

### Guiding questions (and resources) on the American war in Vietnam:

It is a challenge to teach the ‘American war’ in Vietnam, as the Vietnamese call it – so even its name is not settled. First of all, there is so much material – thousands of books, articles, and opinion pieces – that makes it almost impossible for even the most conscientious teacher (or citizen) to keep up with. Secondly the war remains controversial; a divide persists between war proponents and opponents even as they age and die. Memories of the American war in Southeast Asia have been consigned to a strange nether world: always in the background, but hardly ever directly confronted. Parents or grandparents may be unhappy with whatever approach we take.

Yet the war is unavoidable; it marked both a continuation of aggressive international policy and an extended expression of it. That US government aims were frustrated has hung over US foreign policy ever since. And the war defined life (and death) for a generation of young Americans. It may help students better tune into the life experiences of their immediate ancestors (including by assigning oral histories of family members).

So it is the responsibility of teachers to help students come to terms with this consequential past. We come at the war from a distinctly antiwar perspective but without denying or omitting the existence of other perspectives. Our goal is not to brainwash, but to honestly present thoughtful and powerful ideas to students that mainstream thinking has consigned to the dustbin of history. We want students to evaluate evidence critically and understand what is at stake in having a pro or antiwar position. The questions of war and peace remain with us and it is our obligation to help students appreciate that what they think and do about these questions is meaningful and important; that there are alternatives to the wars that continue to be visited upon us by ‘big’, seemingly all-powerful warmakers.

The American war in Vietnam can be framed in many ways: as part of the story of US imperial expansion, the history of colonialism, the Cold War, the application of international law, the impact of popular protest, the meaning of patriotism, the uses of government propaganda, the impact of war on civilians, as well as another episode in the history of warfare.

What follows is a list of key questions that need to be answered if students are to gain an adequate understanding of the war along with (short and accessible) materials for them to examine that elucidate these questions. We don’t expect teachers to adopt this unit plan as a whole – understanding among other things that unlimited time is not available – but to pick out what works in the context of their classroom. There are also suggestions for individual lessons.

What follows is not meant to be exhaustive, but suggestive. Most of the referenced articles are short. Two anthologies are indispensable: Marvin E. Gettleman, Jane Franklin, Marilyn B. Young, H. Bruce Franklin, *Vietnam and America: A Documented History* (NY: Grove Press, 1995) and Christian G. Appy, *Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered from All Sides* (NY: Penguin Books, 2003). Most resources can be used in the high school classroom, especially with guidance from the teacher. Resources useable by earlier grades are indicated.

Key questions are marked with a \*\* and key resources are marked with a ## for a scaled-down version of this unit plan.

Finally, we also include references to the National Council of Social Studies Standards (NCSS), as well as the Common Core Standards (CC) at the end of each numbered section. We recognize that the Common

Core standards are controversial, but know that many teachers need to make use of them. We will attach a short version of the NCSS standards and refer to them by the numbers used therein. We will refer to the CC standards by referring to names and number; for instance Key Ideas and Details: 1 – meaning “Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of science and technical texts, attending to important distinctions the author makes and to any gaps or inconsistencies in the account.” Go to [http://www.corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/ELA\\_Standards.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/ELA_Standards.pdf) for details of the standards referred to.

1. Why did the US fight in Vietnam? \*\*

The American war in Vietnam was a key episode in what has been called the Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union, though it decidedly was a hot conflict.

The US government rationale:

- a. Self-defense
- b. To promote democracy
- c. To prevent the expansion of tyranny/communism
  - i. To prevent the expansion of Soviet communism
  - ii. To prevent the expansion of Chinese communism
  - iii. To combat aggressiveness from North Vietnam

Alternate analyses:

- d. To gain influence in Asia
  - i. To combat revolutionary China
  - ii. To gain a land base on mainland Asia
  - iii. To replace France as a controlling power in Vietnam by setting up a ‘puppet regime’
- e. To expand its power
  - i. To extend its global reach and replace European powers as a dominant world force
  - ii. To gain control of natural resources

The following pieces trace US involvement, and the motivations for that involvement, in Vietnam starting after World War II.

(The Franco-Vietnamese War, 1945-1954: Origins of US Involvement, By Ngo Vinh Long (with Editors’ Introduction), 31-40 ## and Taking up the White Man’s Burden: Two American Views (1954) By John Foster Dulles and Richard M. Nixon, 50-52 in Marvin E. Gettleman, Jane Franklin, Marilyn B. Young, H. Bruce Franklin, *Vietnam and America: A Documented History* (NY: Grove Press, 1995).

<http://www.amazon.com/How-United-States-Involved-Vietnam/dp/B001TD2816>

Antiwar analysis by Robert Scheer who ran for US Congress in 1966 in California in an antiwar campaign.

Teaching idea:

<http://zinnedproject.org/materials/rethinking-the-teaching-of-the-vietnam-war/>

Students are asked to advise President Truman on whether to support Vietnamese independence or support French efforts at re-colonization after World War II

And/or write essays to advise Truman

NCSS: I b, d; II b, c, d; III a; VI f; IX a, b

CC: Reading:

Key Ideas and Details: 1, 2, 3; Craft and Structure: 4, 5, 6; Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: 8, 9; Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity: 10

## Writing:

Texts Types and Purposes: 1, 2, 3; Research to Build and Present Knowledge: 7, 8, 9;  
Range of Writing: 10

## 2. Could war have been avoided?

The US began its involvement during the Franco-Vietnamese war (1946-54), sometimes referred to as the First Indochinese war, footing 80% of the war costs by 1954. France had conquered Vietnam in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and was seeking to reestablish its power after World War II.

(First Appeal to the United States (June 18, 1919), By Ho Chi Minh, 18-20 ##

In this piece, Ho Chi Minh appeals to Woodrow Wilson to follow through on his call for 'self-determination' and support Vietnamese independence.

Vietnam Declaration of Independence (September 2, 1945), 26-28) in Marvin E. Gettleman, Jane Franklin, Marilyn B. Young, H. Bruce Franklin, *Vietnam and America: A Documented History* (NY: Grove Press, 1995). (Can be used in middle school)

Ho Chi Minh quotes from the American Declaration of Independence as he declares Vietnam's independence (from the French after the Japanese surrender). ##

<http://www.historynet.com/ho-chi-minh-and-the-oss.htm>

A description of cooperation between the US's Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh against the Japanese during World War II.

(Chapter 15, "The War That Should Not Have Been," by General Tran Van Tra in Jayne S. Werner and Luu Doan Huynh, eds., *The Vietnam War: Vietnamese and American Perspectives* (NY: Me Sharpe, 1993).

A Vietnamese leader argues that the American war in Vietnam was avoidable and unnecessary.

NCSS: I b, c, d; II b, c, d; III a; VI f; IX a, b

CC: Reading:

Key Ideas and Details: 1, 2, 3; Craft and Structure: 4, 5, 6; Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: 8, 9; Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity: 10

## 3. Who was the 'enemy'; who were US allies?

The US allied with the Republic of South Vietnam (or South Vietnam), whose military wing was the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN). The other side was the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam (or NLF, called the Viet Cong or VC by the Americans) and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV or North Vietnam) whose military wing was the People's Liberation Army (or PLA).

(Vu Hy Thieu, "Nothing was more essential than our sandals", pp. 190-94, Le Cao Dai "sometimes I operated at night while the staff took turns pedaling the bicycle", pp. 138-141, Phan Xuan Sinh, "All my ancestors are buried here", pp. 25-27, Truong Tran, "We could either lose or tie, but not win", pp. 504-507 in Christian G. Appy, *Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered from All Sides* (NY: Penguin Books, 2003).

The first two pieces describe the motivation and morale of the National Liberation Front and North Vietnamese soldiers.

The last piece provides a perspective from the Army of South Vietnam (ARVN), the allies of the US. (can be used in middle school)

NCSS: I d; II b, c, d; III a; VI f; IX a, b

CC: Reading:

Key Ideas and Details: 1, 2, 3; Craft and Structure: 4, 5, 6; Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: 8, 9; Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity: 10

4. Why did President Johnson escalate the war? \*\*

The Gulf of Tonkin resolution passed in August, 1964—after US government officials claimed that the DRV had attacked US ships in international waters in the Gulf of Tonkin (located off the coast of the DRV) -- gave President Johnson a free hand in pursuing military intervention in Vietnam, but was not a declaration of war. In fact, war was never officially declared, despite the involvement of hundreds of thousands of US troops and a series of bombing campaigns that exceeded all the bombing that occurred during World War II. The Gulf of Tonkin ‘incidents’ refer to two separate attacks. The nature of the first attack is controversial, but most historians doubt that there was a second attack.

The decision to escalate US involvement (already considerable) was taken in 1965 after an attack on Camp Holloway Airfield by the NLF in the city of Pleiku. In March, an air campaign, Operation Rolling Thunder, was launched against the DRV. By the end of 1965, US troops numbered 180,000. In 1968, there were over half a million US troops fighting in Vietnam.

(Excerpt from Daniel Ellsberg, *Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers*, (pp. 7–20); links at either:

<http://www.pbs.org/pov/mostdangerousman/secrets2.php> ##

or

<http://newsmine.org/content.php?ol=deceptions/war-pretext-lies/ellsberg-gulf-of-tonkin.txt>

Daniel Ellsberg’s first-hand account from the Pentagon of the Gulf of Tonkin incident.

[Robert J. Hanyok, "Skunks, Bogies, Silent Hounds, and the Flying Fish: The Gulf of Tonkin Mystery, 2-4 August 1964", \*Cryptologic Quarterly\*, Winter 2000/Spring 2001 Edition, Vol. 19, No. 4 / Vol. 20, No. 1](#) or <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB132/relea00012.pdf> .

A review of the evidence for the second Gulf of Tonkin incident.

See also <https://www.dropbox.com/s/oqahklqswlms7g/American%20Artifacts.mp4> for an understanding of what Johnson knew and what he said about the Gulf of Tonkin.

(Rationale for Escalation: The US Government “White Paper” of 1965, pp. 255-274) in Marvin E. Gettleman, Jane Franklin, Marilyn B. Young, H. Bruce Franklin, *Vietnam and America: A Documented History* (NY: Grove Press, 1995).

The government view of US strategy.

NCSS: I d; II a, b, c, d; III a; VI f; IX a, b

CC: Reading:

Key Ideas and Details: 1, 2, 3; Craft and Structure: 4, 5, 6; Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: 8, 9; Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity: 10

5. What was the war like for US soldiers and their families?

*What's Goin' On?* By Marvin Gaye. (*What's Goin' On? Motown Records, 1971.*)

Marvin Gaye's first venture into songwriting and producing, the song was based on stories told to him by his brother, a Vietnam vet, after he returned from the war.

Selections from: Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried* (1990), New York: Houghton Mifflin and Wallace Terry, *Bloods: An Oral History of the Vietnam War by Black Veterans* (1984), New York: Ballantine Books. ##

*Patrol: An American Soldier in Vietnam* by Walter Dean Myers (HarperCollins, 2005). 40 pp.

Award winning young adult author Walter Dean Myers introduces the questions raised by many soldiers as they see the humanity of the "enemy" through this illustrated picture book. (Upper elementary students).

*Regret to Inform* by Barbara Sonneborn. Sun Fountain Productions, 1999. 72 min.

Teacher's guide by Bill Bigelow. This beautifully filmed Oscar-nominated documentary follows director Barbara Sonneborn as she travels to Vietnam to the site of her husband's wartime death. Woven into her personal odyssey are interviews with American and Vietnamese widows who speak openly and profoundly about the men they loved and how war changed their lives forever. More information at [regrettoinform.org](http://regrettoinform.org).

NCSS: I d; II a, b, c, d; III a; VI f; IX a, b

CC: Reading:

Key Ideas and Details: 1, 2, 3; Craft and Structure: 4, 5, 6; Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: 7, 8, 9; Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity: 10

6. What was the turning point in the war?

"Remembering the Tet Offensive," By David Hunt, 359-377 ## in Marvin E. Gettleman, Jane Franklin, Marilyn B. Young, H. Bruce Franklin, *Vietnam and America: A Documented History* (NY: Grove Press, 1995) and

Long, Ngo Vinh, "The Tet Offensive and its aftermath", pp. 23-45. (An updated and detached version of the realities of the Tet offensive in J. Werner and D. Hunt, eds., *The American war in Vietnam* (1993).

The first piece vividly describes the shock and power of the 1968 Tet offensive, which many see as the key turning point in the war. The second describes its multiple and contradictory impacts on the National Liberation Front as well as on the Americans and ARVN. Who won the Tet offensive – and what exactly winning consisted of – is a matter of some controversy. In any case, the impact on the American public was powerful, demonstrating that there was no imminent 'light at the end of the tunnel', no imminent victory.

NCSS: I d; II a, b, c, d; III a; VI f; IX a, b

CC: Reading:

Key Ideas and Details: 1, 2, 3; Craft and Structure: 4, 5, 6; Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: 8, 9; Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity: 10

7. Who was harmed by the war? \*\*

*Nick Turse, Kill Anything That Moves: The Real American War in Vietnam, by Nick Turse (2013, pp. 1-23, 259-62). ##*

A powerful description of the impact of US strategy on Vietnamese civilians.

*Seymour Hersh, "What Happened at My Lai", pp. 410-24 in Marvin E. Gettleman, Jane Franklin, Marilyn B. Young, H. Bruce Franklin, Vietnam and America: A Documented History (NY: Grove Press, 1995). ##*

The most well-known of numerous massacres of civilians was exposed through the persistent efforts of veteran Ron Ridenour.

Song for Hugh Thompson by David Rovics. (We Just Want the World, 1998.)

The story of a soldier who stood up for the Vietnamese civilians during the My Lai Massacre.

Rovics' site has more songs on the Vietnam War and other peace and justice issues.

<http://www.davidrovics.com> .

NCSS: I d; II a, b, c, d; III a; VI f; IX a, b

CC: Reading:

Key Ideas and Details: 1, 2, 3; Craft and Structure: 4, 5, 6; Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: 7, 8, 9; Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity: 10

8. Which Americans resisted the war?

Anti-Draft statements, pp.305-09, ("Declaration of Independence from the War in Vietnam" (April 1967), by the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., 310-318 ## [also available online at

[http://www.democracynow.org/2012/1/16/special\\_dr\\_martin\\_luther\\_king\\_jr](http://www.democracynow.org/2012/1/16/special_dr_martin_luther_king_jr)] and "The Collapse of the Armed Forces" (1971), By Colonel Robert D. Heinl, Jr., pp.326-335 ## in Marvin E. Gettleman, Jane Franklin, Marilyn B. Young, H. Bruce Franklin, *Vietnam and America: A Documented History* (NY: Grove Press, 1995).

The first piece describes the actions and motivation for brave acts of draft resistance by Americas who refused to fight in Vietnam..

The second piece is one of Martin Luther King's greatest speeches opposing the war despite the advice of many to stick to issues of civil rights..

The third piece by a military officer describes the depth and breadth of resistance to the war inside the US military.

**Sir! No Sir! – The Suppressed Story of the GI Movement to End the War in Vietnam** produced, directed and written by David Zeigler

[www.sirnosir.com](http://www.sirnosir.com). ##

(Available from

[www.teachingforchange.org](http://www.teachingforchange.org),

) (Can be used in middle school)

This powerful video featuring the voices of Vietnam soldiers, veterans and their supporters

Muhammad Ali refuses induction:

<http://openvault.wgbh.org/catalog/sbro-mla000938-muhammad-ali-and-the-vietnam-war>

or

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HeFMyrWIZ68>

Country Joe McDonald:

<http://www.lyrics.com/i-feel-like-im-fixin-to-die-rag-lyrics-country-joe-mcdonald.html>

<http://search.yahoo.com/search?ei=utf-8&fr=ytf1->

w3i&p=i%20feel%20like%20i%20m%20fixin%20to%20die%20country%20joe%20lyrics&type=W3i\_YT,192,2\_4,Search,20120518,18488,0,29,0

Country Joe McDonald performing his famous antiwar rag. (Can be used with discretion in middle school)

Tom Engelhardt, "It was like Vietnam had somehow come all the way into our living rooms", pp. 268-274, Vivian Rothstein, "What? Meet separately with the women?", pp. 274-78 in Christian G. Appy, *Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered from All Sides* (NY: Penguin Books, 2003). Recollections by antiwar activists.

Antiwar buttons:

[http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML\\_docs/Exhibits/Buttons.html](http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML_docs/Exhibits/Buttons.html)

Antiwar posters:

[http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML\\_docs/Exhibits/Track16.html](http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML_docs/Exhibits/Track16.html)

(Can be used with discretion K-12)

**National Vietnam Examination**, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS, 1966)

<http://www.sds-1960s.org/exam.htm>

Teaching idea:

<http://zinnedproject.org/materials/the-most-dangerous-man-in-america-teaching-guide/>

*The Most Dangerous Man in America : Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers* (2009) Directed by Judith Ehrlich, Rick Goldsmith. With Peter Arnett, Ben Bagdikian, Ann Beeson, John Dean. ## A documentary about Daniel Ellsberg and how he came to release the secret *Pentagon Papers*

<http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB359/>

which revealed the long-term involvement of the US in Southeast Asia, as well as the lies of many pro-war government officials.

(Can be used in middle school)

**Possible projects:**

1. Design a poster, button, or write a song about the war in Vietnam or contemporary wars from an antiwar perspective..
2. Have students produce oral histories of antiwar vet.
3. Interview relatives who were alive about their views of the war in Vietnam.

NCSS: I d; II a, b, c, d; III a; VI f; IX a, b

CC: Reading:

Key Ideas and Details: 1, 2, 3; Craft and Structure: 4, 5, 6; Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: 7, 8, 9; Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity: 10;

Writing:

Texts Types and Purposes: 3; Research to Build and Present Knowledge: 7, 8, 9

9. Which Americans supported the war?  
 SSGT. Barry Sadler, "The Ballad of the Green Berets":  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0y5GDvN9\\_OE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0y5GDvN9_OE)  
 The popular pro-war ballad.

1970 NYC Hardhat Riot:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGtDLVM1UZU>  
 Visuals of the demonstration by construction workers against antiwar protestors.

Penny Lewis, "The Myth of the Hardhat Hawk":  
<http://jacobinmag.com/2013/09/the-myth-of-the-hardhat-hawk/>  
 An attempt to dislodge the stereotype of the pro-war character of the US working class.

**Possible projects:**

1. Design a poster, button, or write a song about the war in Vietnam or contemporary wars from a pro-war perspective.
2. Have students produce oral histories of a pro-war vet.
3. Interview relatives who were alive about their views of the war in Vietnam.

NCSS: I d; II a, b, c, d; III a; VI f; IX a, b

CC: Reading:

Key Ideas and Details: 1, 2, 3; Craft and Structure: 4, 5, 6; Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: 7, 8, 9; Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity: 10

Writing:

Texts Types and Purposes:3; Research to Build and Present Knowledge: 7, 8, 9

10. What would have constituted winning for the US? \*\*  
 The US goal was the establishment of a pro-American, anti-Communist government in South Vietnam (some saw such a government also as a potential launching pad to overthrow the pro-Communist Democratic Republic of Vietnam). As this outcome became more unlikely the US shifted goals and tactics.  
 "US Crisis Managers Choose from among Diminishing Options" pp. 299-91 in Marvin E. Gettleman, Jane Franklin, Marilyn B. Young, H. Bruce Franklin, *Vietnam and America: A Documented History* (NY: Grove Press, 1995).

In 1968, Lyndon Johnson decided not to run for re-election and Richard Nixon defeated Hubert Humphrey for the Presidency. Nixon eventually introduced a policy of 'Vietnamization' – in which US airpower bombed and South Vietnamese troops fought on the ground. This resulted in fewer US casualties (which totaled over 58,000 dead by the end of the war), but failed to turn the tide. In any case, the US withdrew its soldiers in 1973 and Saigon fell to the combined forces of the NLF and the DRV in 1975 marking the end of the war.

**Possible projects:**

Essay: Describe the obstacles to US military success in Vietnam; explain whether and how they could have been overcome.

NCSS: I d; II a, b, c, d; III a; VI f; IX a, b

CC: Reading:

Key Ideas and Details: 1, 2, 3; Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: 7, 8, 9; Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity: 10;

Writing:

Texts Types and Purposes: 3; Research to Build and Present Knowledge: 7, 8, 9

11. How did the war affect Vietnam? \*\*

<http://www.warlegacies.org/> ##

A web site describing the legacies of the war for the people of Vietnam.

Project Renew: UXO in Quang Tri province:

<http://www.landmines.org.vn/> ##

A Vietnamese project with US veteran involvement to clear the province of unexploded ordinance and to educate the populace on how to deal with it.

The United States dropped more bombs on Indochina (Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia) than were dropped by all sides on all fronts during World War II. Systematic bombing during the war created over twenty-five million bomb craters. Since the end of the war, UXO explosions have killed forty-two thousand Vietnamese and seriously injured an additional sixty-two thousand, with one-third of the victims being children. The area in Vietnam most heavily affected by UXO is Quảng Trị, the province divided by the former DMZ (De-Militarized Zone). More than 83 percent of the total area of the province remains contaminated with UXO.

<http://www.agentorangerecord.com/home/> ##

Vietnam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Project:

<http://www.vn-agentorange.org/edmaterials/bibliography.html>

Web sites dealing with the impact of the use of Agent Orange.

From 1961 until 1971, the US military dropped more than nineteen million gallons of toxic chemicals — defoliants or herbicides — on southern Vietnam in Operation Ranch Hand. The chemicals were identified by the colors painted on their 55-gallon-drum shipping containers. The best known and the most sprayed was Agent Orange, a herbicide known by the late 1960s to contain often dangerous levels of a “finger-print” (i.e. specifically identifiable) dioxin, 2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin, which the World Health Organization has cited as among the most dangerous persistent-organic-pollutant (POP) toxins.

The articulated goal of the spraying program, which was implemented by both American and Saigon-government forces, was two-fold: to deprive the resistance fighters of food supplies by destroying crops and to deny them cover through deforestation. Many Vietnamese may have been exposed intermittently for close to ten years.

The US Veterans Administration accepts that anyone who served in South Vietnam from 1962 until 7 May 1975 was “exposed,” where “exposed” does not necessarily imply “sprayed” or “affected.” However, American, ARVN, and allied foreign troops doused their own bases with defoliants, with the troops handling the chemicals probably the most exposed. Whereas most Americans soldiers served one year, some ARVN troops handled Agent Orange and other toxic chemicals and lived in heavily doused environments for a decade. Thus, these ARVN soldiers may have been subjected to the most exposure.

There is growing scientific evidence that those exposed during the war regardless of their side and military/civilian status may experience increased incidence of some types of cancer, type 2 diabetes, nervous-system conditions, reproductive problems, disabilities among offspring, and other health problems. The environmental impact continues in present-day Vietnam from the loss of triple-canopy forests and the presence of “hot spots” with high concentrations of residual dioxin. These hot spots, which are mostly on former bases where the spray planes were loaded, can be seen as comparable to US Environmental Protection Agency Superfund toxic-waste sites. A few Vietnamese and Americans and their organizations have worked together on the Agent Orange issue since during the war, with veterans on both sides joining that effort soon thereafter. Organizations are now active in both the United States and Vietnam with, in the last ten years, some cooperation between collegial branches of the two governments on remediation of dioxin “hot spots” in Vietnam and assistance to Vietnamese who may be victims of Agent Orange. Nevertheless, Agent Orange remains a persistent, difficult, and painful post-war issue.

Tran van Ban, “We saw so many parents crying for their lost children”, pp. 515-16 in Christian G. Appy, *Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered from All Sides* (NY: Penguin Books, 2003).  
A reaction by a Vietnamese at the end of hostilities.

US Promise of Postwar Reconstruction: Letter to DRV Prime Minister Pham Van Dong (February 1, 1973), by Richard Nixon, pp. pp. 487-88. ##

A promise of postwar reconstruction aid for Vietnam by President Nixon. Does Nixon’s letter constitute an obligation of the American government or people?

**Possible projects:**

1. Essays: Pro or Con: The US owes Vietnam reparations for destruction during the war.
2. How might the class support the above postwar projects?

NCSS: I d; II a, b, c, d; III a; VI f; IX a, b

CC: Reading:

Key Ideas and Details: 1, 2, 3; Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: 7, 8, 9; Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity: 10;

NCSS: I d; II a, b, c, d; III a; VI f; IX a, b

Writing:

Texts Types and Purposes: 2, 3; Production and Distribution of Writing: 4; Research to Build and Present Knowledge: 7, 8, 9; Range of Writing: 10

12. How did it affect the American people? \*\*

<http://www.ncveteransforpeace.org/memorial/vietchalk.pdf>

A call for an alternative to the Department of Defense commemoration of the war; what do those in power choose to commemorate; what is important for Americas to remember and learn from? How is history made use of in commemoration and rituals of remembrance?

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Christian G. Appy, **American Reckoning: The Vietnam War and our National identity**, New York: Penguin Press, 2015, Introduction and Chapter 11.

H. Bruce Franklin, "The Last Chapter?", pp. 500-515 ##, Marilyn Young, "Epilogue: The Vietnam War in American Memory, pp. 515-522 ## in Marvin E. Gettleman, Jane Franklin, Marilyn B. Young, H. Bruce Franklin, *Vietnam and America: A Documented History* (NY: Grove Press, 1995). A brilliant dismantling of the mythology of the POWs and MIAs by H. Bruce Franklin. Marilyn Young assesses American attempts to come to terms with or avoid coming to terms with the meaning of the war.

The Vietnam War and the Struggle For Truth, by John Grant (Vietnam Veteran, now anti-war activist) ##

<http://www.intheminfield.com/2012/06/22/the-vietnam-war-and-the-struggle-for-truth/>

Ruminations by a thoughtful American veteran and antiwar activist.

**Possible projects:**

1. Have students develop a commemoration of the war (a museum exhibition, an art or dramatic piece).
2. Pro or Con: The American people have learned important lessons from the experience of the war in Vietnam.

NCSS: I d; II a, b, c, d; III a; VI f; IX a, b

CC: Reading:

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NCSS: I d; II a, b, c, d; III a; VI f; IX a, b

Writing:

Texts Types and Purposes: 1, 2, 3; Production and Distribution of Writing: 4, 5, 6; Research to Build and Present Knowledge: 7, 8, 9; Range of Writing: 10