War and Dissent

Trace how the Vietnam War and social movements shaped public opinion.

SS24.US2.13d "Evaluate the relationship between domestic social movements, including the New Left and counterculture movements, and America's war in Vietnam and explain how the movements and the war each influenced public perception of the other."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one way a war development changed activism, circle one way activism changed views of the war, and number two different public reactions to protesters to trace influence in both directions.

A War Debated at Home

1 During the Vietnam War, the draft made a distant conflict immediate for many young Americans. New Left groups, including Students for a Democratic Society, organized teach-ins and marches that challenged government claims about the war. Counterculture participants rejected conventional authority through music, dress, and communal living; some joined antiwar protests, though the two movements were not the same.

2 War news also changed how these movements were heard. After the 1968 Tet Offensive, official assurances of progress seemed less convincing to many Americans, giving antiwar arguments a wider audience. When the United States expanded fighting into Cambodia in 1970, student protests grew. At Kent State University, National Guardsmen killed four students, intensifying debate over war and dissent.

WAR DEVELOPMENTS AND ACTIVISM

War development	Effect on activism
Tet Offensive, 1968	Antiwar arguments gained a wider audience
Expansion into Cambodia, 1970	Student protests grew

3 The movements changed views of the war, too. Teach-ins and mass demonstrations pushed military policy into public debate. Some Americans admired protesters for questioning the war; others saw draft resistance and counterculture symbols as disrespect for soldiers. People could therefore doubt the war yet distrust protesters, while others saw protest as a reason to question government decisions.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the New Left and counterculture each connect to opposition to the war?

2. How did the Tet Offensive affect the way Americans heard antiwar arguments?

3. How did teach-ins and demonstrations affect public discussion of the war?

4. Why might someone doubt the war but still distrust protesters?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a short newspaper editorial from 1970 arguing whether antiwar protests helped or hurt public debate about Vietnam. Use one war development and one movement action from the reading, and explain how each affected people's views.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 11 · SS24.US2.13d

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one way a war development changed activism, circle one way activism changed views of the war, and number two different public reactions to protesters to trace influence in both directions. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the New Left and counterculture each connect to opposition to the war?	**New Left groups organized teach-ins and marches against the war. Some counterculture participants joined protests, but the movements were distinct.**
2	How did the Tet Offensive affect the way Americans heard antiwar arguments?	**It made official assurances of progress less convincing to many Americans, giving antiwar arguments a wider audience.**
3	How did teach-ins and demonstrations affect public discussion of the war?	**They brought military policy into public debate instead of leaving it solely to officials.**
4	Why might someone doubt the war but still distrust protesters?	**That person might question the war while viewing draft resistance or counterculture symbols as disrespectful to soldiers.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Antiwar protests have helped public debate about Vietnam. After the Tet Offensive, many Americans questioned official claims that the war was going well, making them more willing to hear protesters. Teach-ins then gave people a place to examine military policy instead of leaving it to officials. I understand why some citizens view draft resistance as disrespectful to soldiers, but questioning a war is not the same as condemning those who serve.

Accept supported differences between the movements and reasonable interpretations of public reactions. For the editorial, look for a clear position and an explanation of how both a war development and a movement action influenced public views.