

The Vietnam War Years



Essential Question

Why did some Americans oppose the Vietnam War?



About the Photo: Soldiers from the U.S. 173rd Airborne Brigade take part in the Iron Triangle assault.

In this module you will learn how the U.S. commitment to stop the spread of communism worldwide led the United States into a long and costly war in Vietnam.

What You Will Learn ...

Lesson 1: Kennedy and Foreign Policy	894
The Big Idea The United States confronted Communist nations in Cold War conflicts around the world.	
Lesson 2: Escalation in Vietnam	902
The Big Idea Johnson quickly expanded U.S. involvement in Vietnam, but American soldiers faced a determined enemy.	
Lesson 3: The End of the War	910
The Big Idea Growing antiwar feelings in the United States helped convince the government to end U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War.	

Explore ONLINE!



VIDEOS, including...

- Causes of the Vietnam War
- Reaction to the Crisis
- Gulf of Tonkin Incident
- Kent State

- ✔ Document-Based Investigations
- ✔ Graphic Organizers
- ✔ Interactive Games
- ✔ Interactive Map: Crises in Cuba
- ✔ Image with Hotspots: The Apollo Space Program
- ✔ Interactive Map: The Vietnam War, 1968
- ✔ Image Slider: A Society Divided

United States

World

1960

1960 Cuba and the Soviet Union sign a trade agreement and establish diplomatic relations.

1961 Kennedy sends military advisers to Vietnam.

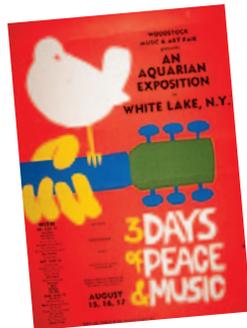


1965 North Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh refuses peace talks with President Lyndon Johnson.



1968 Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy are assassinated.

1969 Joan Baez, The Who, and Jimi Hendrix headline the Woodstock Music Festival. >



1969 Ho Chi Minh dies in Hanoi.

1973 Last U.S. ground troops leave Vietnam.



1975

1975 North Vietnam troops capture Saigon.

Reading Social Studies

THEME FOCUS:

Geography

In this module you will learn about the Vietnam War years. American soldiers faced many obstacles in Vietnam, including the country's geography. Jungles and mountains prevented Americans from gaining an easy victory. You will read about how the long, drawn-out conflict caused divisions between the nation's leaders and many Americans.

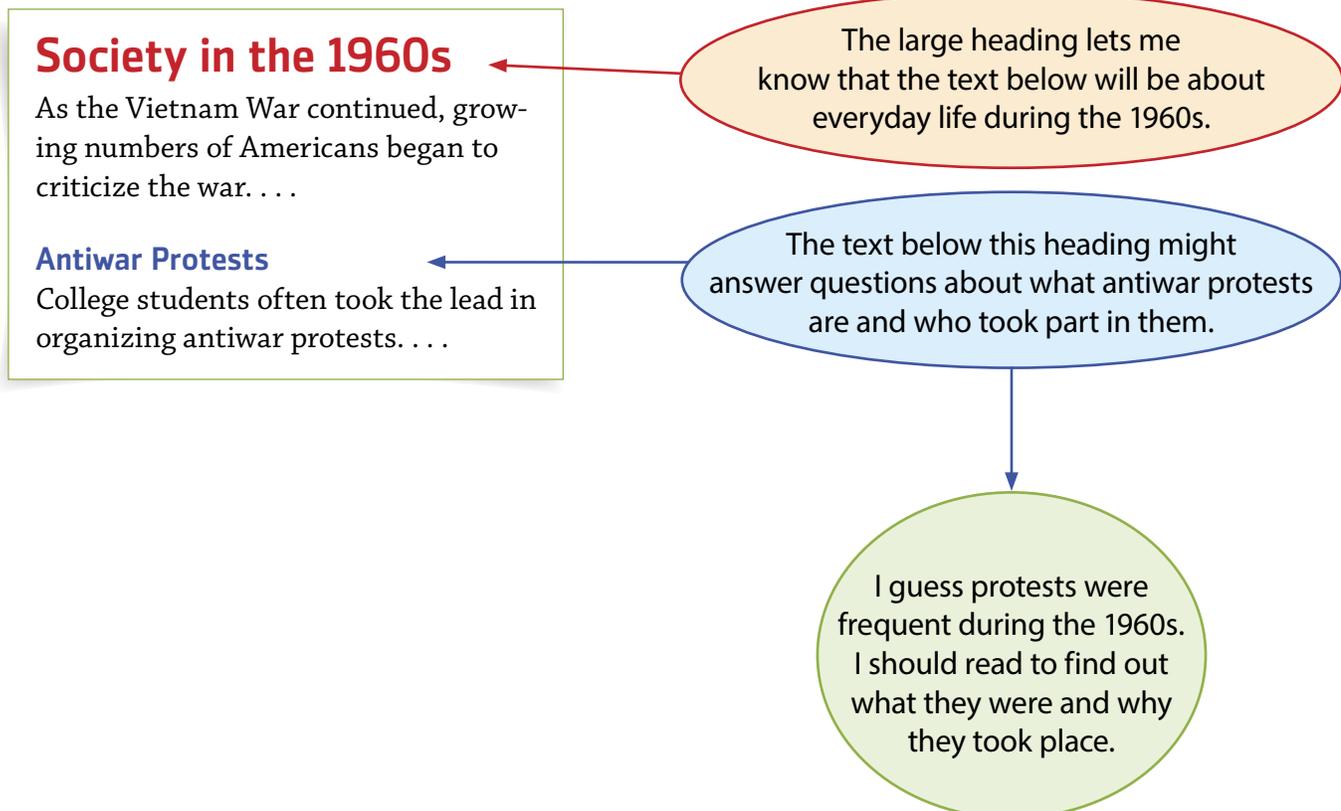
READING FOCUS:

Set a Purpose

Setting a purpose for your reading can help you to understand the things that you read. Understanding the author's goal is often an important part of this task.

Set a Purpose When you open this book to a page you have been assigned to read, there will be clues about what you will be learning. The information in this book is organized under headings that help explain the text. When you read a section like the one below, try to determine how the text explains the heading.

Notice how one reader used the headings to determine his purpose for reading the passage below.



You Try It!

The following passage is from the module you are getting ready to read. As you read the passage, look for information in the headings that tell you what to look for.

The Vietnam War Ends

While Nixon was running for re-election in 1972, Henry Kissinger continued peace negotiations with the North Vietnamese. . . .

The Impact in Southeast Asia

The war ended when North Vietnamese forces captured Saigon in April 1975. . . .

The Impact at Home

The Vietnam War carried heavy costs for the United States as well. . . .

After you read the passage, answer the following questions.

1. After reading the headings, what do you think this section is going to be about?
2. What are some questions you might ask before reading this section?
3. What information do you think you will learn from the section?

As you read Module 29, set a purpose before you read each section.

Key Terms and People

Lesson 1

Peace Corps
Fidel Castro
Berlin Wall
Cuban missile crisis
Neil Armstrong
Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin
Ho Chi Minh
domino theory
Vietcong

Lesson 2

Tonkin Gulf Resolution
Ho Chi Minh Trail
escalation
William Westmoreland
search-and-destroy missions
Tet Offensive
doves
hawks

Lesson 3

Students for a Democratic
Society
hippies
Richard M. Nixon
Henry Kissinger
Vietnamization
Twenty-Sixth Amendment
War Powers Act
Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Kennedy and Foreign Policy

The Big Idea

The United States confronted Communist nations in Cold War conflicts around the world.

Main Ideas

- President Kennedy confronted Communist threats around the world.
- The United States and the Soviet Union raced to send a person to the moon.
- The Cold War conflict in Vietnam led the United States into war.

Key Terms and People

Peace Corps
 Fidel Castro
 Berlin Wall
 Cuban missile crisis
 Neil Armstrong
 Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin
 Ho Chi Minh
 domino theory
 Vietcong

If YOU were there . . .

You are a student in 1960. Whenever you discuss current events in class, students talk nervously about the ongoing nuclear arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union. If Cold War tensions ever spark an all-out nuclear war, entire cities and populations could be destroyed in just a matter of minutes.

Do you think Cold War tensions will lead to a nuclear war?

Kennedy Confronts Communism

As president, John F. Kennedy was committed to the Cold War policy of stopping the spread of communism worldwide. He maintained strong military forces and expanded the nation’s supply of nuclear weapons. He also sought nonmilitary ways to defeat communism. For example, in a program called the Alliance for Progress, the United States pledged \$20 billion in aid to countries in Latin America. This assistance did little to improve conditions in Latin America or U.S.–Latin American relations, however. Another nonmilitary program was more successful. Beginning in 1961, the **Peace Corps** sent volunteers to developing countries to help with projects such as digging wells and building schools.

Bay of Pigs In his early days as president, much of Kennedy’s attention involved confronting communism with U.S. military forces. The first Cold War crisis during his administration took place in Cuba. In the late 1950s Cuban rebel **Fidel Castro** had led a revolution against an unpopular dictator. In 1959 he overthrew the dictator. Castro soon established a Communist government allied to the Soviet Union. Many Cubans who had opposed Castro fled to the United States.

Castro’s close ties with the Soviet Union worried Kennedy, especially since Cuba is only about 90 miles from Florida. Soviet leaders could use Cuba as a base from which to attack the United States.

Crises in Cuba



While president, Dwight Eisenhower had developed a plan to remove Castro from power. The Central Intelligence Agency began training Cuban exiles to invade the island and overthrow Castro. Kennedy learned of the plan when he became president. He approved the operation.

On April 17, 1961, about 1,500 Cuban exiles landed by boat at Cuba's Bay of Pigs. Castro's forces quickly responded, killing about 300 of the invaders and capturing the rest. Many Americans criticized Kennedy for the disastrous invasion attempt. His administration was off to a shaky start.

The Berlin Wall Located behind the Iron Curtain in East Germany, the city of Berlin was the site of Kennedy's second crisis. East Berlin was part of Communist East Germany. West Berlin remained a part of democratic West Germany. It stood as a model of prosperity and freedom. About 2.5 million East Germans fled to West Berlin between 1949 and 1961. They were desperate for freedom and better economic opportunities. The steady loss of skilled workers alarmed Communist officials. Calling the open border between East and West Berlin a "handy escape route," Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev demanded that the border be closed.

Khrushchev threatened to take over West Berlin. President Kennedy responded by vowing to defend the free city. "We cannot and will not

This map of Cuba was marked by President Kennedy during a cabinet briefing on the Cuban missile crisis.



permit the Communists to drive us out of Berlin,” he warned. Then, on the night of August 12–13, 1961, the East German government began building the **Berlin Wall**, a barrier of concrete and barbed wire between East and West Berlin. Kennedy rushed American troops to West Berlin. But he was unwilling to go to war with the Soviet Union over the Berlin Wall. The wall stood as a symbol of the Cold War for nearly three decades.

The Cuban Missile Crisis In October 1962 Kennedy faced yet another problem in Cuba. American U-2 spy planes discovered that the Soviets were installing nuclear missiles in Cuba. If launched, the missiles could reach, and possibly destroy, American cities within minutes.

At a press conference on October 22, Kennedy demanded that the Soviet Union remove the missiles. During the **Cuban missile crisis**, the U.S. Navy formed a blockade around Cuba. The blockade was designed to prevent Soviet ships from bringing in more weapons. As Soviet ships approached the blockade, terrified Americans waited tensely for news updates. Then came some welcome news—the Soviet ships had turned back.

After the crisis ended, Khrushchev agreed to remove the nuclear missiles from Cuba. In return, Kennedy promised not to invade Cuba. He also agreed to remove some missiles in Italy and Turkey. To improve future communication, Kennedy and Khrushchev set up a telephone “hotline” so the leaders could talk directly to each other at a moment’s notice. They also signed the Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, which banned the testing of new nuclear weapons aboveground.

Race to the Moon

Although Kennedy and Khrushchev had taken some steps to prevent conflicts, the Cold War continued. One **aspect** of the Cold War that heated up in the 1960s was the space race—the competition between the United States and the Soviet Union to explore space. The Soviet Union pulled ahead in April 1961 when Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first person to travel into space, orbiting Earth once.

Reading Check
Sequence When did Kennedy’s three Cold War crises occur?

Academic Vocabulary
aspect part

The United States was determined to catch up to and surpass the Soviet Union in the space race. Kennedy outlined a bold plan in a 1961 speech to Congress:

“I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the earth.”

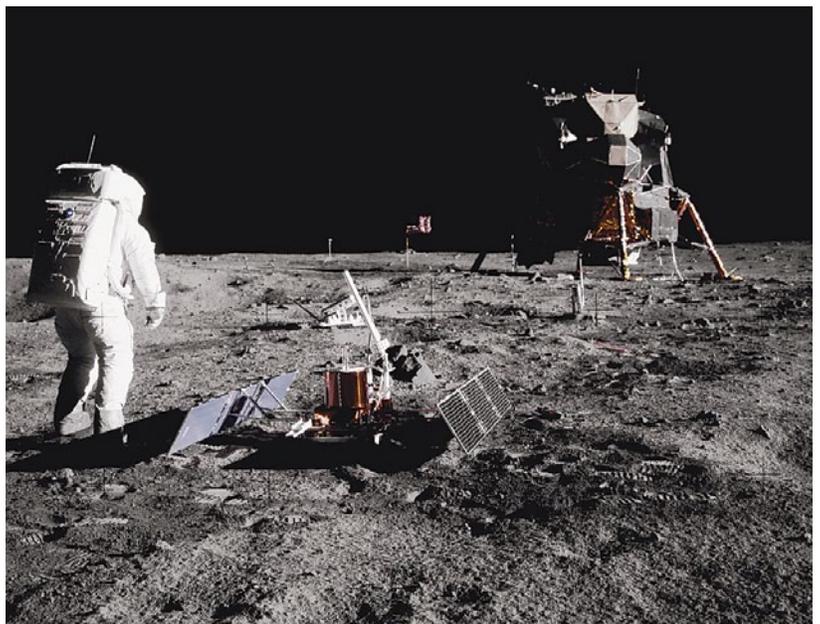
—John F. Kennedy, speech to Congress, May 25, 1961

It is difficult for us to imagine what it was like for Kennedy’s audience to hear these words. Space travel seems normal to us today. But to people in the early 1960s, the idea of humans landing on the moon seemed like something out of a science fiction novel. Still, Americans supported the project. Congress provided NASA with billions of dollars to fund the development of new space-travel technology.

In May 1961 astronaut Alan Shepard Jr. became the first U.S. astronaut in space. The next year, John Glenn became the first American to orbit Earth. Then NASA pushed ahead with Project Apollo, with the goal of landing an astronaut on the moon. Even with careful planning, Apollo astronauts faced great danger. Three astronauts died in a fire during a prelaunch test in 1967.

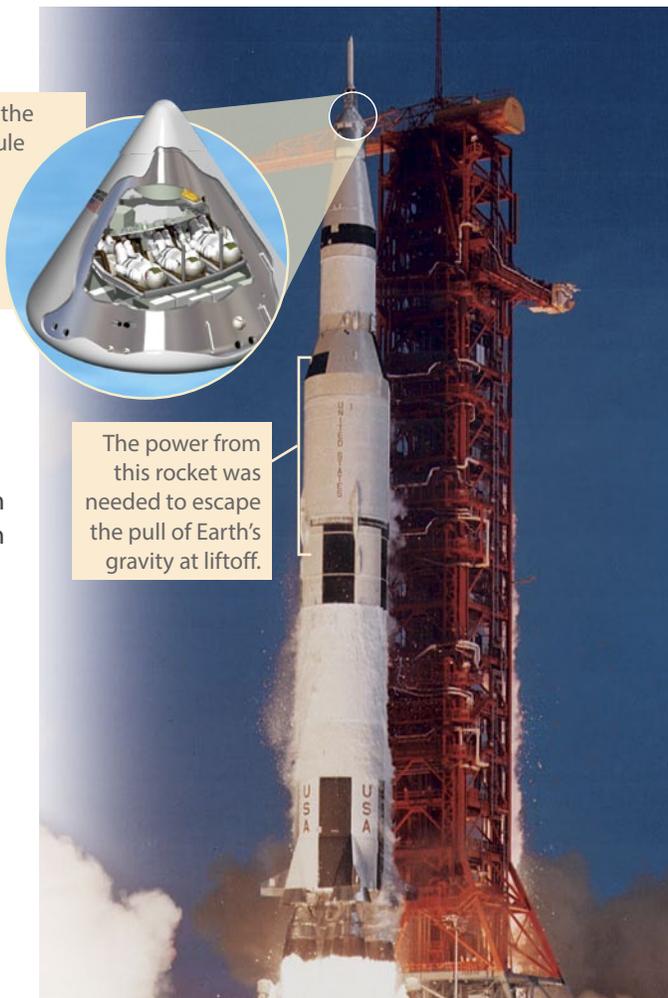
On July 20, 1969, while millions of people around the world watched on television, the lunar module *Eagle* landed on the surface of the moon. American astronauts **Neil Armstrong** and **Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin** climbed out and became the first people to walk on the moon. “That’s one small step for [a] man, one giant leap for mankind,” said Armstrong as he touched the lunar surface. Armstrong and Aldrin planted the American flag on the moon’s surface and collected samples of moon rocks. The Apollo program continued, achieving five more successful moon landings by 1972.

A vehicle known as the moon lander took two astronauts to the moon and returned them to the orbiting spacecraft.



Mission to the Moon

The astronauts guided the spacecraft from a capsule perched on the nose of the rocket. This capsule was the only part that returned to Earth.



The power from this rocket was needed to escape the pull of Earth's gravity at liftoff.

Connect to Science and Technology

The Apollo space program led to the creation of new technology to land people on the moon and bring them safely back to Earth. The design of the *Apollo 11* spacecraft involved separate pieces that played a role in different stages of the voyage. These included a rocket that could escape Earth's gravity, a spacecraft that orbited the moon, and a craft that could land on the moon and return to the orbiting spacecraft.

Analyze Visuals

What were some of the challenges of landing humans on the moon?

Reading Check

Analyze How did the events of July 20, 1969, fulfill the hope Kennedy had expressed in 1961?

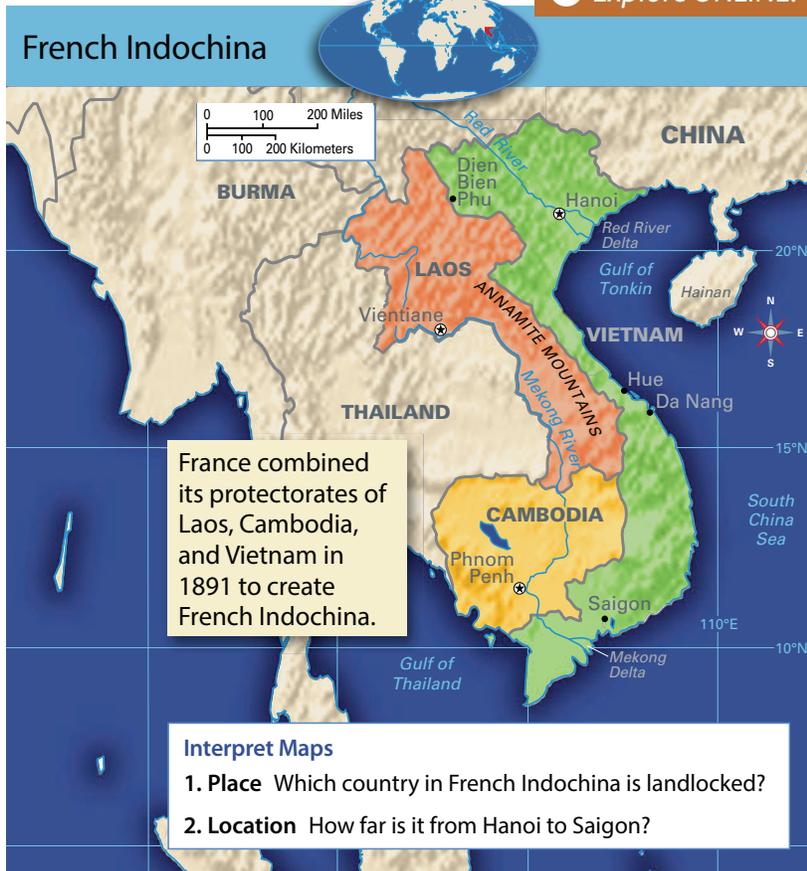
The technology NASA developed enabled people to land on the moon and return safely back to Earth. The design of the *Apollo 11* spacecraft that first took astronauts to the moon involved separate pieces that played a role in different stages of the voyage. These included a rocket that could escape Earth's gravity, a spacecraft that orbited the moon, and a craft that could land on the moon and return to the orbiting spacecraft.

Conflict in Vietnam

The most serious and deadly event of the Cold War took place in Vietnam, a country in Southeast Asia. The Vietnamese struggled against the domination of China for centuries. By the early 1880s all of Vietnam was conquered by France. The French combined Vietnam with neighboring Laos and Cambodia to create a colony called French Indochina. French leaders imposed harsh taxes and put limits on political freedoms. Vietnamese nationalists began a struggle for independence in the early 1900s.

France and Vietnam One of the leading Vietnamese nationalists was **Ho Chi Minh**. Ho believed that only a Communist revolution could free the Vietnamese people.

During World War II, Japan drove the French out of Indochina. Ho Chi Minh did not want Vietnam to be controlled by yet another foreign power.



He organized a group called the Vietminh to resist Japanese occupation. When Japan was defeated by the Allies in 1945, Ho declared Vietnamese independence. Using words echoing those of the American Declaration of Independence, he said, “All men are born equal: the Creator has given us inviolable rights, life, liberty, and happiness.” In reality, Ho did not believe in the democratic principles outlined in the American document.

Vietnam was still not free of foreign rule. France insisted that Vietnam was a French colony. French forces moved to regain control of Vietnam, leading to new fighting between the two sides.

Presidents Truman and Eisenhower both supported France with military aid. Military aid is often used by countries as a tool of foreign policy. In this case,

American leaders were concerned that a Vietminh victory would lead to the spread of communism in Asia. They feared that if one country became Communist, nearby countries would also fall to communism. This was called the **domino theory**. Americans had already watched Communist victories in China and North Korea. They did not want Vietnam to be next.

The Vietminh had fewer weapons and supplies than the French, but they used hit-and-run guerrilla tactics to gradually weaken French forces. In May 1954 the Vietminh trapped a French army at Dien Bien Phu, where the French surrendered. In July French and Vietnamese leaders worked out an agreement called the Geneva Accords. This compromise temporarily divided Vietnam into North and South. It also called for democratic elections in July 1956 that would unite the two countries under one government.

North and South Vietnam North Vietnam became a Communist dictatorship led by Ho Chi Minh. South Vietnam had a Western-style government led by Ngo Dinh Diem (en-GOH DIN de-EM) and supported by the United States. U.S. officials hoped Diem would win control of the country in the 1956 elections.

Diem, however, quickly proved to be a disappointing leader. He put his own family members in top government positions and used his security forces to imprison and torture his political enemies. President Eisenhower

was concerned, but he and his advisers saw Diem as the only realistic alternative to a Communist Vietnam.

In North Vietnam, meanwhile, Ho Chi Minh introduced land redistribution plans. Like Diem, Ho and the Vietminh violently persecuted their opponents. During the land redistribution process, they imprisoned and killed thousands of landowners.

As the 1956 reunification elections approached, however, a growing number of South Vietnamese supported Ho and the Vietminh. Diem refused to allow South Vietnam to participate in the elections. The United States backed this decision. Diem also arrested thousands of people who supported Ho.

In 1960 members of the North Vietnamese government formed the National Liberation Front (NLF). The NLF recruited South Vietnamese who were opposed to Diem to fight against the South Vietnamese government. The NLF relied on Communist guerrilla forces called the **Vietcong** as its army, which was supplied and funded by the North Vietnamese.

American Involvement The United States government felt it had a national interest in stopping the spread of communism. President Eisenhower sent aid, weapons, and military advisers to South Vietnam to aid Diem. Soon after taking office in 1961, President Kennedy sent more advisers and special forces. Although they were not official combat troops, the U.S. military advisers often accompanied the South Vietnamese army on combat missions. Some were killed in action. By late 1963 about 16,000 U.S. military personnel were serving in Vietnam.

South Vietnamese soldiers plot a firing pattern under the guidance of American military personnel.



Quick Facts

The Beginning of the Vietnam War

Causes

- French lose control of Vietnam
- Cold War tensions
- Civil war in Vietnam
- Assassination of President Diem

Effects

- Eisenhower and Kennedy send military advisers
- Gulf of Tonkin Resolution

Reading Check
Evaluate Why did the United States see the Vietnam conflict as a Cold War struggle?

The increased U.S. support did not help Diem, who was becoming less and less popular in South Vietnam. Several attempts were made to overthrow his government, all of which failed. Diem would not hold elections, and his opponents began to consider violence as their only option. He lost more support when he ordered his troops to fire on Buddhist demonstrators.

Some Buddhist monks protested by setting themselves on fire. Horrifying images of these protests helped turn U.S. public opinion against Diem.

In November 1963 a group of South Vietnamese army officers seized power and killed Diem and his brother. Only weeks later, Kennedy was assassinated, and Vice President Lyndon Johnson became president. Johnson immediately faced tough decisions about how to handle an increasingly unstable South Vietnam.

Summary and Preview In the 1950s and early 1960s, Cold War tensions caused conflicts around the world. In the next lesson you will read about increased U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

Lesson 1 Assessment

Review Ideas, Terms, and People

- a. Describe** What nonmilitary tactics did President Kennedy use to confront communism?

b. Explain How was the Cuban missile crisis resolved?

c. Evaluate In which Cold War crisis do you think President Kennedy showed the strongest leadership? Explain your answer.
- a. Recall** How did the Soviet Union take the lead in the space race in 1961?

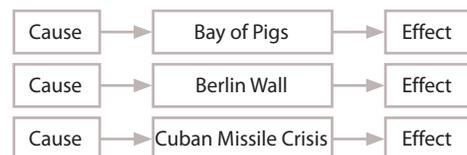
b. Predict How do you think the Soviet Union responded to the successful U.S. landing of a man on the moon?
- a. Identify** Who was Ho Chi Minh?

b. Describe According to the domino theory, what did U.S. leaders think might happen if Vietnam became a Communist country?

c. Analyze Do you think the United States was justified in supporting Ngo Dinh Diem? Why or why not?

Critical Thinking

- Identify Cause and Effect** In this lesson you learned about the Cold War crises during the Kennedy administration. Create a chart similar to the one below and use it to list the causes and effects of each crisis.



Escalation in Vietnam

The Big Idea

Johnson quickly expanded U.S. involvement in Vietnam, but American soldiers faced a determined enemy.

Main Ideas

- President Johnson committed the United States to victory in Vietnam by expanding U.S. involvement.
- American soldiers faced new challenges fighting the Vietnam War.
- The Tet Offensive was an important turning point in the war.

Key Terms and People

Tonkin Gulf Resolution
Ho Chi Minh Trail
escalation
William Westmoreland
search-and-destroy missions
Tet Offensive
doves
hawks

If YOU were there . . .

It is 1965, and you have just been elected to Congress. You know voters are concerned about events in Vietnam, and you are carefully following the progress of the war. No one knows what will happen if the United States gets more deeply involved in the conflict. It might turn back the tide of communism. On the other hand, thousands of young soldiers might die.

Would you support sending U.S. troops to Vietnam? Why or why not?

Johnson Commits to Victory

Lyndon Johnson was determined to prevent Communists from taking over in South Vietnam. “We have the resources and the will to follow this course as long as it may take,” Johnson said. He waited for a spark that might allow him to take action.

The Tonkin Gulf Resolution In the summer of 1964, a naval skirmish led to a rapid expansion of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. On August 2, 1964, the USS *Maddox* reportedly exchanged gunfire with North Vietnamese torpedo boats in the Gulf of Tonkin, off the North Vietnamese coast. Two days later, during a night of thunderstorms, U.S. ships reported a second attack. The captain of the *Maddox* was not sure his ship had actually been attacked, but the USS *Turner Joy* claimed to have picked up high-speed vessels on its radar. Despite the conflicting stories, President Johnson declared the incident an act of war.

Johnson asked Congress to give him the authority to take military action. Congress passed the **Tonkin Gulf Resolution**. The resolution gave the president the authority “to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States.” Johnson used the Tonkin Gulf Resolution to greatly expand the U.S. role in Vietnam.

Reading Check

Summarize

What authority did the Tonkin Gulf Resolution give to President Johnson?

Air Strikes Begin Johnson sent the first U.S. combat troops to South Vietnam in March 1965. At the same time, he ordered Operation Rolling Thunder, a series of air strikes on war industries in North Vietnam. The air strikes were also designed to disrupt the **Ho Chi Minh Trail**, a supply route the North Vietnamese used. The trail was a network of paths and tunnels that led from North Vietnam, through Laos and Cambodia, and into South Vietnam.

Because some of the Ho Chi Minh Trail was located in neutral countries, U.S. soldiers could not surround it on the ground. Instead, U.S. airplanes bombed the route. Sometimes planes bombed with napalm, or jellied gasoline, to kill troops and destroy supplies. Planes also released chemicals such as Agent Orange to kill the dense forests on the trail and to increase visibility from the air. American veterans and Vietnamese civilians later suffered serious health problems from exposure to these chemicals.

By late 1968 more than a million tons of explosives had been dropped on North and South Vietnam. Many Vietnamese soldiers and civilians were killed. The Communists' ability to wage war, however, was not destroyed.

U.S. Soldiers in Vietnam

From 1965 to 1968, President Johnson pursued a policy of **escalation**, or increased involvement, in the war. By 1968 more than 500,000 U.S. troops were serving in Vietnam. Backed by superior military technology, U.S. generals expected to win a quick victory. But the Vietnam War proved to be different from previous wars.

BIOGRAPHY

John McCain 1936–

John McCain's father and grandfather were both U.S. Navy admirals. The younger McCain also attended the Naval Academy and served in Vietnam as a combat pilot. On a bombing mission over Hanoi in 1967, his plane was shot down. McCain was held as a prisoner of war (POW) for more than five years. He was often tortured and kept in solitary confinement. McCain entered politics after the war. In 2010 he was elected to his fifth term as U.S. senator from Arizona. One of his priorities as a senator has been to help repair and strengthen U.S. relations with Vietnam. McCain was the Republican nominee for president in 2008.

Draw Inferences

If you were John McCain, would you want to establish good relations with Vietnam? Why or why not?



As a lieutenant, John McCain served as a flight instructor.

Strategies and Tactics In Vietnam there was rarely a front line where armies met face to face. Much of the war was fought in the jungles and villages of South Vietnam. General **William Westmoreland** commanded the U.S. ground forces involved in Vietnam. He developed a strategy based on **search-and-destroy missions**. During these missions U.S. patrols searched for hidden enemy camps, then destroyed them with massive firepower and air raids.

To make up for their disadvantage in firepower, Vietcong and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) troops used guerrilla warfare tactics. Moving quickly, they set deadly traps and land mines. They also knew the local geography. This allowed them to make quick surprise assaults on small groups of U.S. soldiers. Though the Vietcong and NVA suffered high casualty rates, they were able to match U.S. escalation by continuing to send new troops into combat. They also received supplies and weapons from Communist China and the Soviet Union.

The civilians of South Vietnam were often caught in the middle of the fighting. Vietcong forces entered villages at night. The forces killed people they believed were cooperating with the South Vietnamese government. South Vietnamese and American troops attacked villages they suspected of assisting the Vietcong. About 4 million South Vietnamese were driven from their homes. This undermined the crucial U.S. goal of winning the support and loyalty of South Vietnamese civilians.

Soldiers' Stories More than 2 million American soldiers served in the Vietnam War. Their average age was 18–21, several years younger than in previous American wars. About one-quarter of the soldiers were drafted, many from minority groups and poor families. College students—most

Historical Sources

Vietnam War

Charley Trujillo was a soldier in the Vietnam War. He later became a writer and filmmaker, focusing on the experiences of Latinos and Chicanos in the Vietnam War. Here he describes a day in Vietnam.

Analyze Historical Sources

Why might Trujillo have remembered this casualty the most?

“Throughout the day we received mortar and sniper fire. By that evening we had suffered more casualties. The one I remember most was a guy we called the yippie. He was totally against the war and usually tried to avoid any violence. He was even thinking, for a while, of not carrying a rifle. It didn’t help him much because the dude lost his leg that afternoon.”



—Charley Trujillo, quoted in *Soldados: Chicanos In Việt Nam*

Reading Check

Compare and Contrast

How was Vietnam different from previous wars for U.S. soldiers?

of whom were white and from wealthier families—were able to get draft releases called deferments.

American troops patrolled jungles and rice paddies, carrying 75–90 pounds of equipment through 100-degree heat and rainstorms that could last for days. They never knew when they might run into enemy fire. Soldiers also faced the constant danger of land mines and booby traps. “We required this kind of instant hair-trigger alertness,” said marine officer Philip Caputo. “You simply trusted absolutely no one. I mean, from a 5-year-old kid to a 75-year-old woman.”

While American troops were often able to win individual battles, they were rarely able to control the territory they had won for long. “You were just constantly walking out over the same ground,” Caputo explained. “The enemy you were supposed to be defeating statistically kept coming back for more.”

Turning Points in Vietnam

By the end of 1967, U.S. military leaders argued that they were nearing victory in Vietnam. General Westmoreland said that he saw “a light at the end of the tunnel.” But events in 1968 weakened the American public’s confidence in this claim.

The Tet Offensive On January 30, 1968, the Vietnamese celebrated their New Year, called Tet. In previous years, a cease-fire had halted fighting on this holiday. In 1968, however, Vietcong and North Vietnamese forces launched the **Tet Offensive**—surprise attacks all over South Vietnam, including an attack on the U.S. Embassy in Saigon, South Vietnam’s capital.

South Vietnamese and U.S. forces successfully fought off the enemy strikes. Still, the massive size of the Tet Offensive shocked Americans. They had been told that the war would soon be over. Now they saw that the enemy was still strong and determined. Many began to wonder if government officials were being honest about the war. One poll taken after the Tet Offensive showed that only 33 percent of Americans believed that the United States was winning the war in Vietnam. About 49 percent said that the United States should never have become involved in the war.

In February 1968 Westmoreland asked for some 200,000 more troops. Many Americans questioned the wisdom of further escalation in Vietnam. President Johnson denied the general’s request.

Hawks and Doves Television reports had an important impact on public opinion about the war. Americans could watch action from the battlefield and see real images of the war’s brutality on nightly news broadcasts. Many were dismayed by what they saw.

Gradually, some Americans who had been supporters of the Vietnam War began to call for an end to U.S. involvement. Opponents of the war were called **doves**—named after the birds that symbolize peace. Many doves believed that the war was draining money that should be spent on



This Vietcong propaganda poster reads, “Vietnam will surely be victorious and America will surely be defeated.”

The Vietnam War, 1968



social programs at home. Supporters of the war were called **hawks**. Hawks called for increased military spending, based on the belief that winning the Cold War took priority over domestic programs.

The bitter divisions between hawks and doves deepened as the Vietnam War continued. On March 16, 1968, a company of U.S. soldiers under the command of Lieutenant William Calley entered the South Vietnamese village of My Lai. Calley and his men expected to find Vietcong forces in My Lai. Their search-and-destroy mission turned into a massacre when American soldiers opened fire, killing about 500 unarmed villagers, including women and children.

Millions of Americans watched correspondent Walter Cronkite report the Vietnam War from the field. When Cronkite called the war a stalemate, or tie, President Johnson said, "I've lost middle America."



Reading Check

Summarize

What events made some Americans oppose the war?

At first, U.S. military officials tried to cover up news of the massacre. But former soldiers eventually made details of the events public. Lieutenant Calley was tried by the military and convicted of murder. As with the Tet Offensive, the My Lai massacre caused many Americans to question U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

Summary and Preview The Vietnam War escalated steadily under President Johnson. In the next lesson you will learn about the final years of the war.

Lesson 2 Assessment

Review Ideas, Terms, and People

- a. Recall** What events led Johnson to ask Congress for authority to take military action in Vietnam?

b. Explain Why was the Ho Chi Minh Trail the target of U.S. air strikes?

c. Predict What problems might arise from giving a president powers such as those defined in the Tonkin Gulf Resolution?
- a. Define** What was escalation?

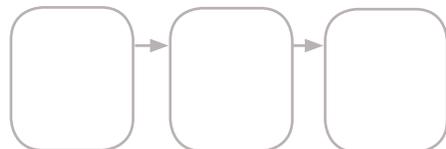
b. Contrast How did strategies and tactics of U.S. troops differ from those of the NVA and Vietcong?
- a. Describe** What were the goals of the doves and the hawks during the Vietnam War?

b. Analyze How did television influence public opinion during the Vietnam War?

c. Elaborate Why was the Tet Offensive such a surprise to U.S. forces?

Critical Thinking

- 4. Sequence** In this lesson you have learned about the events that led to increased U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. Create a chart similar to the one below and use it to put the events in the correct order.



History and Geography

The Vietcong Tunnels

Besides knowing the geography and terrain much better than U.S. forces, the Vietcong had the advantage of an underground system of tunnels. One large system of tunnels was installed some 47 miles north of Saigon in the Cu Chi district of South Vietnam. The picture on these pages is a re-created representation of these tunnels. The tunnels provided a place from which to fight that the Americans could not attack. A tunnel complex included special rooms in which to sleep, eat, plan, store weapons and supplies, and tend wounded soldiers.



The Vietcong used the tunnel meeting rooms to plan attacks on U.S. soldiers.

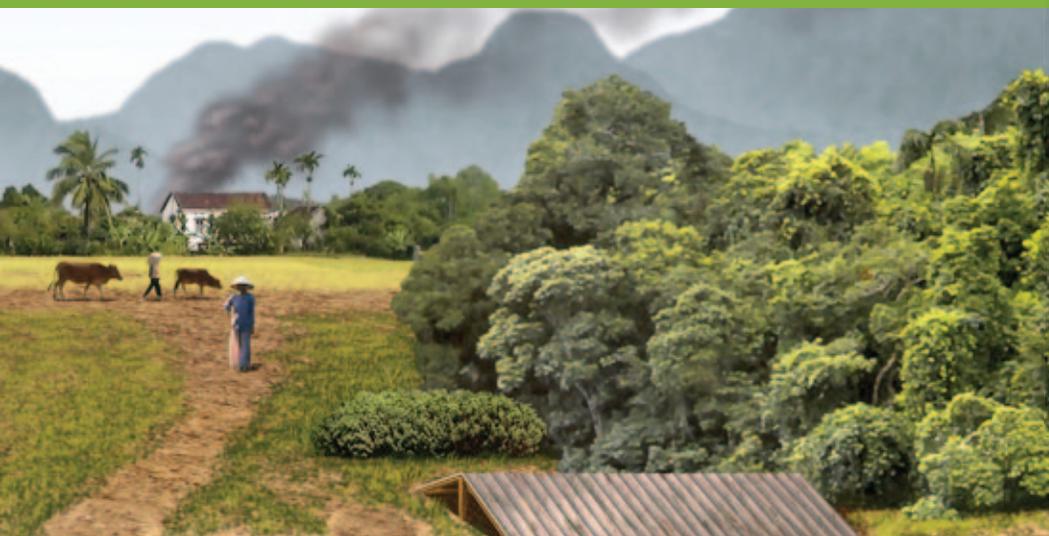
Firing post

Dormitory

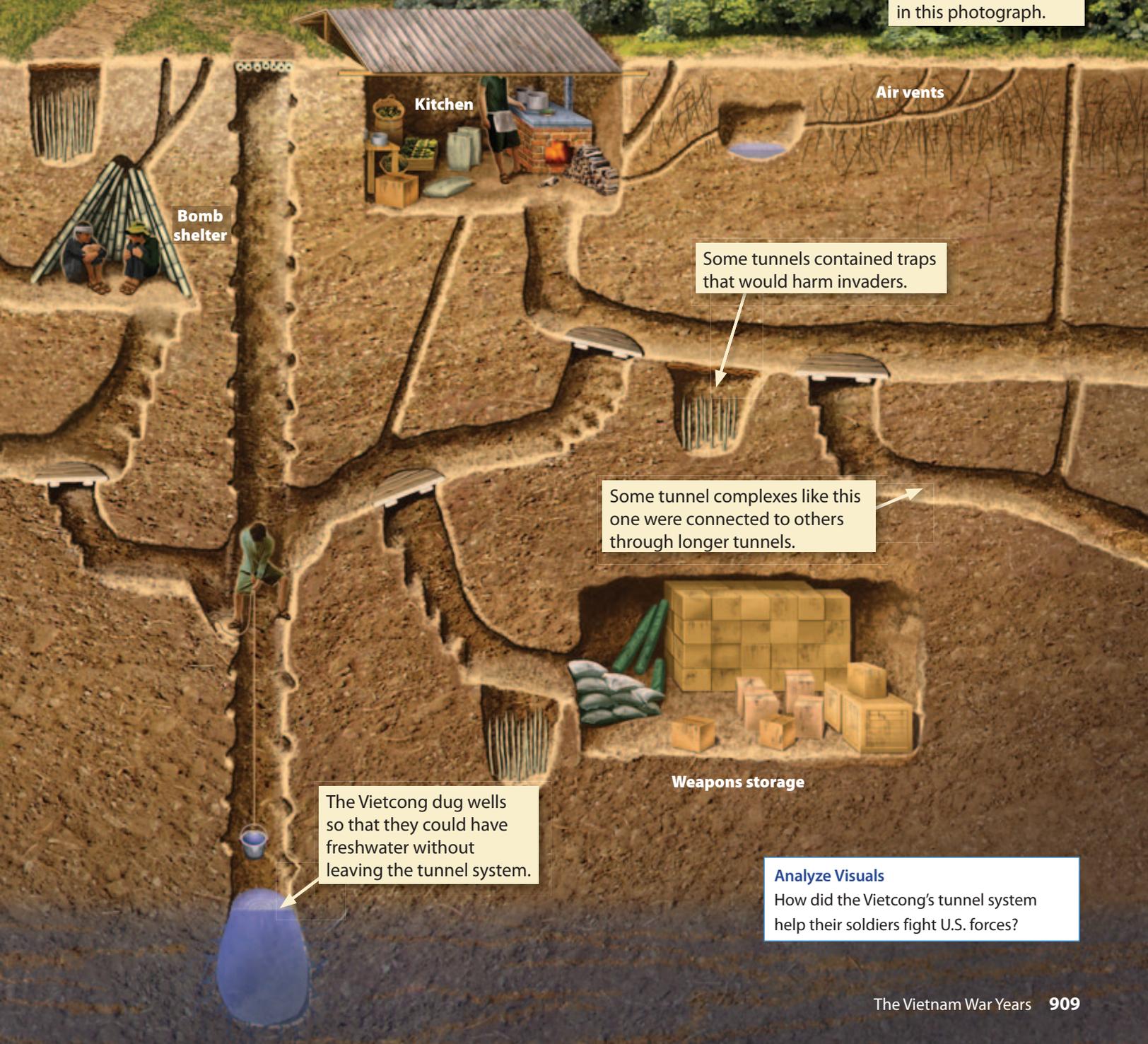
Special doors were installed that could withstand bomb blasts and poisonous gases.

Hospital

Generators powered by bicycles provided electricity where needed.



American soldiers had trouble finding the hidden tunnel entrances, like the one in this photograph.



Some tunnels contained traps that would harm invaders.

Some tunnel complexes like this one were connected to others through longer tunnels.

The Vietcong dug wells so that they could have freshwater without leaving the tunnel system.

Analyze Visuals
How did the Vietcong's tunnel system help their soldiers fight U.S. forces?

The End of the War

The Big Idea

Growing antiwar feelings in the United States helped convince the government to end U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War.

Main Ideas

- Opinions about the Vietnam War divided American society in the 1960s.
- The war under Nixon expanded from Vietnam to Laos and Cambodia.
- The Vietnam War ended in 1973, but it had lasting effects on Vietnam and the United States.

Key Terms and People

Students for a Democratic Society
hippies
Richard M. Nixon
Henry Kissinger
Vietnamization
Twenty-Sixth Amendment
War Powers Act
Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Academic Vocabulary

values ideas that people hold dear and try to live by

If YOU were there . . .

You are a high school student in 1969. You follow events in Vietnam very closely and often talk about the war with your friends. Some of your friends are active in the antiwar movement, but you also have friends who support the war. You think each group makes good points, but you are having a hard time deciding which position you support.

Would you join the antiwar protests? Why or why not?

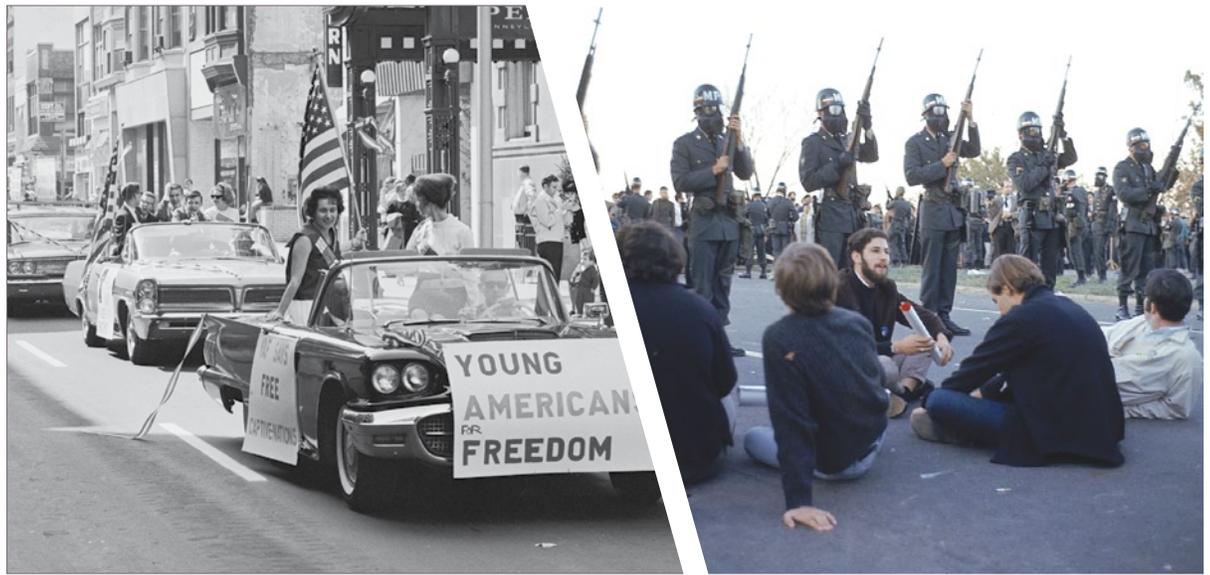
Society in the 1960s

As the Vietnam War continued, growing numbers of Americans began to criticize the war. “The peaceniks [war protesters] these days are legion [many],” said Charlotte Keyes, who helped organize a group called Women Strike for Peace. “They are ninety-years-old and fifteen, heads of families and housewives with babies, students, [and] young people.”

Antiwar Protests College students often took the lead in organizing antiwar protests. One of the most active protest groups was **Students for a Democratic Society** (SDS). Members of SDS protested the draft as well as companies that made weapons used in Vietnam.

By the end of 1968, students had held antiwar demonstrations on nearly 75 percent of college campuses. Some young men protested by publicly burning their draft cards. Others avoided military service by moving to Canada. Many Americans, however, criticized the antiwar movement as anti-American. In 1970, for example, thousands of construction workers marched in New York City, shouting, “All the way with the U.S.A.”

For some Americans, the antiwar movement was part of a rejection of traditional **values** and government authority. Some young people chose to “drop out” of mainstream



A Society Divided

Some young Americans supported the war in Vietnam. Many saw it as the only way to stop the spread of communism. Other young Americans protested the war. They believed the United States should not be involved in a violent conflict in Southeast Asia.

society and built a counterculture—a culture with its own values and ways of behaving. Members of this counterculture, called **hippies**, emphasized individual freedom, nonviolence, and communal sharing. Hippies expressed their rejection of traditional society by growing their hair long and wearing unusual clothes. They promoted openness and were sometimes called “flower children.”

The views of hippies and war protesters upset many Americans. Commentators described a “generation gap,” or division between older and younger Americans. “I know of no time in our history when the gap between the generations has been wider,” said one university professor.

The Election of 1968 News of the Tet Offensive led to a sharp drop in the popularity of President Johnson. In early 1968 the percentage of Americans who approved of Johnson’s performance as president fell from 48 to 36. The number of Americans who approved of the way Johnson was handling the war was even lower. As the 1968 presidential election approached, Johnson was even losing support within his own Democratic Party. On March 31 he went on live television and told Americans: “I shall not seek, and I will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as president.”

Several other candidates campaigned for the Democratic nomination. Johnson backed his vice president, Hubert Humphrey. Eugene McCarthy, a senator from Minnesota, ran as an outspoken antiwar candidate. Senator Robert F. Kennedy of New York argued that the United States should do everything possible to negotiate a quick and peaceful end to the war.

Kennedy won the California primary on June 5, 1968—an important step before the upcoming Democratic National Convention in Chicago. After giving his victory speech that night, he was assassinated by a man named Sirhan Sirhan.



National Guardsmen and antiwar protesters face off at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago.

Reading Check

Compare What did the expeditions of Lewis and Clark, Pike, and Frémont reveal about the West?

The Democrats were badly divided going into their party's convention in Chicago. Vice President Humphrey seemed certain to win the nomination. But many delegates disliked his close ties with President Johnson and the Vietnam War. Angry debates inside the convention hall were matched by antiwar protests on the streets. When police officers moved in to stop the demonstrations, a riot broke out. Television cameras broadcast live images of the violent chaos in Chicago. More than 100 police officers and 100 demonstrators were injured.

Humphrey won the Democratic nomination for president, but the events in Chicago damaged his chances of victory.

Republican nominee **Richard M. Nixon** promised to restore order to American society and bring "peace with honor" to Vietnam. Nixon won the election, receiving 301 electoral votes to Humphrey's 191. Southern voters gave 46 electoral votes to George Wallace, a segregationist candidate of the American Independent Party.

The War under Nixon

President Nixon wanted to get U.S. troops out of Vietnam without creating the appearance of an American defeat. "I will not be the first president of the United States to lose a war," he told his fellow Republicans. With his national security adviser, **Henry Kissinger**, Nixon created a plan to pull U.S. troops from Vietnam and have the South Vietnamese Army take over all the fighting. This strategy was called **Vietnamization**.

Nixon began slowly withdrawing American troops from Vietnam. Without the knowledge of Congress or the American public, however, he approved bombing raids on Cambodia and Laos. The goal of these raids was to disrupt Vietcong supply lines. On April 30, 1970, Nixon announced that he had sent U.S. troops into Cambodia to attack Communist bases. "If, when the chips are down," he said, "the United States of America acts like a pitiful helpless giant, the forces of totalitarian anarchy will threaten free nations." Many Americans were furious. Rather than seeking peace, Nixon seemed to be expanding the war.

Student protests erupted on hundreds of college campuses. On May 4, at Kent State University in Ohio, the National Guard was called in to break up a demonstration. When the students refused to leave, guard troops used tear gas. Some students began throwing rocks at the National Guard. Several guard troops then opened fire into the crowd. Four students were killed. Horrified by the killings, antiwar activists expanded their protests all over the nation.

Antiwar feelings grew in June 1971, when the *New York Times* published secret government documents known as the Pentagon Papers. These documents revealed that U.S. officials had been lying to the American public about the progress of the war for years.

Public opinion was hardening against the war as the 1972 presidential race began. Democratic candidate George McGovern was an outspoken opponent of the war who promised voters an immediate U.S. troop withdrawal from Vietnam. "The doors of government will be opened, and that brutal war will be closed," he said.



Today, relations between the United States and the united Vietnam have only slowly improved. In 1994 the United States lifted its long-standing trade embargo against Vietnam. In 1995 the former enemies officially established diplomatic relations. Many American veterans and tourists now visit Vietnam.

Quick Facts

Causes and Effects of the Vietnam War

Long-Term Causes

- Fear of Communist expansion
- U.S. support of South Vietnam's government

Immediate Causes

- Gulf of Tonkin incident
- Communist attacks against South Vietnam



Effects

- Many thousands of Americans and millions of Vietnamese killed and injured
- Vietnam united as a Communist nation
- Political divisions created in the United States
- Increased Vietnamese immigration to the United States

The Impact in Southeast Asia The war ended when North Vietnamese forces captured Saigon in April 1975. Communist leaders created the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, uniting the former countries of North and South Vietnam. Hanoi became the capital, and Saigon was renamed Ho Chi Minh City.

Life remained extremely difficult in Vietnam after the war. Cities, villages, forests, and farms had been destroyed during the war. Some 250,000 South Vietnamese soldiers died in the war. About 1 million North Vietnamese and Vietcong soldiers were killed. The number of civilians killed is estimated at 2 million. Hundreds of thousands of former soldiers, officials, and other professionals were forced to live in "re-education camps." Another 1.5 million Vietnamese fled the country. About half of them settled in the United States. Thousands of other refugees from Southeast Asia joined them, such as the Hmong of Laos. The Hmong fought bravely alongside the U.S. military against the Communists during the war. Communist dictators took over Laos and Cambodia in 1975. The Cambodian Communist army, the Khmer Rouge, killed about 1.5 million people in a massive campaign to destroy supposed enemies of communism.

According to a 2007 U.S. Census survey, more than a million Vietnamese immigrants now live in the United States. Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian

immigrants to the United States have made significant contributions to the communities they join. Many of these communities are along the West and Gulf coasts.

The Impact at Home The Vietnam War carried heavy costs for the United States as well. Some 58,000 Americans were killed, and more than 300,000 were wounded.

Returning American soldiers were not always welcomed home as heroes as other war veterans had been. Some were insulted by antiwar protesters. As veterans struggled to readjust to civilian life, many suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder. This condition includes symptoms such as nightmares and flashbacks to traumatic experiences. Today, the U.S. government is more prepared to meet the needs of veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder. It offers counseling and information to vets and their families on how to deal with symptoms of trauma.

Another effect of the Vietnam War was that Americans had less trust in government officials, including the president. This led to the passage in 1973 of the **War Powers Act**. The act requires the president to get congressional approval before committing U.S. troops to an armed struggle.

The war also left a dismal economic legacy, affecting the development of the United States. Some estimates place the cost to American taxpayers at more than \$150 billion. This cost added to the national debt and fueled inflation. The money spent on the war used funds that might have gone to domestic programs, such as those that help the poor.

Americans took a step toward healing the wounds of the war with the 1982 dedication of the **Vietnam Veterans Memorial**. Maya Ying Lin designed the black granite memorial. It lists the names of dead or missing American soldiers. Lin insisted that the names be listed in chronological order rather than in alphabetical order or by rank.

BIOGRAPHY

Maya Ying Lin

1959–

Ohio-born Maya Lin was a 21-year-old architecture student when she designed the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Her design was chosen from more than 1,400 proposed memorial designs. The memorial is a V-shaped black granite wall that lists the names of more than 58,000 dead and missing Americans. Explaining the design, Lin said, “It was important to me to be extremely honest; not be concerned

with the politics of war, but the results. I wanted to bring the visitor a concrete realization of the great loss.”

The memorial is now one of the most-visited spots in Washington, DC. Many visitors leave letters, flowers, or other objects at the memorial to honor loved ones.

Draw Conclusions

How does Lin’s design achieve the goal she describes?





The smooth, black-granite wall of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, nearly 500 feet long, lists the 58,249 names of military men and women who died or were listed as missing in action.

Reading Check

Summarize What were the longterm effects of the Vietnam War?

The memorial has become a symbol of healing after a long and divisive war. Hundreds of people visit it daily. Some visitors leave flowers, personal mementos, or written messages. Others simply ponder the meaning of the memorial.

Summary and Preview The Vietnam War deeply divided American society. In the next module you will read about how American life changed in the 1970s and 1980s.

Lesson 3 Assessment

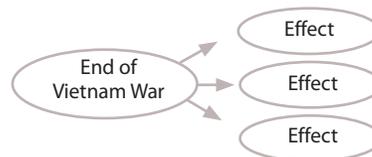
Review Ideas, Terms, and People

1. **a. Identify** What was Students for a Democratic Society?
 - b. Elaborate** How did hippies express their disapproval of traditional culture?
 - c. Evaluate** How did the Republicans win the presidential election of 1968?
2. **a. Explain** What was Vietnamization?
 - b. Summarize** Why did the Pentagon Papers fuel antiwar feelings?
 - c. Elaborate** How did the Twenty-Sixth Amendment affect the 1972 presidential election?

3. **a. Recall** How did the Vietnam War end?
 - b. Describe** What was the experience of veterans returning home from Vietnam?
 - c. Analyze** Do you think U.S. leaders made the right decision in signing the Paris Peace Accords? Why or why not?

Critical Thinking

4. **Identify Effects** In this lesson you learned about the causes of the end of the Vietnam War. Create a chart similar to the one below and use it to list the effects of the end of the war.



Social Studies Skills

Use Primary Sources: Oral Histories

Define the Skill

An important part of history is understanding the lives and experiences of people in the past. Oral histories and personal memoirs are primary sources that help historians understand how people in the past acted and felt.

Oral histories are interviews in which people talk about events they participated in or witnessed. In personal memoirs, people write about their memories of such events. Both oral histories and personal memoirs are different from other kinds of primary sources because they can be written long after an event takes place. However, they both include descriptions of firsthand experiences.

Learn the Skill

Follow these guidelines to analyze oral histories and personal memoirs.

1. Identify the situation that the oral history or memoir describes.
2. Find the emotions or events that stand out in the description.
3. Make a generalization about how the individual's experience helps us understand the time period or event. Do you think other people might have had similar experiences?

In the following quotation, Diana Dwan Poole describes her experience serving in the Army Nurse Corps in Vietnam.

“One of my rules was that nurses were not allowed to cry. The wounded and dying men in our care need our strength, I told them. We couldn't indulge in the luxury of our own feelings. . . . I was always straight with the soldiers. I would never say, ‘Oh, you're going to be just fine,’ if they were on their way out. I didn't lie.”

Poole was a nurse in Vietnam. In this quotation, she describes working with wounded and dying patients. Her strength in the face of sadness and her honesty stand out.

Other nurses might have had experiences similar to Poole's. The nurses' situation—treating the wounded and the dying—also suggests the dangers soldiers faced.

Practice the Skill

Todd B. Walton was a sergeant in Iraq who found adjusting back to life at home challenging. Read the primary source quotation from Walton below.

“I would scan the overpasses for IEDs or something down on the bottom. Is there anybody on the top that is going to be trying to throw stuff in, obviously I'm in truck mentality, you know, are they going to try to drop something into your truck. . . . Is there somebody manning a . . . weapon.”

1. What situation does Walton describe?
2. Based on this description, how do you think Walton felt at the time?
3. How can Walton's experience help us better understand soldiers serving in Iraq?

Module 29 Assessment

Review Vocabulary, Terms, and People

Identify the descriptions below with the correct term or person from the module.

1. The Cuban rebel who overthrew an unpopular dictator and established a Communist government
2. A barrier made of concrete and barbed wire that separated East Berlin and West Berlin
3. The commander of U.S. ground forces in Vietnam who developed the strategy of search-and-destroy missions
4. Supporters of the Vietnam War who believed winning the Cold War took priority over domestic reform
5. The Republican nominee who won the 1968 election for president of the United States
6. The amendment that lowered the voting age from 21 to 18

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

Lesson 1

7.
 - a. **Recall** What is the Peace Corps?
 - b. **Sequence** Describe the sequence of events that led to American astronauts landing on the moon in 1969.
 - c. **Evaluate** How do you think the Cuban missile crisis would have ended had the United States pursued air strikes or an invasion of Cuba?

Lesson 2

8.
 - a. **Define** What is guerrilla warfare?
 - b. **Describe** How did the American military try to disrupt the Ho Chi Minh Trail?
 - c. **Predict** Do you think Americans' opinions about the war would have been different had there been no television reporting? Explain your answer.

Lesson 3

9.
 - a. **Identify** What was the War Powers Act?
 - b. **Explain** What was Henry Kissinger's role in the Vietnam War?
 - c. **Summarize** What long-term effects did the Vietnam War have on the United States?

Module 29 Assessment, continued

Review Themes

10. **Geography** How did the geography of Vietnam help the Vietcong?
11. **Geography** How did the geography of Vietnam affect American forces?

Reading Skills

Set a Purpose Use the Reading Skills taught in this module to answer the question about the reading selection below.

Johnson Commits to Victory

Lyndon Johnson was determined to prevent Communists from taking over in South Vietnam. “We have the resources and the will to follow this course as long as it may take,” Johnson said. . . .

The Tonkin Gulf Resolution

In the summer of 1964, a naval skirmish led to a rapid expansion of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. On August 2, 1964, the USS *Maddox* reportedly exchanged gunfire with North Vietnamese torpedo boats in the Gulf of Tonkin, off the North Vietnamese coast. . . .

12. Which of the following is an example of a purpose you could set for the passage above?
 - a. Find out why the Vietnam War was fought.
 - b. Find out Johnson’s view of the Vietnam War.
 - c. Find out when the Vietnam War ended.
 - d. Find out what the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is.

Social Studies Skills

Use Primary Sources: Oral Histories Read this passage from marine officer Philip Caputo. Then use the Social Studies Skills taught in this module to answer the question below.

“You simply trusted absolutely no one. I mean, from a 5-year-old kid to a 75-year-old woman.”

13. How do you think Caputo felt about not being able to trust anyone? Do you think he felt safe? Why or why not?

Focus on Writing

14. **Present a Newscast** Newscasts during the Cold War were a big source of information that reported world and war events to the American people. You will present a five-minute newscast to your class about events in the Cold War. Make notes and include several segments on different topics from the module. One could be an interview with a friend in the role of a soldier back from Vietnam, a government official, or an antiwar protester. You can also use pictures to illustrate the events you are reporting. Write your script and practice reading it before your presentation.

OCTOBER FURY: THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS



The Cuban missile crisis was perhaps the most dangerous event of the Cold War period. For several days in October 1962, the United States and the Soviet Union stood on the brink of nuclear war. The crisis began when the Soviet Union sent weapons, including nuclear missiles, to Cuba. It deepened when the United States blockaded Cuba to prevent the Soviets from delivering more missiles. With Soviet ships sailing toward the

blockade, a confrontation seemed inevitable. However, at the last moment, the Soviet ships turned back and war was averted.

Explore the development and resolution of the Cuban missile crisis online. You can find a wealth of information, video clips, primary sources, activities, and more through your online textbook.



Prelude to Crisis

Watch the video to learn about the buildup to the Cuban missile crisis.



Go online to view these and other **HISTORY**® resources.



Getting Ready for War

Watch the video to see how the missiles in Cuba created tension between the United States and the Soviet Union.



Crisis Averted?

Watch the video to see how the Cuban missile crisis brought the United States and the Soviet Union to the brink of nuclear war.



Lessons Learned

Watch the video to learn about the impact of the Cuban missile crisis.

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