Vietnamese constitution  
|        |                                                                          | b. Viet-Cambodia  
|        |                                                                          | c. Viet Cong  
|        |                                                                          | d. Vietnamese communist  
|        |                                                                          | e. both C and D are correct |
| 18     | To defoliate vast areas of forest, American planes sprayed:               | a. DDT  
|        |                                                                          | b. Agent Orange  
|        |                                                                          | c. red dye #2  
|        |                                                                          | d. thiamine mononitrate  
|        |                                                                          | e. all of the above |
| 19     | President Johnson worried that the war in Vietnam might erode support for | a. New Frontier  
|        | the:                                                                      | b. Cold War  
|        |                                                                          | c. SALT I discussions  
|        |                                                                          | d. Great Society  
|        |                                                                          | e. none of the above |
| 20     | To protest the Vietnam war, Americans:                                    | a. burned their draft cards  
|        |                                                                          | b. fled to Canada and other countries  
|        |                                                                          | c. “dodged” the draft  
|        |                                                                          | d. participated in civil protest  
|        |                                                                          | e. all of the above |
Multiple Choice

DIRECTIONS: Read each of the following statements. Then circle the best answer.

21. In the video program, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King said, "It is estimated that we spend ____________ for each enemy killed in Vietnam while we spend, in the so-called War on Poverty, only about ______________ for each person classified as poor."
   a. “more than seven thousand dollars” and “half of that”
   b. “three-hundred twenty-two thousand dollars” and “fifty three dollars”
   c. “at least ten-thousand dollars” and “twenty-five hundred dollars”
   d. “lavishly” and “the cost of a bus ticket from Selma to Montgomery”
   e. none of the above

22. The American "war of attrition" minimized civilian casualties by:
   a. targeting only industrial and military facilities
   b. respecting a self-imposed “no-cities” policy
   c. using the latest in military technology
   d. B and C are correct
   e. none of the above

23. The Tet Offensive influenced President Johnson to:
   a. step-up bombing missions against targets in North Vietnam
   b. seek a negotiated peace settlement with North Vietnam
   c. fire his top military commander in Vietnam
   d. not seek reelection
   e. withdraw from SEATO

24. During his second term, President Nixon's policies in Vietnam were hampered by:
   a. an escalation in the Cold War
   b. the diplomatic “opening” with China
   c. the Watergate scandal
   d. the Pentagon Papers
   e. both C and D are correct

25. The enemy offensive in the Spring of 1975 resulted in:
   a. the fall of Saigon
   b. the end of the Vietnam war
   c. victory for the communists
   d. the reunification of Vietnam
   e. all of the above are correct
Activity: Post-Test (3e)       Name ________________________________
Subject: Vietnam              Date ________________________________

Short Answer Essay

DIRECTIONS: Provide a short answer to the following questions. Use a separate sheet of paper if necessary.

26. Briefly describe the Gulf of Tonkin incident and its role in the Vietnam war.

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

27. What was Vietnamization and how did it affect America's involvement in Vietnam.

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

28. What was the "body count" and why was it significant?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

29. In what ways was the Tet Offensive significant?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

30. Why did hostilities in Vietnam continue after the U.S. departure?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Fill in the Blank

DIRECTIONS: Read the following questions and fill in the blank with the most appropriate answer.

Short Answer Questions
Directions: Read each of the following statements and answer in one or two sentences.

31. The disparity between official government statements and news reports from Vietnam became known as the ___________________.

32. In June 1963, a Buddhist Monk sat down in the middle of a Saigon street and ___________________.

33. Vietnam was the __________________ war in American history.

34. The Tonkin Gulf Resolution authorized __________________ in Vietnam without a formal declaration of war.
AGENT ORANGE
Definition: Agent Orange is the code name for a herbicide and defoliant used by the U.S. military in its herbicidal warfare program during the Vietnam War. It was later discovered that one of the compounds in Agent Orange was contaminated by an extremely toxic dioxin. Exposure to Agent Orange has caused far-reaching side-effects including birth defects, mental disability and death.

Context: More than 21,000,000 US gallons (79,000,000 L) of Agent Orange were sprayed across South Vietnam between 1962 and 1971. According to the Vietnam Red Cross as many as 3 million Vietnamese people have been affected by Agent Orange.

BATTLE OF DIEN BIEN PHU
Definition: The 1954 Battle of Dien Bien Phu was the climactic confrontation of the First Indochina War between French troops and Viet Minh communist revolutionaries which influenced negotiations over the future of Indochina.

Context: Military historian Martin Windrow wrote that Dien Bien Phu was “the first time that a non-European colonial independence movement had evolved through all the stages from guerrilla bands to a conventionally organized and equipped army able to defeat a modern Western occupier in pitched battle.”

COMMUNISM
Definition: Communism is a family of economic and political ideas and social movements related to the establishment of a classless society based on common ownership and control of the means of production and property in general. It is also often used to refer to a form of government in which the state operates under a one-party system and declares allegiance to Marxism-Leninism or a derivative thereof, even if the party does not actually claim that the society has already reached communism.

Context: Within the context of the Cold War, many American political leaders believed in the concept of “monolithic communism”—the idea that all communist movements were controlled by the Soviet Union. They failed to grasp the significance of the many communist movements that had their roots in nationalism as a reaction to colonial rule.

COUNTERINSURGENCY
Definition: In the context of the Vietnam war, counterinsurgency is the military term for the combat against Vietcong guerillas, or “insurgents.” Counterinsurgency assumed many forms, including military missions, political propaganda and programs intended to win the “hearts and minds” of the local population and, thus, starve the insurgency of its popular support.
DOMINO PRINCIPLE
Definition: The domino principle or domino theory was used by successive United States administrations during the Cold War to clarify the need for American intervention around the world. It stated that if one land in a region came under the influence of communism, then the surrounding countries would follow in a domino effect.

Context: “Finally, you have broader considerations that might follow what you would call the “falling domino” principle. You have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly. So you could have a beginning of a disintegration that would have the most profound influences.”

— President Dwight D. Eisenhower The Domino Principle April 7, 1954

EASTER OFFENSIVE
Definition: The Easter Offensive of the Vietnam war was a military campaign conducted by the People’s Army of Vietnam (PAVN, the regular army of North Vietnam) against the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN, the regular army of South Vietnam) and the United States between March 30 and October 22, 1972.

Context: The Easter Offensive was the first major confrontation in which the Army of South Vietnam fought independently without the assistance of significant American group troops.

FIRST INDOCHINA WAR
Definition: The First Indochina War was fought in French Indochina (i.e. Vietnam) from December 19, 1946, until August 1, 1954, between the French Union’s French Far East Expeditionary Corps and the Việt Minh, led by Hồ Chí Minh and Võ Nguyên Giáp. Most of the fighting took place in Tonkin in Northern Vietnam, although the conflict engulfed the entire country and also extended into the neighboring French Indochina protectorates of Laos and Cambodia.

FRENCH INDOCHINA
Definition: French Indochina, established in 1887, was the part of the French colonial empire in southeast Asia. It was initially comprised of Cambodia and the three regions of Vietnam: Tonkin (North), Annam (Central), and Cochinchina (South), as well as Cambodia. Laos was added in 1893. During World War II, the colony was administered by Vichy France and was under Japanese occupation.

GENEVA ACCORDS
Definition: The Geneva Accords were a set of treaties signed by France and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam at the Geneva Conference of 1954. The agreements were intended to end hostilities and restore peace to the region. The key provisions included:

• recognition of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Indochina thereby granting its independence from France
the cessation of hostilities and foreign involvement (or troops) in internal Indochina affairs.

• the establishment of a “provisional military demarcation line” diving Vietnam into northern and southern zones

**GREAT SOCIETY**

**Definition:** The Great Society was a set of domestic programs proposed or enacted on the initiative of President Lyndon B. Johnson. Two main goals of the Great Society social reforms were the “war on poverty” and new civil rights legislation. One of the great conflicts of the Johnson presidency was the choice between the war in Vietnam and the Great Society—could the nation have both “guns and butter.”

**Context:** “I knew from the start that I was bound to be crucified either way I moved. If I left the woman I really loved—the Great Society—in order to get involved in that bitch of a war on the other side of the world, then I would lose everything at home. All my programs.... But if I left that war and let the Communists take over South Vietnam, then I would be seen as a coward and my nation would be seen as an appeaser and we would both find it impossible to accomplish anything for anybody anywhere on the entire globe”

— President Lyndon Baines Johnson

**GUERILLA WARFARE**

**Definition:** Guerrilla warfare is the unconventional warfare and combat in which a small group of combatants use mobile tactics in the form of ambushes and raids to combat a larger and less mobile formal army. The guerrilla army uses ambush and mobility in attacking vulnerable targets in enemy territory.

**Context:** This term means "little war" in Spanish and was created during the Peninsular War. The concept acknowledges a conflict between armed civilians against a powerful nation state army, either foreign or domestic.

**GULF OF TONKIN**

**Definition:** Part of the South China Sea off shore of North Vietnam and location of the notorious 1964 “Gulf of Tonkin Incident.”

**HO CHI MINH TRAIL**

**Definition:** The Ho Chi Minh trail was a supply route that ran from North Vietnam, through Laos and Cambodia, and into South Vietnam. It provided a means to move men and materiel to the battle fronts in the South.

**Context:** According to the U.S. National Security Agency’s official history of the war, the Trail system was “one of the great achievements of military engineering of the 20th century.” Although the trail was the target of incessant American bombing, it was continuously rebuilt.

**INSURGENCY**
**Definition:** An insurgency, or guerrilla insurgency, is the antithesis of conventional warfare, Whereas regular armies aim to concentrate force to achieve a decision with maximum speed, guerrilla forces disperse and conduct small-scale operations over an indefinite period of time. The strength of this form of warfare is its resilience; its weakness is the inability of small forces to confront regular armies directly.

**Context:** In Vietnam, the United States faced a guerilla insurgency over many years beginning in 1954. Although, the insurgency could not defeat the U.S. in traditional military terms, the long-term psychological affects on American political and military leaders as well as the public were sufficient to force a U.S. withdrawal and, ultimately, victory for the guerilla fighters.

**KHMER ROUGE**
**Definition:** The Khmer Rouge was the totalitarian ruling party in Cambodia from 1975 to 1979 that flourished to some degree because of the unrest fostered by the war in Vietnam. Led by the dictator Pol Pot, the Khmer Rouge is remembered primarily for its policy of social engineering and the deaths this caused. Brutal and arbitrary executions and torture carried out by its cadres against anyone suspected of belonging to several categories of supposed “enemies”:

- anyone with connections to the former government or with foreign governments
- professionals and intellectuals - in practice this included almost everyone with an education, or even people wearing glasses (which, according to the regime, meant that they were literate)
- ethnic Vietnamese, ethnic Chinese, ethnic Thai and other minorities in Eastern Highland, Cambodian Christians (Most of whom were Catholic, and the Roman Catholic Church in general), Muslims and the Buddhist monks
- “economic sabotage” for which many of the former urban dwellers (who had not starved to death in the first place) were deemed to be guilty by virtue of their lack of agricultural ability.

**Context:** Estimates of the number of people who died as a result of the Khmer Rouge’s policies varies widely, but the most common figures are between 1.4 million and 2.2 million—perhaps one-third the population of Cambodia.

**NLF (NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT)**
**Definition:** The National Liberation Front, or NLF, was the North Vietnam-supported Communist insurgency present in South Vietnam following the First Indochina War. The NLF had both guerilla and regular army units, as well as a network of cadres who organized peasants in the territory it controlled.

**NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY**
**Definition:** The North Vietnamese Army (NVA) or People’s Army of Vietnam (PAVN) both refer to the regular, uniformed army of Communist North Vietnam during the Vietnam War.
(1959-1975) and was used to distinguish the Northern Communists from Southern communists who were known as Viet Cong.

OPERATION ROLLING THUNDER
Definition: Operation Rolling Thunder was the title of a gradual and sustained U.S. 2nd Air Division (later Seventh Air Force), U.S. Navy, and Republic of Vietnam Air Force (VNAF) aerial bombardment campaign conducted against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) from 2 March 1965 until 1 November 1968, during the Vietnam War. The four objectives of the operation, (which evolved over time) were:

• To bolster the sagging morale of the Saigon regime in the Republic of Vietnam;
• To convince North Vietnam to cease its support for the communist insurgency in South Vietnam;
• To destroy North Vietnam’s transportation system, industrial base, and air defenses;
• to interdict the flow of men and material into South Vietnam

Context: The operation became the most intense air/ground battle waged during the Vietnam War and, indeed, the Cold War. Thanks to the efforts of its allies, North Vietnam fielded a potent mixture of sophisticated air-to-air and ground-to-air weapons that created one of the most effective air defense environments ever faced by American military aviators. After one of the longest aerial campaigns ever conducted by any nation, Rolling Thunder was terminated as a strategic failure in late 1968 having achieved none of its objectives.

PEOPLE’S ARMY OF VIETNAM
Definition: The People’s Army of Vietnam (PAVN) or North Vietnamese Army (NVA) both refer to the regular, uniformed army of Communist North Vietnam during the Vietnam War (1959-1975) and was used to distinguish the Northern Communists from Southern communists who were known as Viet Cong.

POW (PRISONER OF WAR)
Definition: POW is the initialism for “prisoner of war,” a combatant who is held in continuing custody by an enemy power during or immediately after an armed conflict. During the Vietnam War, the North Vietnamese captured and held U.S. service members, especially pilots who had been shot down over North Vietnam and Laos. As POWs, many suffered from systematic mistreatment and torture. For its part, the United States and its allies in South Vietnam held enemy combatants during the same period, some of whom were allegedly tortured.

Context: Following the Paris Peace Accords of 1973, 591 U.S. prisoners of war were returned during Operation Homecoming. But speculation continued that American service members were kept as live prisoners after the war’s conclusion for the United States in 1973. A vocal group of POW/MIA activists maintains that there has been a concerted conspiracy by the Vietnamese government and every American government since then to hide the existence of
these prisoners. The U.S. government has steadfastly denied that prisoners were left behind or that any effort has been made to cover up their existence. Several congressional investigations have looked into the issue, culminating with the largest and most thorough, the United States Senate Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs of 1991–1993 led by Senators John Kerry, Bob Smith, and John McCain. It found “no compelling evidence that proves that any American remains alive in captivity in Southeast Asia.”

The fate of those missing in action has always been one of the most troubling and unsettling consequences of any war. In this case, the issue has been a highly emotional one to those involved, and is often considered the last depressing, divisive aftereffect of the Vietnam War.

**SAIGON**

*Definition:* Traditional capital city of South Vietnam. During the Vietnam War, the seat of government for the Republic of Vietnam. Saigon was captured by Communist forces in 1975 and was subsequently renamed Ho Chi Minh City.

**STRATEGIC HAMLET**

*Definition:* The Strategic Hamlet Program was a plan by the governments of South Vietnam and the United States during the Vietnam War to combat the Communist insurgency by means of population transfer. During the early 1960s, the “Strategic Hamlet Program” attempted to separate rural peasants from Communist insurgents by creating fortified villages. In effect, villagers became prisoners. Many abandoned support for the Diem regime in South Vietnam and began to support the communist Viet Cong.

**TET OFFENSIVE**

*Definition:* The Tet Offensive was a military campaign during the Vietnam War that began on January 31, 1968. Forces of the National Liberation Front for South Vietnam, or Viet Cong, and the People’s Army of Vietnam, or North Vietnamese army, fought against the forces of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam), the United States, and their allies. The purpose of the offensive was to strike military and civilian command and control centers throughout South Vietnam and to spark a general uprising among the population that would then topple the Saigon government, thus ending the war in a single blow. The initial attacks stunned allied forces, but most were quickly contained and beaten back, inflicting massive casualties on communist forces. Of the 80,000 enemy fighters who participated in the Tet Offensive, as many as 50,000 were killed.

*Context:* Although Tet was undeniably a military defeat for Communist forces, they emerged with a decisive psychological victory. The American public, who had been led to believe that the enemy was on the verge of defeat, alleged a “credibility gap” on the part of President Johnson and his military advisors. Support for the war effort, already waning, collapsed.

**TONKIN GULF RESOLUTION**
Definition: The Tonkin Gulf Resolution (officially, the Southeast Asia Resolution, Public Law 88-408) was a joint resolution of the United States Congress passed on August 7, 1964 in response to the Gulf of Tonkin incident, in which enemy warships allegedly fired-upon an American destroyer. The Tonkin Gulf Resolution is of historical significance because it gave U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson authorization, without a formal declaration of war by Congress, for the use of military force in Southeast Asia. Specifically, the resolution authorized the President to do whatever necessary in order to assist "any member or protocol state of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty." This included involving armed forces.

Context: The unanimous affirmative vote in the House of Representatives was 416-0. It was opposed in the Senate only by Senators Wayne Morse (D-OR) and Ernest Gruening (D-AK). Senator Gruening objected to "sending our American boys into combat in a war in which we have no business, which is not our war, into which we have been misguidedly drawn, which is steadily being escalated." The Johnson administration subsequently relied upon the resolution to begin its rapid escalation of U.S. military involvement in the Vietnam conflict.

Mounting public opinion against the war eventually led to the repeal of the resolution, which was attached to a bill that Nixon signed in January 1971.[7] Seeking to restore limits on presidential authority to engage U.S. forces without a formal declaration of war Congress passed the War Powers Resolution in 1973, over Nixon's veto. The War Powers Resolution, which is still in effect, sets forth certain requirements for the President to consult with Congress in regard to decisions that engage U.S. forces in hostilities or imminent hostilities.

VIỆT CÔNG
Definition: Việt Cộng is a pejorative term for “Vietnamese communist”. The word appears in Saigon newspapers beginning in 1956. American soldiers referred to the Vietcong as Victor Charlie or VC. “Victor” and “Charlie” are both letters in the NATO phonetic alphabet. “Charlie” referred to communist forces in general, both Vietcong and PAVN.

VIETNAMIZATION
Definition: Vietnamization is the term given to the Nixon administration’s policy of rearming and rebuilding South Vietnam’s armed forces in order to allow the withdrawal of American ground troops.

Context: During the Johnson administration the efforts to “take charge” of the fighting are sometimes referred to as “Americanizing” the war in Vietnam.

VIỆT MINH
Definition: The Việt Minh or “League for the Independence of Vietnam” was a national liberation movement founded in South China on May 19, 1941. Led by Ho Chi Minh, the Việt Minh initially formed to seek independence for Vietnam from France and later to oppose the Japanese occupation.
Context: Former members of the Việt Minh joined with other resistance groups to form the National Liberation Front (NLF).

VERSAILLES PEACE TREATY
Definition: The Treaty of Versailles was one of the peace treaties at the end of World War I. It ended the state of war between Germany and the Allied Powers. It was signed on 28 June 1919, exactly five years after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. The other Central Powers on the German side of World War I were dealt with in separate treaties. Although the armistice signed on 11 November 1918 ended the actual fighting, it took six months of negotiations at the Paris Peace Conference to conclude the peace treaty.

Context: In Vietnam, the United States faced a guerilla insurgency over many years beginning in 1954. Although, the insurgency could not defeat the U.S. in traditional military terms, the long-term psychological affects on American political and military leaders as well as the public were sufficient to force a U.S. withdrawal and, ultimately, victory for the guerilla fighters.
Activity: Legacy of Ashes (6)

Subject: Vietnam

DIRECTIONS: Based on your research answer the following questions.

President: ____________________________________________________________

Dates in Office: _______________________________________________________

Political Party: _______________________________________________________

Party Majority in Congress: _____________________________________________

Key Advisors: _________________________________________________________

Summarize the President’s policy vis a vis Vietnam and Southeast Asia:

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Were the administration’s actions consistent or did they change over time? Provide examples.

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
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_____________________________________________________________________
Activity: Heroes and Heroines (7)  
Subject: Vietnam

Name ________________________________  
Date ________________________________

DIRECTIONS: Select one of the following Vietnamese heroes or heroines and compose a brief biography.

the Trung sisters  
Trieu Trinh  
Le Loi  
Le Thanh Tong  
Phan Boi Bhau  
Trieu Da

___________________________________________________________________________________
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Activity: Songs of Protest (8)  
Subject: Vietnam  

Name ________________________________  
Date ________________________________  

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the lyrics to Vietnam war protest song and then complete the following questions.

Song ____________________________________________________________  

Artist ____________________________________________________________  

For or Against the War ____________________________________________  

Summarize the Song’s Message ______________________________________  

What does this song say about American public opinion during the war? ________________
DIRECTIONS: The Vietnam War was one of many sources of instability in the United States during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Anti-war sentiment was matched by equally outspoken voices in support of the war.

While you are watching the video segment “Vietnam: The Great Debate” take notes on each person’s point of view. Then, answer the questions posed on the Student Worksheet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>For/Against</th>
<th>Left/Right/NA</th>
<th>Biased?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Benjamin Spock</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student</td>
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<td>President Johnson</td>
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<td>Sec. of State Rusk</td>
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<td>Senator Fullbright</td>
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<td>U.S. Soldier #1</td>
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<td>Sam Brown</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anti-war Protester</td>
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<td>Gov. Ronald Reagan</td>
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<td>Sen. Goodell</td>
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<td>Gov. Rockefeller</td>
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<td>Hungarian Refugee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other #1</td>
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<td>Other #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other #3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Activity: The Whole World Was Watching (10)  
Subject: Vietnam

**DIRECTIONS:** For your assigned month(s), research to learn about significant events of 1968. Then complete the chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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