

Vietnam War Activities

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Diagnostic activity: What do you already know about New Zealand and the Vietnam War?

This is a brainstorm activity known as a 'frame-up'.

- Divide your class into groups of four.
- Give each group a large sheet of paper, and tell each member of the group that they are allowed one edge of the paper each, with the middle of the paper to be kept blank. Ask them to imagine it looking like a picture frame. They each have a side of the frame to write on.
- Now give the class two minutes to record everything they can think of or know in relation to New Zealand and the Vietnam War. It could be words, dates or images – there is no right or wrong response, and there is no talking.
- After two minutes tell them to put down their pens and observe what the other members of their group recorded.
- If there are words or terms that are common to at least two members of the group, then record these in the middle of the paper, where the picture would be in the frame.
- Ask one member of the group to present the notes from the middle of the page to the rest of the class. Someone can compile a list on the board and, as each group adds information, highlight the recurring themes and ideas.

Now see if you can tease out, as a class, the three most important questions they would like to find answers to in relation to New Zealand and the Vietnam War.

Exploring values: Thinking hats

New Zealand's participation in the Vietnam War has been a topic of intense debate. Some people believed the war was none of our business and that we were bullied into fighting by the United States. Others maintained that we had an obligation to support our allies and that one day we might need their help.

Edward de Bono's six thinking hats is a good technique to use when considering different points of view.

- Wearing your white hat – look at the statement and see what you can learn from it. Look for gaps in your knowledge. Are there things you need to know or find out to help you make sense of this statement? If so, try to fill them or take account of them.
- Wearing your red hat – consider your feelings. What is wrong with this statement? How does it make you feel?
- Wearing your black hat – look at all the bad points of this statement. What are the weak points in this statement?
- Wearing your yellow hat – consider the good points of this statement and all of the possible benefits and values.
- Wearing your green hat – think creatively and develop creative responses to this statement. There is no real right or wrong, and there is little criticism of your ideas.
- Wearing your blue hat – what other thinking is needed here about this statement?

Newspaper editorial

Use the material on New Zealand and the Vietnam War and the six thinking hats to help you complete this activity.

Imagine you are currently the editor of a New Zealand newspaper. It is Anzac Day and your newspaper is using this day to present a feature that looks back at New Zealand's experiences at war. The focus for this feature will be on New Zealand's participation in the Vietnam War. You are to write an editorial in response to this feature. Your editorial, of no more than 200 words, should express your views as to whether or not New Zealand should have got involved in this war

Have a look at some examples of editorials to get a sense of the style of writing.

History road

A history road is a type of timeline; you put events in the order they happened, but you don't have to show the even passing of time. A history road:

- takes the form of a widening road coming towards you
- has the oldest event at the beginning of the road
- may have symbols or sketches to go with the events.

Ask your students either individually or in pairs to select six key events concerning New Zealand's participation in the Vietnam War. Now get them to turn these six events into a history road. They can use the material available from NZHistory.net.nz and Vietnamwar.govt.nz to help prepare the history road.

Make sure things are in chronological order, and use sketches and/or symbols to go with each event or date.

1. Key vocab

Learning and reinforcing understanding of key words associated with a particular piece of content can be very important, especially to younger students. There are several ways of doing this:

- As you read through the content with your class you can write up unfamiliar or new words on the board and find out the meanings together
- Alternatively, you can get students to underline or highlight words they don't understand from the text they read. They can turn this into a list of words they need to find the meaning for.
- Or you can decide what are the important words you want them to be familiar with, e.g. communist

Vocab bingo

- However you develop your list, aim for at least 12 words or terms.
- Get each pupil to write down six of them on a piece of paper. This is their bingo card.
- You can now read out meanings and your students can either cover the word on their sheet with another piece of paper or cross it out when they think their word matches your definition.
- The first pupil to get all six of their words called out and marked off calls out 'bingo' and is declared the winner. If there is a tie you can read out other words until a winner is found. You can challenge older children by making the definition you read more cryptic.

What happened and why – New Zealand and the Vietnam War

Use the material in NZHistory.net.nz and Vietnamwar.govt.nz for the following activity ideas.

It is important for your students to get some sense of what happened and why it happened. While Level Four of the social studies curriculum requires students *to gain knowledge, skills and experience to understand that events have causes and effects*, it is important for students at all levels to get some sense of what happened and why.

It is also important for students to get some sense of the sequence of events associated with the Vietnam War as part of the explanation.

A. This activity could be developed as a transactional writing activity as part of a language unit with a social sciences context. Consider the following approach:

Levels 1-3

Read through the material from the websites as a class and note together on the board answers to the following broad questions:

- What happened?
- Why did it happen?
- In what order did things happen?

Students could then communicate this information in the format you have selected by:

- identifying **one or two** happenings associated with New Zealand and the Vietnam War
- giving **some** ideas about why it happened
- listing **some** of the events associated with this event in time order.

Level 4

At this level it is probably still appropriate to read through the material as a class and note together on the board answers to the following broad questions:

- What happened?
- Why did it happen?
- In what order did things happen? Introduce the word/concept of sequence.

The expectation here is that students should be able to recount cause and effect in more detail. Students could then communicate this information in the format you have selected by:

- identifying **most** of the happenings associated with New Zealand and the Vietnam War
- giving **some** ideas about why it happened with factual justification
- Providing a sequence of events – with **most** of the events in time order.

Level 5

At this level there is a higher expectation of independent reading in order to communicate cause and effect. This will no doubt vary from class to class but if this is a problem revert to one of the suggested approaches from an earlier level.

Students will be able to produce a report in which they:

- **Clearly identify** what happened – identifying the **main** happenings and **subsidiary** events or flow-on from the main event itself.
- Explain why it happened – giving ideas with **factual justification** and supposition.
- Provide a sequence of events – with **all** events in time order.

B. The sequencing of events

Being able to put events in their correct sequence is an important historical skill that will help students with the narrative of any historical event. It is important to understanding cause and effect.

Another way of helping younger students especially to understand sequence is to get them to approach this skill from a visual perspective.

- Go to the online media galleries associated with New Zealand and the Vietnam War
 - Print out some of the images or information from the gallery. Make sure you remove any captions or clues from the image.
 - Jumble them up and present them to your class – or to groups.
 - Your students have to put them in what they think is the correct sequence and be able to justify their order.

The discussion in groups here is where some of the real learning can take place and will help students to develop arguments that they can justify.

Alternatively consider a timeline approach. This might work with older students with a greater awareness of time.

- Use the online media galleries associated with New Zealand and the Vietnam War to produce an **illustrated timeline** of New Zealand's experience of the Vietnam War:
 - The timeline must start from the time New Zealand first became involved in Vietnam until it was 'all over'. You might need to define what is meant by 'all over'.

- Include the main events that affected New Zealand and make sure you get it in the right time sequence (order).
- Some levels might find this easier to brainstorm as a class, checking the order as they go.

Communicating ideas

There are many formats that could be used to communicate and present information about New Zealand and the Vietnam War that demonstrate understanding. These approaches are an ideal way of incorporating themes and skills associated with the social sciences in a language unit.

A number of options follow that can be selected and modified to suit your class and level. The requirements will vary from level to level, as will the degree of teacher support. Younger students may require one-to-one modeling and step-by-step instruction, while older students may be able to operate on a more independent level.

This is an ideal opportunity to introduce a research element to this study. Using the material in NZHistory.net.nz and Vietnamwar.govt.nz as a starting place, students can use the library and other locations/sources to locate a range of information that is useful. This is a good opportunity to introduce or further develop skills such as the use of key words, contents and an index in information gathering. Older students can be challenged through the expectation to locate information from a greater range of sources while younger students might locate useful information with teacher help.

- **Picture captions**

As a piece of writing the style required for this activity is brief with an emphasis on concise facts. Explain to the class that they are going to write captions for a selection of images or objects associated with New Zealand and the Vietnam War. It could be an ideal way to incorporate some of the images associated with *Tribute08*. Some students or levels will need to have the word 'caption' explained to them. To assist with this task it might be useful to have some examples on hand or to even workshop an example with your class. Discuss what is important in a good caption and stress the need to be brief. For the purpose of this exercise set a word limit of no more than 30 words.

- Go to the online media galleries associated with New Zealand and the Vietnam War:
 - Print out some of the images or information. You can determine the number or range suitable for your class.
 - Make sure you remove any captions or clues from the image.
 - Present them to your class – or to groups – and get them to write a suitable caption for the media item.
- Younger classes can do this as a class exercise and write captions for 2-3 images that the teacher has selected for the class.

Alternatively a more artistic approach to this might be to complete a picture/caption telling the story of what happened. Break the story up into its main points and draw a picture reflecting each point. Underneath each picture write a brief summary of that main point.

- **Read all about it! Newspaper front pages**

This can be a very effective and popular way of communicating information and ideas on any number of history-based topics. Don't make assumptions about what your students might know about the features of a good front page story. Spend some time looking at examples and discussing the features with them. Depending on what technology and time you have available you can also use this as an opportunity for the students to work on some of their publishing skills.

Use the format why, what, when, where, who, how to help students approach the story. The style is factual. Begin with the most important facts first.

Younger classes might work on appropriate banner headlines instead of producing a full-blown page. Think here about what are some of the key things to convey in a headline. What is its purpose?

A. For some levels the following approach may be sufficient or could be used to break the task up into smaller parts:

- Imagine you are a reporter for a newspaper at the time of the government's decision to send combat forces to Vietnam. You can make up the name of your own newspaper or use one that was in existence at the time.
- The editor of your newspaper wants three possible headings for a front-page story on this announcement for the morning after it occurred.
- write an introductory paragraph for this front-page story about what has happened.

B. From here you could go further by coming up with topics for the following paragraphs that provide readers with more detail about the government's decision and what caused it to make this decision.

Consider presentation. Write your story up in columns with a headline and picture(s). Remember newspaper stories deal with who, why, what, when, where and how.

C. Now write an editorial that might have appeared in the same paper in 1971 when the government announced its decision to withdraw our forces from Vietnam. Under the heading of 'Was it all worth it?':

- Provide a couple of paragraphs that summarise New Zealand's involvement in Vietnam
- Outline the different opinions/attitudes of New Zealanders to our participation in this war

- **Making a history book for younger children**

A good way of demonstrating understanding of a topic is to get

students to effectively teach others about that topic. One method is to prepare a textbook that will make sense to younger students about that topic. You can brainstorm with your class what this means and what the features of such a textbook might be, but consider the following:

- Use of language suitable to age group
 - Explaining certain key words
 - Use of headings and sub-headings
 - Use of images and illustrations
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- If you have examples of suitable texts show them to your class and discuss the features of the selected textbook. Ask your class what makes this book effective (or not).
 - There is potential for this activity to be used as a more extensive research topic. Students could work collaboratively on this and you might want to explore your publishing options.
 - Alternatively students could produce pages to contribute to a class book and again they could work on these individually or in pairs.
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- **Making a web page**
Based on the IT and skills available to you this might be a worthwhile alternative to the textbook activity. Or it might be a really useful extension activity. Look at some websites and pages and discuss what works and what doesn't from the perspective of finding out about the event. What do your students believe are the essential ingredients for a good webpage? If the technical skills/capabilities aren't there to actually build a page then students could produce a paper version. If the skills are there, then imagine how good this would look on your school's own website or if you built your own class pages as a class project. The possibilities are enormous...
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- **Radio or TV broadcast**
These sort of presentations can be as complicated or as simple as you want to make them. They can be effective as they work in a medium most students have some experience of. The opportunity exists to make this a lead story in a news bulletin that can bring in reporters in the field or as part of a more extensive documentary type feature. Obviously with the TV presentation there is the ability to bring in visual props. Again there is the need to discuss or observe the features of good TV and/or radio to reinforce the fact that there is the need to communicate information effectively and efficiently. With tape recorders and cameras involved there can be a lot to organise but there is also the potential for a lot of fun and creativity. Consider setting up a newsroom and dishing out separate tasks from news gathering to presentation.

- **Powerpoint presentations**

This is a skill many students seem to master at an early age and one that can make good use of the many images available.

- **Developing a museum or online exhibition**

A good way for students to approach the topic is to consider what objects or artefacts would be essential for a display on this topic as well as the appropriate interpretations. This could be real or virtual. Alternatively a museum guide or pamphlet on the exhibition could be developed.

- **Static images**

There are many opportunities in a study like this for static images from posters for a museum exhibition, book covers, film advertising etc.