

1968 Protests and Politics | Lesson Plan

Target Audience: 12th Grade Government

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Rationale:

What was the impact of Vietnam on the election process? The objective or aim of this lesson is to allow the students the opportunity to analyze the 1968 democratic convention and the impact of protesters on political change. The goal is to expose the students to multiple primary source videos that show the side of antiwar protesters, political leaders and the police. It will be the student's responsibility to make Constitutional connections and link the event to a change in America's political process.

This lesson is for a 12th grade government class. The class period would be 60-90 minutes, depending on the time allotted for discussion if showing the modules in class. It is designed to be a flipped lesson however, where students can access the information from home or classroom with technology. Other than the discussion portion, students will move at their own pace.

A recent goal of social studies in Virginia is to focus on skills that teach students to evaluate, problem solve and communicate effectively. Rather than just answer content-based questions on each video, the students are evaluating the video clips and connecting them to the Constitution. This allows them to tie 1968 events to the founders intentions as well as current events during the discussion portion. Practicing how to communicate diverse opinions on controversial topics fosters civil discourse.

Virginia and United States Government [Standards of Learning](#):

- GOVT.1 The student will demonstrate mastery of the social studies skills responsible citizenship requires, including the ability to
- analyze primary and secondary source documents;
 - analyze political cartoons, political advertisements, pictures, and other graphic media;
 - distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information;
 - evaluate information for accuracy, separating fact from opinion;
 - identify a problem, weigh the expected costs and benefits and possible consequences of proposed solutions, and recommend solutions, using a decision-making model;
 - select and defend positions in writing, discussion, and debate.
- GOVT.3 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the concepts of democracy by
- recognizing the fundamental worth and dignity of the individual;
 - recognizing majority rule and minority rights;
 - recognizing the freedom of the individual.
- GOVT.4 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the Constitution of the United States by
- examining the fundamental principles upon which the Constitution of the United States is based, including the rule of law, consent of the governed, limited government, separation of powers, and federalism;
- GOVT.6 The student will demonstrate knowledge of local, state, and national elections by
- describing the organization, role, and constituencies of political parties;
 - describing the nomination and election process;
 - analyzing the influence of media coverage, campaign advertising, public opinion polls, and Internet-based communications on elections;
- GOVT.7 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the organization and powers of the national government by
- examining the ways individuals and groups exert influence on the national government.
- GOVT.9 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the process by which public policy is made by

- a) examining different perspectives on the role of government;
- e) analyzing how individuals, interest groups, and the media influence public policy;

GOVT.11 The student will demonstrate knowledge of civil liberties and civil rights by

- a) examining the Bill of Rights, with emphasis on First Amendment freedoms;
- d) exploring the balance between individual liberties and the public interest;

GOVT.17 The student will demonstrate knowledge of personal character traits that facilitate thoughtful and effective participation in civic life by

- b) practicing courtesy and respect for the rights of others;

Objectives:

The Student Will Be Able To:

- Recall Constitutional principles and rights (Remember)
- Compare and contrast goals of protesters and political leaders (Analyze)
- Critique the actions of political and social leaders (Evaluate)
- Identify the significant parts of primary source video clips (Understand)
- Develop their own opinion based on the documents (Create)
- Defend their interpretation using historical knowledge and civil liberties during reflection (Evaluate)
- Debate the various points of view on the War during class discussion (Analyze)

Background:

The Vietnam War will have been studied the previous year in US History through a historical lens. As government students, this lesson will have them look at the effects of Vietnam on individuals, political parties and elections. Widespread media coverage of the war gave viewers a front row seat to the tumultuous year leading up to the 1968 convention. Many began to distrust and question the foreign policy stance of political leaders, and mobilize to bring about change. While protest is a first amendment right, the 1968 convention offers curriculum pairings to rule of law, public safety, media and more.

Prep for lesson:

1. If you have not already, log onto [PBS Learning Media](#) as a teacher and find “[1968 Protests and Politics](#)” lesson plan. Set up your classes so that you can assign the lesson to students.
2. Have students set up their PBS accounts in class or access the site for the first time together, to trouble shoot any possible kinks.
3. This activity is designed to be a flipped lesson in which students view and complete the module on their own as homework or in class at their own pace, without much teacher support. The discussion portion is then given ample class time. If using the modules in class, headphones will be needed for individual viewing or a projector to show the video once to everyone.
4. It is important prior to any government themed debate that students understand how to communicate respectfully when encountering opinions that differ from their own.

Materials:

- VIDEO: The [White House](#): Inside Story part 9, (only the first 4 minutes)
- VIDEO: [1968](#) | Chicago 10 Film Module (3:21)
- VIDEO: The [Convention](#) | Chicago 10 Film Module (7:03)
- VIDEO: Iowa [Caucus](#) History: 1968 Creates Need for Change (2:15)
- PHOTO: Cops Restrain Protestor At 1968 Democratic National Convention [photo](#)
- Headphones for each student if viewing individually in class with laptops; projector and paper for responses if viewing as one group

Activity Instructions:

1. WATCH The [White House](#): Inside Story part 9, (only the first 4 minutes)
 - a. Note the effect of protesters on the President
2. WATCH Video: [1968](#) | Chicago 10 Film Module (3:21)
 - a. What were the goals of the Convention protesters?
3. LOOK at the image Cops Restrain Protester At 1968 Democratic National Convention [photo](#)
 - a. What is the response from Mayor Daly to violence in his city?
4. WATCH The [Convention](#) | Chicago 10 Film Module (7:03)
 - a. As you watch the film, make a T-chart list reflecting the protestors and the role of government (political leaders, police, etc)
5. Recall on majority rule, minority rights and rule of law - Explain which side is protected by the Constitution
6. WATCH Iowa [Caucus](#) History: 1968 Creates Need for Change (2:15)
 - a. What was the effect of 1968 Convention protesters on political parties and the election process?
 - b. Explain the new "Iowa" method
7. Essay: In readings and in class we have covered the old election system in which political parties chose their candidate from party favorites. Compare and contrast the old political system to the new 1972 method. Explain the role of Vietnam protesters in that change. Is this the most democratic method?
8. Discussion as a class after the written portions have been submitted: In addition to the questions from the modules - Was the 1968 violence necessary to bring about change? What was the tipping point for protests? When the protesters chanted, "The whole world is watching" what did that say about the impact of media coverage of the war? Where does one draw a line between legal protests and public safety? Are there any recent protests that are similar?

Assessment: The written reflections in the video modules gauge comprehension of the government Standards of Learning goals. In addition, the discussion acts as a Performance Based Assessment to evaluate how well students demonstrate mastery of the social studies skills for responsible citizenship.