

NATIONAL VETERANS MEMORIAL AND MUSEUM

HONOR ★ CONNECT ★ INSPIRE ★ EDUCATE

Veterans of the Vietnam War: Lesson Foundations

Ohio Department of Education and Workforce Learning Standards

High School American History

- Topic: Historical Thinking and Skills
 - **Content Statement 1:** The use of primary and secondary sources of information includes an examination of the credibility of each source.
- Topic: The Cold War (1945 – 1991)
 - **Content Statement 23:** The United States followed a policy of containment during the Cold War in response to the spread of communism.
 - **Content Statement 25:** The Cold War and conflicts in Korea and Vietnam influenced domestic and international politics.

Common Core Standards Alignment

CCSS.ELA.Literacy.RH.9-10.8

- Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.4

- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

Learning Objectives

- By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:
 - Describe the conditions many Veterans faced upon returning home from military service during the Vietnam War era.
 - Analyze different arguments and better understand American culture and politics during the Vietnam War era.

Materials & Resources

[Veterans of the Vietnam War PowerPoint Presentation](#)

- [NVMM Blog - Women in Vietnam](#)
- [PBS – Vietnam Stories](#)
- [History.com – Why Were Vietnam War Vets Treated Poorly When They Returned?](#)
- [Virginia Museum of History & Culture - Coming Home and Negotiating Peace](#)

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Compelling Question for this Lesson

- How can we honor Vietnam War Veterans today?

Lesson Instruction

Begin by asking the students: “What comes to mind when you think about military service members returning home?”

Use the PowerPoint slide presentation to provide an overview of the Vietnam War, the treatment of military service-members during this time, and the legacies of this era. Ensure students understand that many Vietnam War Veterans were not treated with respect or kindness for their service. This is different than how our society treated World War II Veterans and today's Veterans.

Silent Debate Activity

Following the presentation, give students 15-20 minutes to review the resources provided. Students should take notes and formulate their opinions in preparation for a silent debate.

Questions for Debate:

- Should the United States have been engaged in Vietnam at all? Why or why not?
- Were the war protests successful? Explain your reasoning.
- How can we honor Vietnam War Veterans today?

Reflection

- Students will write a reflection essay based on the compelling question. The reflection should be at least 100 words. Encourage them to consider ways they can honor Vietnam War Veterans.

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Take Action

- Vietnam War Veterans Day is commemorated on March 29 each year. The NVMM hosts a ceremony that day during which we recognize and welcome home Vietnam War Veterans. Students can create a welcome home poster and either deliver it to the NVMM or attend the ceremony. Or, if you're not local to Columbus, look for VWVD ceremonies in your area to participate in. To learn more, contact the NVMM Education Department at education@nationalvmm.org.
- Watch the 2025 [Vietnam War Veterans Day Ceremony](#) hosted at the NVMM.
- Talk to a Vietnam War Veteran and upload your conversation to the [NVMM Story Collection Archive](#).
- Consider attending an Honor Flight Welcome Home Celebration at your local airport.