

On the Home Front

Comparing Life in America During Two War Eras

Tools		
<i>Kit software:</i> ABC-CLIO's American History Online; The Writing Trek; TimeLiner; World Book Encyclopedia	<i>Other:</i> Computers; the Internet; AppleWorks; EdView	<i>Optional:</i> Tape recorders; a digital camcorder; iMovie

Project Duration

Five to seven class sessions spanning about three weeks

Introduction

In 1945, when World War II ended, American forces returned to a proud, supportive country. Thirty years later, when the conflict in Vietnam came to a close, the Americans who took part came back to a divided nation, including angry citizens who disagreed with government policies and questioned the decisions of their leaders. How can we help students compare the pressures on the country at these two very different periods in history? How can we help them make sense of these two important periods in our history?

Project Overview

In this project, half the class studies life in the United States during the Second World War, while the other half examines life in America during the Vietnam conflict. To find out about those times, students do research on their own, learn interviewing techniques, and then interview friends and family who spent those war years at home. Once teams have completed their research, students share discoveries in panel presentations, participate in a moderated class discussion, and write essays comparing and contrasting these two important eras in American history.

Phase 1: Investigating the past

Discuss with the whole class what they know about World War II and the Vietnam War. How were these two wars different? What was life like in the United States during each period?

After the discussion, divide the class into two groups: one will study the effects of World War II on American life (circa 1940-1945); the other will study the effects of the Vietnam War on American life (circa 1965-1975).

Students in each group pair up to research their respective periods. They review ready-made TimeLiner timelines, find information in World Book Encyclopedia and American History Online, and search the Internet with EdView, saving resource files and recording notes in AppleWorks. Their primary goal in this phase is to gain enough understanding of the times to conduct effective personal interviews.

Phase 2: Conducting interviews

Ask groups of two pairs each to explore the Interview project in the News Center of The Writing Trek, in which students learn and practice the skills they'll need to conduct effective personal interviews. After completing the interview project, partners work together to find an interview subject (a friend, parent, or grandparent, for instance) who is willing to share his or her memories and experiences of life in America during the war years being studied.

Partners conduct their interviews, using the questions suggested in the "Interview Questionnaire." (See the "Interview Questionnaire" template on the kit Web site.) One person acts as the interviewer; the other acts as the recorder, taking notes (by hand or by using a tape recorder or digital camcorder). After the interviews, students summarize the interviewee's responses by filling in the appropriate column of the "Interview Questionnaire." (The other half of the questionnaire will be filled in during the panel presentations in Phase 3.)

Phase 3: Presenting interview results

Set up the classroom for panel presentations. For the first set of presentations, the World War II group sits together at the front of the room, and each pair in turn gives a brief synopsis of their findings, telling about the person they interviewed and what they learned, and then answering questions from the audience. During the presentations, students in the audience take notes that they can use to fill in the World War II columns of their questionnaire forms.

When the World War II group has presented its findings, the groups trade places: pairs in the Vietnam War group give their presentations and students in the World War II group take notes for filling in the Vietnam War columns of their questionnaire forms.

Phase 4: Comparing the war years

After both panel presentations have been made, lead the class in a discussion comparing and contrasting life in America during the years of World War II and the Vietnam conflict. Ask students what they notice about the general feeling of each era and the public's views of the wars. Encourage them to speculate about the reasons for the differences. Students use their completed questionnaire forms to guide them in this discussion.

To conclude the project, ask students to write (in AppleWorks) short essays in which they draw upon their research, interview experiences, the panel presentations, and the final discussion to compare the social climate in the United States during the two war eras and give reasons for the differences they see.

Technical and Facilitation Tips

Facilitation Tips: Phase 1

- Before dividing students into groups (and possibly before you begin the project) you may want to ask students to think about which group they would prefer to be in, based on their own interests and resources. Students may want to talk with friends and family to find out who might be able to help them before they begin.
- Help students focus their research so they don't become overwhelmed by the amount of information available. For this project, getting a "feeling" for the war years in the United States will be more useful than learning about the wars themselves.
- If you have a limited number of computers, or limited access to World Book Encyclopedia, American History Online, or TimeLiner CDs, students can rotate use of these resources, taking turns in pairs or small groups as necessary.
- World Book Encyclopedia includes several articles that make good starting points for research. Students in the Vietnam War group may want to review the article "Vietnam War," paying particular attention to the sections "Reactions in the United States" and "Effects in the United States." Students in the World War II group may want to review the article "World War II," especially the section "On the Home Front."
- Suggest that students use the Time Frame feature in World Book Encyclopedia, which gives an overview of all the events that occurred during a particular year or decade, and allows quick access to articles and media relating to those events. For information on how to use this feature, see the Tech Tips for Phase 1.
- American History Online contains many excellent primary source documents relating to both World War II and the Vietnam War, including images, video clips, audio clips, quotes, and text documents. The site also includes comprehensive articles describing each of those wars and their impact in the United States.
- Reviewing ready-made TimeLiner timelines is a great way for students to get an overview of a particular time in history. For students studying the World War II era, these ready-made timelines are recommended:
 - American History: Causes of World War II, World War II
 - Dinosaurs & Other Big Stuff: Big Events in the U.S.
 - Women In History: % of Labor ForceFor students studying the Vietnam years, the following ready-made timelines are recommended:
 - African-American History: Civil Rights
 - American History: Cold War, Vietnam War
 - Dinosaurs & Other Big Stuff: Big Events in the U.S.
 - Social Studies: 1968 (in the Sample Time Lines folder located in the Sample Time Lines folder)
- It will take two class sessions to introduce this project and allow students to do their research and prepare for their interviews. You may want to have students do some research as homework.

Tech Tips: Phase 1

- To find information on a specific topic in American History Online, follow these steps:
 - 1 Go to the American History Online site at www.americanhistory.abc-clio.com and log in. If you have not yet activated your subscription, you need to first go to www.abc-clio.com/apple.
 - 2 Type a topic in the Search box in the Reference section.
 - 3 Click the Go button. A list of resources is displayed.
 - 4 Click the hyperlink for that resource.
 - 5 To print an article, go to the bottom of the article, click the hyperlink labeled “Printable version,” and then print the page from your browser.
- To copy an image from American History Online, position the pointer on the image, hold down the mouse button, and then choose “Download Image to Disk” (or the equivalent) from the pop-up menu. The image is saved as a JPEG file which can be added to other documents.
- The Time Frame feature in World Book Encyclopedia is very useful for the type of research done in this project. Time Frame searches all the resources on the CD for articles and media that relate to any specific time frame (a year, an era, a decade, century, or millennium) that you choose. The results are displayed as brief descriptions of topics and thumbnails of images, each of which is a link to an entire article or piece of media. To use the Time Frame feature in World Book Encyclopedia, follow these steps:
 - 1 Click Time Frame under Search on the main menu or click the hourglass icon on the right side of the control panel.
 - 2 Choose Millennium, Century, Decade, or Year. The larger the unit, the more results. (For this project, Year and Decade are recommended.)
 - 3 Choose the year and select A.D.
 - 4 Choose a category from the pop-up menu. Use All Categories at first.
 - 5 Click Go.
 - 6 Results are displayed as boxes containing short descriptions of topics. Clicking a box takes you to the article in which the information appears. To get back to the time frame results pages, click the back arrow.
 - 7 To do a new Time Frame search, click the New Time Frame button on the left end of the blue bar.

Facilitation Tips: Phase 2

- If computers or The Writing Trek CDs are limited, you can have some small groups begin exploring the Interview project in The Writing Trek while other students are completing their Phase 1 research.

- Be sure partners can find suitable people to interview for this phase. If students have trouble finding friends or family members who spent time in the U.S. during the war years, or cannot identify adults who can help with this project, school staff or the friends and families of classmates may provide additional resources. Alternatively, you may want to broaden the types of information students research by allowing some student pairs to examine cultural references such as the arts of the times, music, propaganda efforts, and so on (see the Options section for examples).
- You may want to advise students of the sensitive nature of wartime years, and urge them to be professional and respectful in their dealings with interview subjects. Students should also let interview subjects know how the interview information will be used.
- You may want to provide students with the following interviewing guidelines and suggestions:
 - With permission, you can choose to record interviews with audio or video equipment, or you can take notes on a separate piece of paper.
 - When you're done with your interview, use the space on your questionnaire to summarize responses so you can have the information available for discussion in class.
 - If interviews are being recorded on audio or video equipment, begin by:
 - 1 Introducing yourself and your partner (if appropriate).
 - 2 Introducing the person you are interviewing and thanking him or her for participating.
 - 3 Stating the current date and the topic of your subject, for later reference.
 - If you're recording the interview by hand, add the date and interviewee's name to your questionnaire.
- The "Interview Questionnaire" provided for this project includes some suggested interview questions plus space for class-created questions. You may want to use the questions included here, or you may want students to add their own questions. Either way, a common set of interview questions used by the whole class will allow groups to most easily compare results in upcoming phases.
- Students acting as recorders during the interview sessions may want to take separate notes, and then fill in the questionnaires afterward. Or, they can take notes on one copy of the questionnaire, and then use a second copy for summarizing the responses. Recording the interviews with a tape recorder or digital camcorder can be very helpful as well (see the Options section).
- Each student in a pair will need a copy of the completed "Interview Questionnaire" for Phase 3. If the pair fills in its form by hand on a printed version, the form can be copied. If the pair fills in its questionnaire at the computer using AppleWorks, then they can simply print two copies.
- Most of Phase 2 will happen outside of school; allow about two weeks for students to do their interviews and prepare their notes.

Tech Tips: Phase 2

- The Interview project in The Writing Trek is located in the News Center. Click the picture of Napoleon being interviewed (to the right of the plant in the corner of the room).

Facilitation Tips: Phase 3

- Help student pairs divide their tasks in these presentations so both have a chance to express themselves. For instance, the interviewer may want to tell about the background of the person who was interviewed and what he or she (the student) learned from the discussion; then, the recorder may want to talk about the interaction from his or her point of view, along with information about what he or she learned.
- Students in the audience can take notes on separate sheets of paper and then use these notes to fill in their questionnaire forms, or they can take notes on copies of the questionnaire forms and then use other copies to write their summaries.
- This phase will take three class sessions: one for students to plan and prepare, one for the World War II-era panel presentations, and one for the Vietnam War-era panel presentations.

Facilitation Tips: Phase 4

- The final discussion in Phase 4 will occupy most or all of a class session. Students' essays can be completed as homework.

Outcomes

After completing this project, students will be able to

- identify the major outcomes of both World War II and the Vietnam conflict
- compare and contrast life in America during World War II and the Vietnam conflict
- assess some of the stresses of wars on society
- trace the causes and effects of certain cultural developments in America
- understand the origins of some contemporary political, economic, and social points of view
- appreciate the effects of world events on society and culture in the United States

In addition, students will have

- gained a new appreciation for friends and family involved in shaping the past
- gained confidence and skill in their abilities to work in groups and contribute to a common goal
- practiced their ability to conduct research using various sources
- developed skills in written and oral communication and the organization of information
- learned and practiced personal interview skills
- improved their abilities to speak in front of groups
- learned skills or acquired knowledge relating to each of the state and national standards referred to in the Project Standards section

Project Standards

From the Secondary Language Arts & Social Studies Web site, you can identify select state curriculum standards and national educational technology standards that correlate to this student project. To locate these standards, go to the kit Web site and click the Curriculum button. Locate and open this student project and click the “Project Standards” button.

Assessment Suggestions

- Since this project depends heavily on student participation and investment, assessment may be based on acknowledging progress for each step along the way. For example, you could opt to give one-quarter credit for each of the four stages of the project: appropriate investigation and preparation, conducting interviews and completing questionnaires, participating on panels and in follow-up discussions, and writing the essay.
- In Phase 2, students can assess what they’ve learned in the Interview project in The Writing Trek by completing the Check What You’ve Learned quiz at the end of the lesson on “The Art of the Interview.”
- In Phase 3, students’ completed questionnaires can be assessed according to the clarity and economy of the summaries, and the degree to which summaries allow comparison of the two eras.
- In Phase 4, students’ essays can be assessed by applying a rubric focusing on clarity, an understanding of the differences between the two eras, use of examples from interviews and panel presentations, and the ability to provide plausible explanations of the differences between the two eras.

Preparation

- Review and print any Step-by-Step Cards that your students may find useful during this project. These include “Searching World Book Encyclopedia 2001” and “Searching the Internet With EdView.”
- Collect resources that students may be able to use during their research in Phase 1.

Resources

Internet

American Cultural History: The Twentieth Century

<http://www.nhmccd.edu/contracts/lrc/kc/decades.html>

American Graffiti

<http://www.filmsite.org/amerg.html>

ABC-CLIO’s American History Online

<http://www.americanhistory.abc-clio.com>

(Activate your subscription at www.abc-clio.com/apple/)

American Memory: Library of Congress Collection Finder

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/papr/mpixhome.html>

Britannica

<http://www.Britannica.com>

Desktop Movies in Education

<http://www.apple.com/education/dv/>

Education Planet: U.S. History

http://www.educationplanet.com/search/History/United_States_History

EdView

<http://edview.apple.com>

History of the GI Bill

http://www.gibill.va.gov/education/GI_Bill.htm

Our Veteran's Memorial: The Interviews/Helen Hauter

<http://library.thinkquest.org/17573/veterans/hhauter.htm>

Our Veteran's Memorial: The Interviews/John Mannoia

http://library.thinkquest.org/17573/veterans/jm_iview.htm

Radio's Moments of the Century

<http://www.lofcom.com/nostalgia/columns/century.php3>

Rosie The Riveter Memorial

<http://www.rosietheriveter.org/>

The 1900s: The Sixties

<http://members.tripod.com/archer2000/1960.html>

Vietnam: Stories Since the War

<http://www.educationplanet.com/search/redirect?id=4707&mfcoun=57&mfw=vietnam&startval=0>

The Vietnam War Internet Project

<http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/shwv/topictop.html>

Vietnam Yesterday and Today

<http://servercc.oakton.edu/~wittman/>

What Did You Do in the War, Grandma?

http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/WWII_Women/tocCS.html

Step-by-Step Cards

- Creating a Web Page With iTools HomePage Templates
- Searching the Internet With EdView
- Searching World Book Encyclopedia 2001
- Setting Up an iTools Account
- Using Your iMovies With iTools HomePage Templates

Templates

- Interview Questionnaire

Prerequisite Skills

To complete this project successfully, students should be able to do the following:

- use a mouse to navigate through a multimedia application by clicking icons and links
- use AppleWorks to compose, edit, format, and print documents
- locate relevant information and resources in American History Online and World Book Encyclopedia (see the Step-by-Step Card “Searching World Book Encyclopedia 2001”)
- use EdView or other search engines to find information on a particular topic on the Internet (see the Step-by-Step Card “Searching the Internet With EdView”)

Background Information

Here is some information you may find useful as you plan how to implement this project or introduce it to your students:

- In 1945, at the end of World War II, American armed forces returned to a country that had largely supported their wartime efforts: melting down frying pans to make munitions, welcoming women into the workforce, and establishing the first public daycare centers to take care of children outside the home. National pride ran high as Americans defended their country from outside forces and fought for the rights and lives of others. The economy was strong, and legislation provided low-cost housing, medical care, and education to returning GIs. The war years had changed the country forever, but the social climate was confident and positive.
- Between 1965 and 1975, no outside force physically threatened the nation. The decision to send troops to Vietnam was more political and economic in nature. Rather than encouraging support, the situation engendered the hostility of many Americans who opposed involvement. Citizens across the country marched against the war; “flower children” demonstrated pacifist points of view; and civil rights leaders railed against discriminatory standards. In 1975, after an unsuccessful campaign, troops came back to a bitter, divided nation. As in 1945, the country had been changed forever, but this time, in a very different way.

While you may want to orient your students to the social climate of America during the two eras being studied here, this project will be more effective if you can guide them to discover these differences in the course of their own research and discussions.

Options and Extension Activities

Options

- If you want to broaden the range of research, or if interview subjects prove difficult to find, allow some partners to study and present other aspects of the times such as art, advertising, propaganda, fashion, movies, music, and so on to discover other ways people expressed their feelings of the eras.

- As part of Phase 1, students in each group can use research notes and ready-made timelines to construct composite TimeLiner timelines detailing domestic events during each of the war eras. These timelines can be printed as banner timelines and posted in the classroom for the duration of the project.
- If a digital camcorder is available, students may want to record their interviews and edit them with iMovie to create desktop movies that can be used in a variety of ways:
 - Movies can be presented to the class during Phase 4 to spur additional discussion, or as part of the panel presentations in Phase 3.
 - Movies of interviews can be published on the Internet, using an Apple iTools account and the School Events template for the Web site. (For complete instructions, see the Step-by-Step Cards “Setting Up an iTools Account,” “Creating a Web Page With iTools HomePage Templates,” and “Using Your iMovies With iTools HomePage Templates.”)
 - Movies can be shown to other classes in your school or to members of the community.

Note that if interviews are to be recorded and used in any of these ways, students should obtain explicit permission from the interviewees. For help using iMovie, visit the “Desktop Movies in Education” Web site.
- If students tape-record their interviews, the tapes can be transcribed, and the transcriptions made available for students to read; transcriptions can also be published on the Internet.
- If portable computers are available, they can be used by interview recorders for taking notes during the interviews.
- The Speech project of The Writing Trek can help prepare students for speaking in front of the class. You can find it by clicking the Theater on the far-right side of The Writing Trek Village.

Extension Activities

- You may want to examine other social changes in America during these times. The roles of women, for instance, changed dramatically between the 1940s and the 1970s. Similarly, civil rights efforts during these years changed the way Americans perceived minorities.
- If the interview format worked well in your class, you may want to try other projects that rely on information discovered during personal discussions. For instance, students may interview women of different generations to discover how women’s roles have changed over the years.

The Home-School Connection

- This project was designed to connect students with friends and family who lived through two war eras. Parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents can tell the stories of these times more convincingly, and more eloquently, than any books or official narratives can.
- Invite family members to attend, or participate in, the panel presentations in Phase 3.

This Project as a Model

In this project, TimeLiner, American History Online, World Book Encyclopedia, and the Interview project in The Writing Trek are all used to support interviews in which community and family members become historical informants. These software tools can function in the same way in projects focusing on any aspect of U.S. history since about the 1930s.

From another perspective, the comparative format of this project, as well as TimeLiner, American History Online, and World Book Encyclopedia, can be used to examine other eras or events. For instance, using historical documents and information, and by studying the artifacts, music, and art of the times, students may study the Civil War from the points of view of both the North and the South.