

The Vietnam Impact Through Images | Lesson Plan

Target Audience: 12th Grade Government

Prepared by Rebekah Amato, Chesterfield County Public Schools

Rationale:

Why did involvement in Vietnam divide Americans? The objective or aim of this lesson is to allow the students the opportunity to question the actions of individuals during the Vietnam war. The goal is to expose the students to multiple primary source images that show the point of views of antiwar protestors, pro-war protestors, soldiers and the Vietnamese. It will be the student's responsibility to draw their own conclusion as to the complexities of the Vietnam conflict and tie it to foreign policy and civil liberties.

This lesson is for a 12th grade government class with 25 students. The class period would be 60-90 minutes, depending on the time allotted for discussion. The discussion focuses primarily on Civil Liberties, as well as the impact of American support on foreign and national policy. US History topics such as domino effect and facts of the war may be mentioned, but should be tied to one of the government objectives above.

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 image, the students are creating their own questions and evaluating the value of the information yielded. 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;
 - select and defend positions in writing, discussion, and debate.
- GOVT.9 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the process by which public policy is made by
- 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
- examining the Bill of Rights, with emphasis on First Amendment freedoms;
 - exploring the balance between individual liberties and the public interest;
- GOVT.12 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the role of the United States in a changing world by
- describing the responsibilities of the national government for foreign policy and national security;
 - assessing the role played by national interest in shaping foreign policy and promoting world peace;
- GOVT.18 The student will understand that thoughtful and effective participation in civic life is characterized by
- respecting differing opinions in a diverse society;

Objectives:

The Student Will Be Able To:

- Recognize the topic/time period using primary source documents (Knowledge)
- Identify the significant parts of the image (Comprehension)
- Generate questions based off of each image (Synthesis)

- Solve questions posed by previous groups (Application)
- Debate the various points of view on the War during class discussion (Analysis)
- Develop their own opinion based on the documents (Synthesis)
- Support their interpretation using historical knowledge and civil liberties during reflection (Evaluation)

Background:

The Vietnam War has a plethora of viewpoints, from that of the North Vietnamese, the South Vietnamese, Americans for the war and Americans for peace. Unlike any previous war, Vietnam was televised for the world to see. The impact that has on citizens in America was unprecedented. Many began to distrust and question the foreign policy stance of political leaders, fight among themselves and invoke their first amendment rights.

Prep for lesson:

Students will have covered the Vietnam War the previous year in US History from the historical lens. Prior to this lesson, students may have previously done a Question Formulation Technique (QFT) so that they are familiar with the process, although this lesson features a carousel addition in which students are rotating. This lesson could easily be used when teaching foreign policy or Civil Liberties. 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:

- Photographs from [PBS Learning Media](#):
[Hunger Protest](#)
[Pro and Anti](#)
[Marine Carries Woman](#)
[Fear](#)
[Cops Restrain Protestor At 1968 Democratic National Convention](#)
[Weeping Marine](#)
[Woman on Guard](#)
- Five Pieces of 25 x 30.5 Inch butcher paper, tape or magnets to post for discussion
- Five different colored markers – avoid light colors
- Paper and pen for 25 student reflections, if not using digital version

Set up: Place five groups of five desks with one photograph at each group. This can be with paper copies or with a laptop open to the PBS Learning Media website. Each station should have one large sheet of butcher or poster paper and a marker. This grouping will accommodate 25 students.

Activity Instructions:

1. Sit in groups of five at one of the stations, assign a writer – this will rotate at each station so everyone must record responses once. Without discussing, look at the photograph and write as many questions as you can based on the image. Do not discuss or comment on the questions suggested – just write them down exactly as written, as many as are offered. Teacher should walk around to be sure students are not discussing the image or questions.

2. Move clockwise with your whole group and marker to the next photograph. Look at the photograph and the questions the previous group wrote. In the margin, label the questions as closed (yes/no, one word answers) or open (short answer/discussion). Teacher walk for support if needed.
3. Move clockwise with your whole group and marker to the next photograph. Look at the photograph and the questions the previous group wrote. Change any closed questions (yes/no, one word answers) into open questions that would yield more information or discussion {example change who to how, why, what purpose, etc}. Teacher walk to evaluate student progress.
4. Move clockwise with your whole group and marker to the next photograph. Look at the photograph and the questions the previous groups wrote. Circle three questions that would yield the most information about the photograph. Teacher walk to evaluate student progress.
5. Move clockwise with your whole group and marker to the next photograph. Look at the photograph and the questions the previous groups wrote. Answer two of the circled questions completely. Teacher walk to evaluate student progress.
6. Move clockwise to your original photo/question station. Look at what the other groups have added and discuss briefly. Look at the two final photographs teacher is displaying to the class, “Weeping Marine” and “Woman on Guard.” Flip over your sheet and make a t-chart to compare/contrast the two photographs with your group. Teacher walk to evaluate student progress.
7. Discuss the activity as a class, hanging up the group responses and projecting the images as needed. Students should speak one at a time and it should be student led discussion. Be sure that students are making the following connections, nudge them in the direction if needed, but do not lecture.
 - a. [Hunger Protest](#): Effects of communist regime on Buddhist religion, significance of their sign
 - b. [Pro and Anti](#): Anti-Communist and Anti-Nazi protestors close to the camera, anti-war protestors in the background closer to the White House.
 - c. [Marine Carries Woman](#) & [Fear](#): Discuss how Vietnamese (both North and South) might view the Americans – are we helping or hurting?
 - d. [Cops Restrain Protestor At 1968 Democratic National Convention](#): Depending on the circumstances – is protest at a political event covered under the 1st Amendment? Is this the tipping point for Americans to distrust their leaders?
 - e. [Weeping Marine](#) and [Woman on Guard](#): one soldier in a foreign land – one defending her country, contrast their emotions and motives for fighting, etc
8. On a sheet of paper if using paper copies or using the PBS Learning Media Website if digital, individually reflect on the seven photographs you have seen for this activity to explain the impact America's position in Vietnam had on its citizens.

Assessment: The written reflection can be used to gauge comprehension of the government Standards of Learning goals, be them a focus on Civil Liberties or the role of the government/citizen on foreign policy. In addition, the activity and discussion acts as a Performance Based Assessment to evaluate how well students demonstrate mastery of the social studies skills for responsible citizenship in Govt SOL 1 and 18.