War Comes Home

Tracing the Vietnam conflict's effects on U.S. politics and public life

USH.C.6.3.H "Explain how the Vietnam conflict impacted domestic affairs (e.g., outcome of the presidential election of 1968, university student protests, counterculture movement, expanded televised coverage of the conflict…"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two wartime events or conditions, circle a different response at home linked to each, and give each cause and response a matching number, 1 or 2.

A War Beyond the Battlefield

1. On a winter evening in 1968, a family watching television could see reports from the Tet Offensive, a series of attacks by North Vietnamese and communist forces in South Vietnam. Although those forces suffered heavy losses, the attacks challenged U.S. officials' claims that victory was near. Television did not show every part of the war, but expanded coverage brought its costs into American homes. Amid growing opposition to the war, President Lyndon Johnson chose not to seek reelection. His vice president, Hubert Humphrey, struggled to separate himself from Johnson's war policy. Richard Nixon won the 1968 election, promising to restore order and seek "peace with honor."

2. On college campuses, students organized teach-ins, marches, and strikes against the war and the military draft. After U.S. forces entered Cambodia in 1970, protests grew. At Kent State University, Ohio National Guardsmen shot and killed four students during a protest. Some young people joined a broader counterculture that questioned authority and celebrated alternative music and lifestyles, although not every antiwar protester joined that movement. The draft also raised a voting question: Why could 18-year-olds be sent to fight but not vote in many elections? Ratified in 1971, the 26th Amendment lowered the voting age to 18 nationwide.

3. Opposition also changed the balance of power in Washington. Many lawmakers believed presidents had committed U.S. forces abroad without enough public debate or congressional oversight. In 1973, after U.S. combat troops had left Vietnam, Congress passed the War Powers Resolution over Nixon's veto. It required the president to report the introduction of forces into hostilities to Congress within 48 hours and generally to end that involvement within 60 days without congressional authorization. The law did not end the Vietnam conflict, and presidents have disputed parts of it. Still, it shows how arguments over the war reshaped debates about who may send Americans into battle.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did televised coverage of the Tet Offensive help shape the political climate of the 1968 presidential election?

2. How did the expansion of the war into Cambodia affect university campuses?

3. How did the draft help build a case for the 26th Amendment?

4. What concern about presidential power led Congress to pass the War Powers Resolution?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence opening for a 1973 newspaper editorial arguing that the Vietnam conflict changed life at home in more than one way. Connect two different domestic effects from the passage, explain why their connection matters to Americans, and do not claim that either effect ended the war.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · USH.C.6.3.H

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two wartime events or conditions, circle a different response at home linked to each, and give each cause and response a matching number, 1 or 2. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did televised coverage of the Tet Offensive help shape the political climate of the 1968 presidential election?	**Coverage brought the war into homes and challenged claims that victory was near. Amid growing opposition, Johnson did not seek reelection, and Humphrey struggled to distance himself from Johnson's war policy.**
2	How did the expansion of the war into Cambodia affect university campuses?	**Campus protests grew after U.S. forces entered Cambodia in 1970. At Kent State, Ohio National Guardsmen killed four students during a protest.**
3	How did the draft help build a case for the 26th Amendment?	**Young people could be sent to fight at 18 but could not vote in many elections. The amendment lowered the voting age to 18 nationwide.**
4	What concern about presidential power led Congress to pass the War Powers Resolution?	**Lawmakers believed presidents had committed forces abroad without enough public debate or congressional oversight. The resolution required reporting to Congress and generally limited involvement in hostilities without its authorization.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A democracy must hear those asked to fight and question leaders who send them. The Vietnam conflict helped bring 18-year-olds into the electorate through the 26th Amendment. It also led Congress to pass the War Powers Resolution, which sought to limit presidential decisions about combat without congressional authorization. Together, these changes gave voters and lawmakers more ways to question decisions about war, even though neither measure ended the conflict.

Accept other cause-and-effect links supported by the passage. For the editorial, look for two connected domestic effects, an explanation of why the connection matters, and no claim that either effect ended the war.