Teaching Vietnam

Sample Speaker Questions

Give students a background sheet on the invited speaker, which could include a brief biography and source of expertise. Students should prepare questions that can be reviewed by the teacher and, possibly, forwarded to the speaker ahead of time. Return these questions to the students just before the visitor arrives. (This allows students to feel more comfortable asking questions in class. Spontaneous questions can also be encouraged.)

- It seems every veteran fought a different war. Do you feel that way?
- How do you feel about the POW issue? Do you think there are still living POWs in Southeast Asia?
- What have you learned most from your experience in Vietnam?
- What were your feelings about the Wall when you first heard about it? Have those feelings changed?
- What are your views on draft dodgers? Do you think they should have been punished? If so, how?
- What was your main mission while in Vietnam?
- Do you feel like relationships among the soldiers changed after the death of Martin Luther King, Jr.?
- Was Vietnam worth it?
- Twenty-five years later, what is the outlook for Vietnam?
- What do you feel is the most important thing we should learn from this war?
- What are your thoughts on how the war was handled by the administration? The military leaders? The media?
- Were there any lessons you learned that you have been able to carry through life?
- What do you want future generations to learn from Vietnam and the era surrounding it?
- If you could change anything about war, what would it be?
- Do you think some people still view the US as a "babysitter" to third-world countries?
- Do you think the US should have developed a clearer purpose before
sending anyone into Vietnam?
• What do you envision as the role of the US military in the future?
• What is your view of Agent Orange? Do you think we should have used it in Vietnam?
• The purpose of the war was to contain communism. Do you think this is a good enough reason to go to war? If not, what else could have been done to prevent its spread?
• How did the war affect the daily life on campus at UNC and other universities?
• Did your feelings about the war change over time?
• Do you think the media had any limits or should there have been any censorship in coverage of the war?

Teamwork can be a very effective way to develop guest speaker questions.
Teaching Vietnam

Resources

A wide variety of resources are available dealing with the Vietnam era. The resources on this site are only a very small sampling of what is available.

Contacts

Personal contacts with various local and national organizations can be extremely useful in developing your curriculum and in locating veterans to serve as links for your students.

North Carolina Vietnam Veterans, Inc. (NCVVI)
PO Box 10333
Raleigh NC 27605

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund
1023 15th Street, NW
Second Floor
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 393-0090

The Vietnam Center - Texas Tech University
Box 41045
Lubbock, Texas 79409-1045

Veterans Education Project
P.O. Box 416
Amherst, MA. 01004
(413)253-4947

PBR Forces Veterans Association, Inc.
1600 Township Road 395
Jeromesville, OH 44840-9712

American Veterans Traveling Tribute
19450 SE 52nd Place
Morrison, Fla. 32668
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States
406 West 34th St
Kansas City, MO 64111
(816) 756-3390

Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors
1515 Cherry St
Philadelphia PA 19102
(215) 563-8787

Print Resources


*The Limits of Power: The United States in Vietnam.* (4th ed.) - Published by Brown University as part of the Choices Education Project.


Poling, Lindy G. "The Real World: Community Speakers in the Classroom." *Middle Level Learning*, a supplement to *Social Education* (May/June 2000).


Zumwalt, Elmo, Jr. and Elmo Zumwalt III. *My Father, My Son* (1986)

**Web Sites**

Agent Orange Debrief - Site that discusses the symptoms of Agent Orange exposure. Also includes assistance for getting help from the Veterans Administration.

How the Vietnam War Still Touches Us--A High School Field Trip to The Wall. The field trip experience is one of the most effective tools social studies teachers can use to make learning meaningful. What better way to help students comprehend the true costs of war than expose them to the 58,220 names engraved on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial?

Best Practices in a Community-in-the-Classroom Social Studies Program - Site by Lindy Poling discussing the benefits of bringing "living history" into the classroom.

The History Place: Vietnam War - Analysis of the involvement of the United States in Vietnam from 1945 to 1975.

The Moving Wall - Web site about the traveling Vietnam Veterans Memorial exhibit.

Teach Vietnam: Echoes from the Wall - The VVMF's web site for educators.

Teaching About Vietnam and The Vietnam War - Includes excellent list of contacts and bibliography.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund - The official web site of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

The Vietnam Center - The official web site of the Vietnam Center at Texas Tech University.

Vietnam: The Women's Experience - Selected bibliography.
The Vietnam Veterans Oral History and Folklore Project - Looks at the songs and stories of the Vietnam era.

Vietnamwar.net - Excellent source for further links.

Vietnam: Yesterday and Today - Excellent site including bibliography, chronology and extended web links.

The Virtual Wall - Interactive web site about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Movies

Apocalypse Now (1979) - Remake of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* set during the Vietnam War.

Born on the Fourth of July (1989)

Coming Home (1978) - Academy Award winner.

Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam, HBO (1988)

Full Metal Jacket (1987) - Set during the Tet Offensive.

Good Morning, Vietnam (1987)

The Hanoi Hilton (1987) - POWs in Hanoi's Hao Lo Prison.

Platoon (1988) - Academy Award winner.

To Heal a Nation (1992) - The effort to build the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Questions and Comments

If you have questions or comments about this curriculum or the overall Community in the Classroom methodology, please contact Lindy Poling at lgpoling@juno.com.