Sample Lesson Plans

Lesson Plan : Community Role Models in the Classroom: The Vietnam Era

Goals and Objectives: The student will acquire information from a variety of sources and use this information for problem solving, decision making and planning (N.C. Social Studies Standard Course of Study: Purpose and Philosophy, p. 1). The student will possess civic understanding and accept their responsibilities as citizens in a democratic society (N.C. Social Studies Standard Course of Study: Overall Framework Goals, p. 3). The student will develop a mutual respect between human beings and identify situations in which social action is required (N.C. Soc. St. Standard Course of Study: Skill III and IV, pp. 21-22). The learner will evaluate the influence of ethical and moral principles on the development of our economic, legal, and political systems (ELP: Goal 10 and USH:Goal 2).

Units of Study: This lesson plan can be applied to any unit of study relating to the Vietnam era.

Length of Activity: One to two class periods plus homework (critical thinking questions plus reflective letter) for each guest speaker visit.

Level of Activity: All Levels

Instructions:

1. Build a network of community speakers for your Vietnam era unit or course through parents, PTA, business, education, government, and veterans' organizations. Never has the community been more willing to contribute to our educational programs!

2. Call the prospective guest speaker and discuss how he/she might be able to enrich the curriculum, as well as serve as a positive role model for your class. Assure the speaker that he/she can add a special vitality to the classroom by sharing expertise and interacting with the students. Describe your class to the speaker. Ask that he/she plan to allow approximately half of the period for student questions. Reassure him/her that you will keep the ball rolling! Set the date!

http://www.wcpss.net/community_in_the_classroom/vietnam/lessonplan1.html 7/14/02
3. Familiarize students with background of community speaker and his/her connection to the Vietnam era.

4. Conduct a "brainstorming" session during which students share ideas for questions and discussion.

5. Instruct each student to prepare five questions for homework. Collect and review student questions the following day.

6. Discuss question themes with guest speaker and mail questions to speaker ahead of time.

7. Return questions to each student prior to the guest speaker's visit. (Students will feel more comfortable if they can refer to their carefully prepared questions.)

8. Arrange for a student to meet the speaker at the front office.

9. When the class begins, introduce the community guest or, if appropriate, have a student who has prepared an introduction do so. Let the class know whether they should hold their questions until the end. Be ready to ask questions yourself if necessary.

10. Assist the speaker in bringing the class to a close a few minutes before the period ends. Instruct students ahead of time that polite applause is very appropriate.

11. Arrange for a student to escort the speaker back to the front office.

12. As a follow up activity, have each student write a reflective thank you letter to the speaker. Be sure to mail the packet of letters to each classroom visitor. Not only do they demonstrate caring appreciation, but they often help the speaker better prepare for future visits. These guests are often willing to serve as student resources throughout the year.

13. Encourage students to write articles for a classroom newsletter, the school newspaper, PTA Newsletter, and local newspaper regarding how these exciting community members have made positive contributions to our educational program. Other teachers, students, and parents will also see the benefits of inviting community role models to our classrooms.

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Vietnam Era Curriculum*

In a study of the Vietnam era, some or all of the following topics may be addressed:

- Geography, History and Culture of Vietnam
  - Identification of the physical features, customs and history that have shaped Vietnam.

- United States Foreign Policy: Containment
  - The United States policy of containment led to increased involvement in Southeast Asia.

- American Involvement: The Early Years
  - The role of the United States changed from one of advisor to the South Vietnamese to one of major participant in the management of the war.

- America Takes Charge
  - The United States military presence in Vietnam escalated dramatically from 1964 to 1968.

- Who Fought for the United States?
  - The Vietnam soldier was a cross-section of American society.

- How the War was Fought
  - A variety of strategies were implemented throughout the war.

- The War at Home
  - The Vietnam War divided America.

- How the War was Reported
  - The media brought the Vietnam War into our homes on a daily basis.

- Vietmization of the War
  - The United States policy of Vietnamization was implemented.

- The Wounds of War and the Healing Process
  - The Vietnam War left open wounds and unanswered questions for generations to come.

- Legacy of the Vietnam War
  - America continues to struggle with the meaning and significance of the Vietnam experience.

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- Vietnam War Research Project
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Normalization of United States/Vietnam Relations
- America and Vietnam normalize relations while lingering issues, such as POWs and Amerasians, remain.

A student rubs the name of a North Carolinian at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

*Adapted from the Wake County Public Schools Lessons of Vietnam Curriculum Guide.
Teaching Vietnam

Sample Interview Questions

Looking Back to the Vietnam Era

We ask you to think back to the Vietnam Era as our students try to better understand this crucial time period in our history. You can help us determine what we should teach our students, the lessons we have learned, and perhaps those we should have learned.

Sample Questions

1. How old were you during most of the Vietnam War Era?

2. What were you doing during this period (school, job, etc.)?

3. What was your attitude regarding American involvement in this conflict?

4. As the war progressed, did your attitude change? If so, how and why?

5. In what ways did this conflict affect your life?

6. What is your most vivid memory of the Vietnam War?

7. How did you feel when Saigon fell in April, 1975?

8. What are your feelings about the Vietnam War today?

9. What lessons has this experience taught us?

10. What should we teach our children about this defining era of 20th century America?
Lesson Plan: Linking Students to Living History: The Vietnam Era

Goals and Objectives: The student will acquire information from a variety of sources and develop skills in interpersonal relationships and social participation. The student will think systematically about personal, national, and global decisions, interactions and consequences including addressing critical issues such as peace, human rights...learn to draw on the knowledge of history to make informed choices and decisions in the present (N.C. Social Studies Standard Course of Study: Overview p. VII). The student will evaluate the conduct of U.S. foreign policy since 1950 (N.C. Social Studies Standard Course of Study: U.S. History: Goal 12). The student will judge the influence of our involvement in foreign wars on

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American society (Goal 12.4).

Unit of Study: Unit XI (U.S. History)/ Semester Course (Lessons of Vietnam)

Length of Activity: Teacher discretion (Link interview with veteran will take several weeks in LOV course.)

Level of Activity: All Levels

Instructions:

1. Make the appropriate number of copies of Interview Guidelines, Link Letter Guidelines, and two sets of Sample Questions ("Sample Interview Questions: Looking Back to the Vietnam Era" and "Linking: Sample Questions) (See Linking Section).

2. Distribute copies in class and explain the assignment.

3. On due dates, hold class discussions on student findings. Encourage students to bring in artifacts from these interviewees for a "show and tell".

4. Collect the interviews and grade them for content, effort, and quality of reflective writing.
Linking: Interview Guidelines

Oral history interviews are useful to historians because they "bring to life" a historical time period. For the purpose of this assignment we will focus on the Vietnam Era. Many people are alive today who lived through this tumultuous period—yes, even many of your parents! You will find that we have a very committed and caring community who will share their viewpoints with you and give you a better understanding of the past. You will also have an opportunity to discuss your beliefs and convictions with your interviewees as you try to understand the moral dilemmas facing our society during the Vietnam Era.

*Prepare yourself well for the interview. Make sure you have a general understanding of topic to be discussed. Get your facts organized.

*Consider the feelings of the person you are interviewing. Your questions may bring an emotional response. If the person is elderly, be prepared to speak slowly and clearly.

*Relax and remember to smile! If your interviewee has agreed to be tape recorded, start the tape. If you are taking notes, have your pen and notepad ready.

*Provide a copy of the sample questions we have developed together in class to the interviewee. As a result, you will be given clearer facts, dates, and information. The person might even look up old photographs and memorabilia to enrich your understanding.

*Courtesy is very important! Thank your interviewee. Ask him/her if you could meet again, if necessary. Inform the person that you will send him/her a copy of your final paper. Make the interviewee realize that he/she is a vital link to this period of history.
*Your parents, neighbors, teachers would be excellent interviewees for the "Looking Back to the Vietnam Era" interview. I will link you with a Vietnam Veteran for the second interview unless you have someone already in mind.

*Be sure to record the following information:

Name:
Address:
Telephone:
Age (Present and during this historical time period):
Date(s) of Interview:
Place of Interview:

Students gain a deeper understanding of the Vietnam era through personal interviews.
Cold War Era Mini-Projects

Students gain a clearer understanding of the Vietnam Era only if they have knowledge of the events and policies leading up to the Vietnam War. Teamwork is encouraged. (Teams of two to three students seem to work best.) Student mini-projects relating to the Cold War may include some of the following topics:

Cold War Era Project Guidelines

Part I. Choose one of the following topics to research:

1. Creation of the CIA
2. Marxist influences on the development of Communism
3. Bolshevik Revolution
4. Yalta Conference
5. Truman Doctrine
6. Marshall Plan
7. NATO
8. Warsaw Pact
9. Berlin (Crissis/Wall)
10. Chinese Revolution (1949)/Mao Tse-Tung

http://www.wcpss.net/community_in_the_classroom/vietnam/coldwarproject.html
12. John Foster Dulles and the Theory of Massive Retaliation
13. Korean War
14. SEATO
15. McCarthyism
16. The Rosenbergs
17. The Suez Crisis/Eisenhower Doctrine
18. Sputnik and America's Reaction
19. The Domino Theory
20. The U-2 Incident
21. Topic of your choice (with teacher approval)

Part II. Suggested resources.

- Encyclopedias
- Magazines
- History books
- Maps
- Novels
- Interviews with Vietnam veterans, former protestors, journalists, etc.
- Movies/Videos
- Internet websites and databases
- Additional resources (SEE YOUR MEDIA SPECIALIST!)

Part III. Oral Presentation. The following requirements must be met:

1. A detailed outline MUST be turned in, as well as a bibliography (in proper format) or more resources. You must also turn in five (5) test questions based on the answers for those questions.
2. A poster, video presentation or skit must also be part of your presentation.
Vietnam Era Project

One of the best ways to teach the Vietnam era is through student projects. This allows a wide variety of topics to be covered. Projects like this also allow students to develop their public speaking and research skills. Many students are motivated to showcase their creative talents as well. Teamwork is encouraged. (Teams of two to three students seem to work best.)

Students present their project on Agent Orange.

Vietnam Era Project Guidelines

Part I. Choose one of the following topics to research:

1. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Vietnam War
2. The Black Soldier in Vietnam
3. Women in Vietnam
4. The Women's Memorial

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5. POWs and MIA's  
6. Agent Orange  
7. Ho Chi Minh  
8. Ho Chi Minh Trail  
10. Lyndon B. Johnson and the Vietnam War  
11. Richard M. Nixon and the Vietnam War  
12. SEATO (Southeast Asia Treaty Organization)  
13. Ia Drang Valley  
14. Asian Refugees  
15. Montagnards  
16. Marines/Army/Navy/Air Force in Vietnam  
17. War Protestors/Kent State/Jackson State  
18. Protest Music of the '60s  
19. Jane Fonda  
20. Robert McNamara  
21. Pentagon Papers  
22. Air War: "Rolling Thunder"  
23. General William Westmoreland  
24. My Lai Massacre  
25. Weapons of the NVA and the Viet Cong  
26. Weapons of the United States and the ARVN  
27. Life of a Soldier  
28. TET Offensive  
29. The Media in Vietnam  
30. Special Forces (Green Berets, Navy Seals)  
31. Fall of Saigon, 1975  
32. Operation Babyift  
33. Gulf of Tonkin Resolution/War Powers Act  
34. President Ngo Dinh Diem  
35. Madame Nhu  
36. The Draft  
37. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder  
38. Ky & Thieu  
39. Tunnels of Cu Chi  
40. Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr.  
41. Medics  
42. Geneva Accords  
43. Vietnam Veterans Memorial  
44. Ambassador Pete Peterson  
45. Amerasians  
46. Vietnam Today  
47. The Black Ponies  
48. PBR's  
49. Topic of your choice (with teacher approval)  

Part II. Suggested resources.  

Encyclopedias
Magazines
History books
Maps
Novels
Interviews with Vietnam veterans, former protestors, journalists, etc.
Movies/Videos
Internet websites and databases
Additional resources (SEE YOUR MEDIA SPECIALIST!)

Part III. Oral Presentation. The following requirements must be met:

1. A detailed outline MUST be turned in, as well as a bibliography (in proper format) including three (3) or more resources. You must also turn in five (5) test questions based on your presentation with the answers for those questions.
2. A poster, video presentation or skit must also be part of your presentation.

The late Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr. served as an inspirational "guest teacher" and classroom resource for MHS history students and teacher, Lindy Poling.
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## Project Rubric

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Link Letter to Veteran

Directions: Use the following guidelines as you write your letter of introduction to your veteran link.

1. Use school letterhead
2. Use your best handwriting or type neatly
3. Express your appreciation for his/her involvement in this project
4. Share some information about yourself (grade level, interests, future plans, family connections to this particular historical period, etc.)
5. Include your home address, telephone number, and best time to reach you
6. Let your link know that you will call him/her within 5-7 days to start the interview process.

Linking Toolkit
- Linking
- Letter to Veterans
- Sample Questions
- Link Reflection

Richie M. (left) exhibits the uniform worn by his veteran link, Mike Lynch, a United States airman in Vietnam in 1970.
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Linking: Sample Questions

Personal
How old were you when you went to Vietnam?
Where are you from? A small town or a big city?
Were you drafted into the War or did you volunteer?
Were you eager to go?
When did you serve and for how long?
Where did you serve?
For which Branch did you serve?
Did you know anything about Vietnam when you went?
Did you understand why the US was involved?
In the beginning, were you for or against the war?
What kind of training did you have when you went?
Did that training help?
How did your family feel about you going to Vietnam?
Did you have a girlfriend/boyfriend or were you married during this time?
Did you have any friends that went with you to Vietnam?

During the War
What was your first impression of Vietnam?
Did you ever feel that you might not make it?
Were you ever wounded during the war?
Did you respect your officers?
How were the food and living conditions?
Did you have contact with South Vietnamese?
Did they seem to respect you?
What is your most vivid memory of the war?
What kind of personal relationships did you gain?
Were you aware of the protests occurring in the United States?
What was the reaction of the Vietnamese when the US stormed their villages?
Did the South Vietnamese know why we were there? Did they appreciate us?
What did you do in your free time? Did you write home? What did you say?
Was the language barrier a problem?
In your opinion, what is the best and worst movie out of those that depict the Vietnam War?
What are your opinions on JFK, LBJ, and Nixon?
Did you talk politics with the Vietnamese?
Did you opinion change concerning the morale of the war?
How did you feel about the TET offensive?
What are your thoughts on the media during the war, in Vietnam, but also at home?
How did you feel when Saigon fell at the end of the war?

Aftermath
How were you treated when you came home?
Do you believe in Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome?
Would you ever go back to Vietnam if you were given the chance?
How did you feel when you left?
Did you talk about it when you got home?
Do you think US involvement was worth the cost?
Do you keep in touch with anyone?
Have you visited the Wall? What are your feelings about it?
How do you feel about how the Veterans were treated?
What are your feelings on Veterans Day?
What should we teach our kids?
Do you think there are living POWs today?
What is your opinion on the government's handling of POW's?
How did you use the GI Bill?
Do you think our military tactics were effective?
Who do you think won the war?
Did you receive any awards?
How does it affect your life today?
If you were given the opportunity, would you serve again?
Should the US have gotten involved?
What are the lessons of Vietnam?