

The USA, 1954-75: Conflict at home and abroad.

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Home revision question and answer booklet

The purpose of this booklet is to support your child with their revision for their GCSE examination.

This booklet is a summary of all the content that your child needs to know and will assist them with regards to preparation for the subject knowledge that they need to apply in the examination. Although the booklet is by no means a guarantee, it will make a significant contribution to their success.

This booklet should be used as a question and answer test booklet so that you can help coach your child into answering content correctly with accuracy. Ideally questions should be worked through at random and use a priority red, amber, green system to prioritise areas to work on.

This booklet is the **minimum**/basic amount of work that your child needs to complete based on the knowledge that they need to have.

I hope that you enjoy using this booklet to help check your child's understanding of the topics that they have completed. Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact a link within the faculty using the following email address: humanities-faculty@whickhamschool.org

Many thanks and good luck from the Humanities faculty.

Topic 1

Civil Rights, 1954-60

1.1 The early 1950s

Segregation and discrimination

- Black Americans faced segregation and discrimination everyday. This was different in the North and the South. In the north segregation was produced by discrimination – black people had the worst jobs so could only afford the worst housing.
- Segregation in the south was different. Racist state laws (Jim Crow laws) enforced segregation. Black Americans could not eat in ‘white’ restaurants for example or sit in the ‘white’ section of a bus.

Attitudes in the South

- Many white people in the south were raised to see black people as racially inferior. Few black people in the south could find work in factories and white people called black people by their first names or referred to them as ‘boy’ or ‘girl’, even when talking to adults.
- The police and law courts were full of racist white officials, especially in the Deep South where many police and judges were members of the KKK.
- Black people were regularly beaten up to get them to confess to crimes they did not commit.
- One of the frightening things for black people was knowing that the officials who were meant to be protecting them were usually members of groups threatening them.

The effect of WW2

- Over a million black Americans fought in WW2 and millions more worked providing supplies for the war. They had hoped for more equality after the war, and some white people were open to this.
- This was also an embarrassment for America – they had gone to fight a racist state in Nazi Germany, yet treat some of its own citizens in a similar way.

Voting Rights

- By 1956 only 20% of black Americans in the South were registered to vote as in many southern states white people stopped black people from voting. For example white employers threatened to sack black workers who voted. Also most states had a literacy test to vote and a common way of preventing black people from registering to vote was to give them a harder test to complete,

Civil Rights Organisations

- By 1950 many organisations campaigning for civil rights had been created, such as the NAACP. Other small, often church based, organisations also fought for the rights of black Americans. These groups were important in developing the tactics of non-violent direct action.
- The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) focused on fighting for civil rights in the courts. They set up a legal defence fund to help wrongly convicted black people in 1940. But in 1950 they decided to fight segregation in the law courts. However, they faced the problem of judgement ‘separate but equal’ from the Plessy vs Ferguson case.

- Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) was smaller than the NAACP and worked mainly in the North. They targeted segregation, but not in the courts, they used non-violent direct action such as boycotts, pickets and sit ins.
- Black American churches were at the centre of most black Southern communities and its clergy were often community leaders and so involved in the civil rights movement. This was because they were educated and effective public speakers, but also because they were employed by the church and so would not lose their jobs.
- Other local organisations included the Regional Council of Negro Leadership (RCNL) who campaigned for black rights within segregation and worked for voter registration.

The murder of Emmett Till

- Emmett Till was a 14 year old boy from Chicago who was visiting relatives in Mississippi in 1955. One of his cousins dared him to go into a store and talk to a white woman. There are conflicting stories about what happened next, but his cousins did admit the Emmett wolf whistled at her. The next day Emmett was kidnapped by the woman's husband and his half-brother, beat him, shot him and threw the body in the river. Emmett's mother insisted on bringing his body back to Chicago and holding an open viewing of the body. The trial of the killers was reported across the whole country, but the jury cleared the defendants in an hour. They later sold their story to a magazine, admitting the murder, for \$3,500.

1.2 Brown v. Topeka, 1954

- Linda Brown was one of many black children in Topeka, Kansas who had to pass 'white' schools to travel to their 'black' school.
- In 1951 the Browns and other parents went to court to fight for their children to go to the nearest school, but lost – because of the 'separate but equal ruling'
- In 1952 the NAACP took up the case and took them to the Supreme Court. Their lawyers argued that separate was not equal because it made black children feel unequal.
- 17th May 1954 the court ruled that life had changed since the Plessy vs Ferguson (separate but equal) ruling and therefore schools had to desegregate.
- The Supreme Court set no timescale for this, but simply said 'with all deliberate speed'

Immediate significance of Brown vs Board

- Many southern states near the border with the northern states began to desegregate straight away. It was a different story in the Deep South.
- Many Deep South school boards did nothing to integrate, and governors in some states (such as Mississippi) pledged to keep segregation.
- Citizens in Indianola, Mississippi set up a White Citizens Council aimed at preserving segregation and KKK membership grew throughout the south.
- In the longer term Brown vs Topeka led to constant legal pressure for desegregation and increased awareness of civil rights.

1.3 Little Rock High School, 1957

- Little Rock Arkansas made a plan for gradual school desegregation. 75 black students applied to the High School, but because of threats and opposition only 9 were still willing to go at the start of the 1957 school year.

- The governor of Arkansas was Orval Faubus and he was a key opponent of integration. He sent 250 state troops to the school to stop the 9 children going in.
- The 9 black children had arranged to go together but Elizabeth Eckford missed this message and she arrived on the bus by herself. She was confronted by a white mob who abused her, she approached the state troopers for help, but they turned her back to the mob that were shouting 'lynch her'.

Publicity

- Over 250 reporters witnessed this and photographs of Elizabeth Eckford were seen in newspapers worldwide. There was enormous outrage and the federal government felt it had to act.

Presidential Order

- President Eisenhower ordered Faubus to remove the state troops, Faubus did this but there was rioting outside the school.
- In response, Eisenhower sent the army to Little Rock to protect the black students and they stayed until the end of term.

Outcome

- The school year ended in May 1958 and Faubus stopped integration by closing all schools in Little Rock for the next year. White parents forced him to open the schools (integrated) for the next year.

1.4 The Montgomery Bus Boycott, 1955

- 1st December 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama, Rosa Parks got on a bus home. The buses were segregated and she sat in the first row of the 'colored' seating.
- When the bus filled with white people she was told by the driver to move to allow white people to sit. She refused, and the driver called the police and she was arrested.
- As a result a boycott of the cities buses was organised. The immediate cause of this was Parks arrest; however the Women's Political Council was set up in Montgomery to fight discrimination and had focused on buses.
- Parks was not the first woman to be arrested for refusing to move on the buses, but her arrest seemed to be the 'final straw'. Also Parks was a respectable middle aged woman, ideal as a figurehead for a campaign. She was also a leading figure in the Montgomery NAACP and had been trained in non-violent direct protest.
- Initially the boycott was to be for one day and was a huge success – so civil rights leaders realised they could escalate the protest.

The Montgomery Improvement Association

- The Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) was created at the Holt Street Baptist Church – its aims were to improve the lives of black people in Montgomery and continue the boycott.

- Martin Luther King was chosen as the leader of the MIA as he was new in Montgomery and so had no enemies among local white officials. As a clergyman the black community respected him, and was well educated.

Events of the boycott

- The MIA met with church groups and set up a car pool system of lifts. The boycott had made black people's lives less comfortable, and they faced harassment. Some lost their jobs. But they persisted and as the boycott progressed the reaction of some whites became extreme – King's home and several other homes and churches were bombed.
- One of the ways in which Montgomery officials harassed MIA officials and boycotters was to arrest them on minor charges.
- City officials also looked for ways to bring the leaders to trial on more serious charges. 89 MIA members were arrested for disrupting lawful business with the boycott, King was part of the group and found guilty. He had to pay a \$500 fine.

Browder vs Gayle Court Case

- After the publicity increased the NAACP decided to go to court to desegregate the Montgomery buses. They filed Browder vs Gayle against bus desegregation. They did not include Rosa Parks because issues about her arrest could complicate the case, so it was in the name of Aurelia Brown – another woman who was arrested on the buses in 1955.
- The Supreme Court ruled that buses should be desegregated giving Brown as their reason. The bus companies appealed, but this failed. On the 20th December the boycott was called off, the next day the buses were desegregated.
- Martin Luther King had played an important part in the boycott, raising funds, and getting publicity. However others were also important in helping him. Jo Ann Robinson, E. D. Nixon and Ralph David Abernathy all helped run the MIA and were arrested with King in January 1956

1.5 Importance of the boycott

- It showed that black people could organise mass resistance and that they could attract mass support
- It brought Martin Luther King into the spotlight
- It showed the importance of publicity in the fight for civil rights
- It was where the rules for non-violent direct action were laid out
- It showed how black action set off a negative white response.
- Buses in Montgomery were desegregated but the white backlash continued. Homes of MIA leaders were firebombed, shots were fired at black people riding the buses and no further desegregation occurred. For example the bus stops remained segregated.
- The Montgomery boycott (and Brown vs Board) led to increasing sympathy for civil rights and helped force action resulting in the 1957 Civil Rights Act. This allowed federal courts to prosecute state violations of voting rights

1.6 Opposition to civil rights: The KKK and violence

- The civil rights movement faced opposition in the south on different levels
- They faced violence from organisations such as the Ku Klux Klan
- Opposition also came from white Southern church organisations who said that integration was a sin. Many southern church goers were also KKK members.
- There was frequent white violence against black people in the South. For example in 1955 Reverend George Lee and Lamar Smith were murdered for registering to vote. There was no arrest for either murder and Lee's shooting was written off as a car accident.

1.7 Political opposition to desegregation

- Opposition also came from both federal and state government.
- The most significant opponents were nicknamed 'Dixiecrats' after southern Democrats who had formed their own breakaway party in 1948.
- By 1954 they had rejoined the Democrats but kept their strong views on segregation.
- Southern governors, local mayors and other state officials also mainly favoured segregation

Topic 2: Protest and progress, 1960-75

2.1 Greensboro and the sit-in movement

The Greensboro sit in

- 1st February 1960, four black students sat at the segregated lunch counter in a Woolworth's shop and were refused service. The students sat until closing time.
- Over the next days, more and more students joined the sit-in, until 300 students were working in shifts, on 4th February
- The word spread and sit-ins occurred at other lunch counters in Greensboro then nationally
- Students were trained in non-violent protest by both CORE and SCLC
- Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) set up

Significance of Greensboro

- Media coverage
- White and black supporters
- Spread quickly
- Young people
- Mass support
- Visible to public

2.2 Peaceful protests and their impact, 1963-65

Events in Birmingham, 1963

- Martin Luther King and SCLC led
- Peaceful marches, sit ins, boycotts etc.
- Gained supportive news coverage due to extreme police response

The March on Washington, 1963

- After Birmingham, protest by people from all over the USA
- For 'jobs and freedom'
- 250,000 participants
- MLK's 'I have a dream' speech

Freedom summer, 1964

- Set up by CORE and SNCC
- 1,000 volunteers went to Mississippi to boost voter registration
- Most white college students

- 17,000 black Americans registered to vote & only 1,600 successful
- KKK burn crosses and people's homes

Mississippi murders, 1964

- 3 activists killed by KKK lynch mob
- During the search for bodies a further 8 victims found
- Shows level of hatred and violence

2.3 Civil Rights laws 1964-1965

President Kennedy 1961-63

- Supportive of black people
- Backed new civil rights laws

President Johnson 1963-69

- Continued to be supportive
- Intervened to allow peaceful protests

1964 Civil Rights Act

- School desegregation
- No discrimination in voter registration tests
- Banned employment discrimination in large companies

1965 Voting Rights Act

- Johnson influenced by Selma
- Federal controlled voting registration process

2.4 Malcolm X

Malcolm X background

- Troubled upbringing
- Black people should defend themselves 'by any means necessary'
- Joined the Nation of Islam in prison (NOI)

Change of attitude

- Leaves NOI and they become an enemy
- Decided to work with other civil rights groups and set up OAAU (Organisation of Afro-American Unity)
- Met with SNCC and CORE members to explore working together

Assassination

- Shot by members of the Nation of Islam
- 15,000 people attended his funeral

2.5 Black power, 1963-70

Why?

- They rejected non-violence
- Influenced by Malcolm X

- Demanded change
- Involved in wider campaigns e.g. Vietnam War movement

Stokely Carmichael

- Set up LCFO (Lowndes County Freedom Organisation) as a political party concentrated on black Americans' problems
- Became chairman of SNCC
- Encouraged black power
- 'March against fear' June 1966

The Black Panthers

- Set up in 1966
- Had a radical '10 point plan' to change society
- Carried guns for self defence
- Provided services/ food/ clothing for poor black children

2.6 The civil rights movement, 1965-1975

Riots of 1964-67

- 329 major riots in 257 Northern US cities
- Riots every year in summer months in different cities
- Reaction to ghetto conditions, past riots/violence

The Kerner Report, 1968

- Set up by Johnson, 1967
- Found that the riots were response to poor conditions and failure to respond
- Media had exaggerated riots

King moves north

- Focus campaigning to North
- Faced setbacks e.g. the local people not supporting the cause and negative media coverage

Assassination of Martin Luther King

- Violent responses across the USA
- After this, civil rights groups lost funding and membership
- Many black Americans became more violent in protests

2.7 Civil rights achievements up to 1975

Progress 1969-74

- Job equality promoted
- More black officials in the White House
- Training for black people increased
- Nixon was seen to be patronising to black people over housing

Progress by 1975

- Progress in desegregation
- By the 1970s, the gap between rich and poor in the USA still depended on race
- Still worse employment chances for black people

Federal Government

- Had hoped that new legislation against segregation would lead to a change in attitude
- By 1970, segregation not consistent and didn't always improve the situation
- Continued to introduce new laws e.g. 1970 voting rights act and 1975 revision to voting rights act

Topic 3: War in Vietnam 1954-75.

3.1 US involvement in Vietnam, 1954-61

Dien Bien Phu and French withdrawal

- Vietnam was a French colony. France lost control of Vietnam when Japan occupied it during World War Two.
- When World War Two ended, France wanted to regain control of Vietnam.
- When Japan surrendered in August 1945, Ho Chi Minh declared that Vietnam was the Democratic Republic of Vietnam – an independent country.
- Ho Chi Minh wanted the USA to help him secure Vietnam's independence from the French, but America was reluctant because they feared Ho would make it communist.
- Support for Ho was strong in the North but weak in the South.
- In the south, the French had sent troops in and made Bao Dai the ruler, he was a strong anti-communist.
- In 1949, China became a communist country and they sent Ho Chi Minh supplies.
- This worried America as they feared that communism would spread, so they began to send supplies and military advisers to the French.
- By 1954, the USA was paying about 80% of the cost of France's war.
- The French fought Ho Chi Minh and the Vietminh at the battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954. The Vietminh won, this defeat for the French led to their withdrawal from Vietnam.

The Geneva Accords, 1954.

On July 21st 1954, nine countries signed the Geneva Accords. This was a partial agreement about the future of Vietnam.

- Vietnam would be temporarily divided along the 17th parallel, separated by a demilitarised zone (DMZ).
- Ho Chi Minh would run the northern part (the Democratic Republic of Vietnam) from Hanoi.
- Bao Dai would run the southern part (the State of Vietnam) from Saigon. Later, he made Ngo Diem the Prime Minister in June 1954.
- Vietnamese troops and people could move north and south for 300 days.
- No foreign troops could enter the country.
- In July 1956, elections would be held across both parts of Vietnam to decide on the government of a united Vietnam.

Reasons for US involvement in Vietnam

The Domino Theory.

- The key reason America became involved was due to the fear of the spread of communism.
- President Eisenhower believed that if Vietnam fell to communism, other Asian countries would also fall.

- Eisenhower set up the SouthEast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) in 1954. Its members agreed to act together to stop the spread of communism in SouthEast Asia.

Weaknesses of Diem's government.

- Diem was a very unpopular leader in South Vietnam and his government was corrupt.
- Diem and his government had little respect for the rural population and the Buddhists (South Vietnam was mainly Buddhists while Diem was a Catholic).
- Different revolutionary groups developed in the South to fight Diem. They were collectively known as the Vietcong (VC).
- North Vietnam backed the VC in a hope they would lead to a fall in Diem's government.

3.2 Kennedy and Vietnam, 1961-63

Background on Kennedy and Vietnam

- Kennedy agreed with the Domino Theory.
- He wanted to avoid direct military action in Vietnam.
- He sent more advisers to the South (16,000 more by late 1963).
- Kennedy authorised the use of chemical sprays, such as Agent Orange to kill crops and jungle areas where the VC were hiding.
- He changed the tactics to searching for VC fighters, not just drawing them into battle.

The Strategic Hamlet Program, 1962

- Diem and the USA built new villages to house locals away from the VC to try and stop the VC recruiting villagers to support them.
- The aim was to provide security for the villagers and create support for the government.
- The hamlets were also supposed to have schools and medical centres.
- The ARVN (South Vietnam's army) forcibly removed and relocated villagers.
- Most villagers did not want to leave their ancestral homes.
- In many hamlets there was not enough food or basic provisions. Many villagers starved to death.
- The program made Diem and the USA more unpopular in the South.

Diem's overthrow

- Kennedy believed the VC were being defeated but in January 1963, the ARVN (South Vietnam's army) lost the Battle of Ap Bac. The media showed the battle as a defeat and Kennedy worried about the negative publicity of Diem's leadership.
- On 6th May 1963, Diem's troops fired on a Buddhist procession, killing nine, which added to his unpopularity.
- On 11th June, a Buddhist monk burned himself to death in protest to Diem's government, the protest generated worldwide publicity.
- Kennedy put pressure on Diem to make peace with the Buddhists but Diem continued to persecute them.

- Kennedy did not want to publicly depose Diem but he made it obvious that he did not support Diem.
- In November 1963, ARVN generals overthrew and assassinated Diem, the USA did not try to stop it.

3.3 Escalation of the conflict under Johnson

Johnson's aims in Vietnam and problems he faced

- Stop the spread of communism
- Establish a democratic government in South Vietnam supported by the people.
- Ensure that the conflict did not lead to a nuclear war.
- Johnson knew the communists were getting stronger and harder to defeat.
- The government in the South were weak and unpopular.
- The USSR supported North Vietnam and nuclear weapons.

Increasing threat of the Vietcong (VC)

The VC had become a threat for different reasons.

They had local support as:

- The VC were able to win the support of locals through propaganda.
- They also made social reforms in areas they controlled, e.g. replacing corrupt officials.
- They respected villagers.

Villagers disliked the Southern government:

- Villagers resented being moved to strategic hamlets.
- The Government was seen as a puppet of the USA.
- The Government was split by fighting itself.

The VC had foreign support:

- Communist China and the USSR provided ammunition, weapons, advisers and troops.

The Ho Chi Minh Trail

- The North Vietnamese with China's help supported the VC in South by sending troops and weapons down the trail.
- The trail was a network of paths and small trails which connected the North and South Vietnam. Some of the trail crossed into Laos and Cambodia.

The Gulf of Tonkin incident, 1964.

- In August 1964, two US naval ships reported attacks by North Vietnamese torpedo boats off the coast of North Vietnam.
- Causes of the incident; the USA had sent more advisers to South Vietnam, regular US patrol ships such as the Maddox and Turner Joy were in the gulf.

- Consequences; Johnson ordered air strikes against the North.

The Gulf of Tonkin resolution, 1964.

- Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin resolution after the attack. It gave the president (Johnson) to use armed force to defend South Vietnam and US troops already there.

3.4 Conflict in Vietnam 1964-68

Vietcong (VC) tactics.

- The Vietcong were soldiers, trained to fight in the tactics of **guerrilla warfare**.
- They avoided direct combat with the American or South Vietnamese armies & instead focused on small scale tactics.
- The Vietcong also set booby traps or planted bombs on known routes of enemy patrols. Once they had completed an attack the Vietcong would disappear into the countryside & the safety of their villages.
- These 'hit & run' tactics made it difficult for the Americans to know their enemy, much less defeat them.
- Staying safe from US attack was an important aim of the Vietcong.
- They could not always assume that they would be safe in the villages or from American bombing, so they built networks of **tunnels** below ground in the countryside where they could live & hide.
- These tunnels catered for all the needs of an army – they included weapon stores, sleeping areas, kitchens & hospitals.
- They were strongly protected. As well as being difficult to find they were booby trapped & trip wired at the entrances & throughout the tunnel.

US tactics.

Operation Rolling Thunder:

- This began in February 1965 and was bombing campaign over North Vietnam.
- The Operation began small at first, only bombing near the border with the South.
- It targeted; The Ho Chi Minh trail and industry in the North.
- The bombing continued until the end of 1968. President Johnson did increase the targets to try and encourage the North to negotiate.

Search and Destroy:

- Search and Destroy was carried out by small units of US soldiers. They would search the jungle for VC camps and supplies. If found, they would call for helicopters to bomb the area.
- The VC often left traps on the ground to kill or injure US soldiers.
- After US troops left areas, the VC returned which showed the tactics weren't working.

Chemical weapons:

- America also used chemical weapons in Vietnam.
- **Napalm** was commonly used. This was a slow-burning petrol mixture that stuck to things and burned them.
- **Agent Orange** was also used. This would deforest the jungle.

- **Operation Ranch Hand:** Between 1964 – 1970, over 24% over South Vietnam was sprayed with some kind of herbicide. Over 3,000 villages were burned, in many cases without warning the villagers.

The Tet Offensive, 1968

- The Tet Offensive was a series of attacks on 26 cities and US bases in South Vietnam.
- It occurred on the 30th January, 1968. This was the Tet Lunar New Year, one of the most important holidays in the country.
- During the war there had usually been a ceasefire, so many of the ARVN were off duty.
- The VC lost 58,000 men out of the 84,000 involved in the offensive.
- Although the US and ARVN regained control of the cities, the Tet Offensive was very negative for America. The public in America had been told they were winning the war, the images and live reporting of the offensive made many think otherwise.

3.5 Changes under Nixon 1969-73

Richard Nixon was elected President in 1969 and promised he would make 'peace with honour' in Vietnam.

The Nixon Doctrine

- In July 1969, Nixon gave a speech outlining what came to be known as the Nixon Doctrine.
- It laid down what the role of the USA should be in Southeast Asian politics in the future.
- He said: the USA would honour any treaty commitments it had made, the USA would have any ally against a nuclear threat. The USA would provide aid and training against non-nuclear threats, but no troops; the country under threat had to provide its own ground troops.

Vietnamisation

- Nixon put his ideas in the Nixon Doctrine into practice with Vietnamisation = where the USA had to withdraw troops without looking like they had been defeated.

Key features:

- US troops to withdraw.
- The ARVN was to provide its own officers.
- The US was still to provide training and equipment.
- The US withdrawal would be done with honour and they would continue to help South Vietnam.
- South Vietnam would remain a separate country and not become communist.

US troops withdraw from Vietnam

- Most of the American public wanted troops to come home.
- Troops began to be withdrawn from 1968 onwards.
- Once soldiers knew they were leaving, they were a lot less willing to fight in battles.
- Some killed their officers to stop them taking them into battle.
- Drug use by soldiers increased greatly.

Attacks on Cambodia

- In 1970, Nixon sent US troops into Cambodia to stop the North Vietnamese from helping Cambodian communists taking control of the country.
- Nixon also bombed the Ho Chi Minh trail which went into Cambodia to try and stop supplies getting to the VC in South Vietnam.
- Congress did not support Nixon with his attacks so cancelled the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution and reduced the money for the war.

Laos, 1971

- There was a power struggle in Laos between different groups
- North Vietnam and the USSR support the Communists. USA advised their opponents.
- Due to the Ho Chi Minh trail being used, the USA were pressured by the South Vietnamese government to provide support for an ARVN invasion of about 21,000 troops.
- The North heard about the plan but they knew they couldn't lose bases in Laos.
- A battle was fought (the first since the Tet Offensive). The Communists had a force of 36,000. The fighting was bloody the ARVN fled leaving weapons and equipment behind.
- The invasion raises doubts about Vietnamisation because it exposed the ARVN as weak.
- The Ho Chi Minh trail remained intact, as did the Communist power bases.

Easter Offensive, 1972

- Another Northern attack encouraged by Laos. They marched across the border into South Vietnam.
- 30th March 1972 around 120,000 North Vietnamese army crossed the border and attacked in 3 different places. They were supported by the VC.
- The attack was a surprise and was very successful at first.
- The ARVN with US air support eventually pushed them back.

Bombing of North Vietnam, 1972

- In response to the Easter Offensive the USA launched Operation Linebacker on 6 April 1972 which involved heavy bombing of North Vietnam – it had no restrictions on targets.
- Both Hanoi and Haiphong were bombed.
- Nixon also ordered mines to be dropped in Haiphong harbour and blockades to keep ships from China and the USSR from reaching North Vietnam.
- This operation almost wiped out the North Vietnamese war industry and disrupted supplies from the USSR and China.
- It led to China and the USSR urging North Vietnam to reach a peace settlement.

Topic 4: Reactions to Vietnam and US failure 1974-75

4.1 Reasons for the growth of opposition

What factors led to the growth in opposition?

- The Student Movement
- TV and Media coverage of the war
- Impact of the media images and footage on opinion at home
- Vietnam and the draft system
- The impact of increased conscription

Explain how the student movement caused growth in opposition.

- Initial approval for the war declined as US involvement escalated.
- Many young people rejected the attitudes of previous generations.
- A new counter culture' was emerging and students were a key part of it.
- Many students were opposed to the draft
- Student numbers increased to 8.5 mill in 1970 in 1970 from about 6 mill in 5 years earlier.

Explain the impact of the media

- TV and media coverage of the war affected the way people felt about the war.
- Vietnam was the first conflict where reporters were able to travel with the troops into the war zone and report back on what they saw.
- The media also reported on the large scale anti war protests that were spreading across the USA.
- Many Americans started to believe that TV reporters were being more honest than the politicians about what was really going on in Vietnam.
- This inspired the American public to get involved in understanding and debating the issues.
- Many Americans felt they did not trust the government and so started to oppose the war.
- *Remember you need to be able to say why the media coverage caused Americans to turn their opinion against the war in Vietnam.*

Explain the impact of the draft system.

- The draft forced men aged 18-25 years to serve in the military forces. Men who were chosen were sent a draft card telling them where to report for duty.
- In 1966 first men drafted were 'delinquents'. Then volunteers were used. Then men aged 18-25 were called up.

- In 1969, a lottery system replaced the old process for the draft. Men born between 1944 and 1950 were issued a number and called up at random.
- Of the 2.6 million US soldiers who served in Vietnam 650000 were draftees.
- Draft system was widely criticised as unfair.
- Some men burned their draft card and refused to join up. This was a criminal offence so 'draft dodgers' had to go into hiding.
- Men from wealthier families avoided the draft by going to college or studying abroad.
- This meant that the draft hit the poorest hardest

4.2 Continued opposition to the war

The My Lai Massacre and Kent State University shooting led to massive public outcry about Vietnam.

My Lai Massacre

- 16 March 1968, US troops were sent to the village of My Lai in South Vietnam
- They were told it had come under Vietcong fire.
- They found only women and children and old men in the village.
- They killed everyone they found (at least 347 maybe more (500+?))
- Sergeant Ron Haeberle was a war photographer went with the soldiers and took photos of what happened.
- The US public was horrified
- Photos were released to CBS news in December.
- The public saw it as a government cover up.

Kent State University

- 4 May- after 3 days of protests official stopped a planned demonstration but 2000 people protested anyway. Tear gas did not break up the crowd, they hurled empty canisters at the National Guardsmen, so the National Guardsmen opened fire killing four and injuring nine.
- Photos of the shooting of the students were published across the USA and the world.
- The public were shocked and outraged.
- The white middle class students were unarmed and two of them were simply bystanders.

4.3 Support for the Vietnam War

Many different groups supported the war despite opposition and negative media. Why?

- Fear of communism
- Patriotism
- The Silent Majority

Fear of communism

- The Cold War made Americans paranoid about the 'communist threat'.
- By 1954, the fear of communism spreading to other countries was still very strong. This was known as the domino theory.

Patriotism

- Many Americans wanted to keep American's standing in the world as high as possible. They did not want a defeat in Vietnam to cause them to look weak.
- Some Americans were very patriotic and saw it as their utmost duty to accept the authority of the government and to do their part in supporting their country.
- They believed fighting communism in Vietnam was their patriotic duty.

The Silent Majority

- 3 Nov 1969 – Nixon argued that ‘the great silent majority’ of Americans supported the Vietnam policy. He was right. A survey showed 77% of Americans backed his plans for the war. This consequence of this was that:
 - That Congress passed resolutions approving Nixon’s approach in Vietnam. Nixon could show North Vietnam that he had strong support, helping him to persuade them to reach a settlement.
 - Nixon could hold out for an exit that, in theory, allowed the USA to withdraw with ‘honour’.

4.4 The peace process and the end of the war

The process of reaching an end to the war involved an extended period of talks between the USA, North Vietnam, and South Vietnam. Talks began in Paris in 1968.

Reasons for peace negotiations up to 1973.

- USA’s reasons
 - Victory in Vietnam no longer seemed possible, especially after the Tet Offensive
 - Growing opposition to the war
 - Congress was reluctant to finance the continuation of the war
 - Nixon was keen to appear the peacemaker in Vietnam for political gain at home.
- North Vietnam’s reasons
 - China and the USSR wanted North Vietnam to make peace and might withdraw help
 - North Vietnam was bombed heavily
- Shared Reasons
 - High numbers of dead and wounded
 - Cost of the war
 - The war could drag on for years.

Features of the negotiations 1973

- After negotiations had broken down in 1972, further talks began in Paris on 8 Sept 1973.
- All parts of the peace agreement were to be supervised by an international body.
- The USA would pay for reconstruction across Vietnam.

The North Vietnamese and South Vietnamese thought that the war had not actually ended, seeing the ‘peace’ as a temporary while the American withdrew.

Features of the agreement

- All countries would accept Vietnam as a single unified country through independent negotiation (with no outside interference)
- There would be an immediate ceasefire
- US troops, equipment and advisors would be withdrawn and military bases removed.
- There would be no US government intervention in Vietnamese politics or military.
- The government of the new unified Vietnam would be chosen in a fair and independent election.

The Paris Peace Agreement 1973

The Paris Peace Agreement, signed by the USA, North Vietnam, South Vietnam and the Provisional Government of Vietnam on 27 Jan 1973, brought an end to the war and peace to Vietnam.

Explain its significance

- Gave the USA an opportunity to withdraw from Vietnam.
- BUT in the long run it failed to secure the future of an independent non-communist South Vietnam.
- South Vietnam’s economy crashed due to bad harvests, and a large reduction in US aid and investment.
- This led to the new government in South Vietnam becoming unpopular.

- The Vietcong became popular again in village communities.
- North Vietnam continued to seek a united, communist Vietnam and became impatient with the refusal of the President of South Vietnam, President Thieu to talk.
- In late 1974, they started the war again.
- The ARVN could not fend off the attack
- The USA Congress would not approve funds for the USA to intervene.
- The Vietnamese capital Saigon fell in April 1975.

Explain the cost of the war

- Financial - \$167 billion. Led to cutbacks on spending on things in the USA and caused economic problems for the USA.
- Human cost – 58000 US soldiers died. 75000 left with a serious disability. 850000 suffered severe mental health problems. There was a high rate of suicide among veterans of the war.

4.5 Why the US failed

Strengths of North Vietnam

- North Vietnamese had a good geographical and cultural understanding of the South.
- Many people in both countries wanted to be united into a single country
- The North Vietnamese had a good understanding of the natural environment, unlike the Americans.
- They shared a language with the South Vietnamese.
- The North Vietnamese expected full commitment to the war from the oldest to the youngest citizens.
- The North Vietnamese believed that fighting and dying for their country was a matter of honour.
- Opposing the war was not allowed in North Vietnam.

Soviet and Chinese support

- North Vietnam had financial help from other communist countries – China and the USSR. They sent over \$3billion in aid to North Vietnam 1954-1967.
- Soviets – became the North Vietnam's main source of economic aid after 1965
- China – Gave technical military and financial help. After the Gulf of Tonkin in 1965 the Chinese dramatically increased their support for North Vietnam and the Vietcong in South Vietnam. 1965-1971 sent over 320000 Chinese troops to North Vietnam.

Vietcong tactics and commitment

- The guerrilla tactics of North Vietnam's allies, the Vietcong (VC) were difficult to stop.
- The VC were used to fighting in jungle conditions and were well equipped for guerrilla style warfare.
- The VC were very committed.
- The North Vietnamese troops were difficult to challenge because they had a clear ideology about why they needed to win.
- In comparison the ARVN had poor training and did not have the same level of belief in what they were fighting for.

The Ho Chi Minh Trail

- Laos and Cambodia allowed the Ho Chi Minh Trail to operate in their countries.
- It was a vital supply route for the North Vietnamese to reach the VC in South Vietnam.
- Parts of it were made up of fake trails to trick the enemy.
- The Americans used biological weapons to kill the jungle and expose the trail.
- Despite this the trail kept on going throughout the whole of the war.

Weaknesses of the US armed forces

The Americans lack an understanding of the Vietnamese culture, geographical environment and politics, which made it difficult for them to win in Vietnam despite their military strength.

Weak knowledge and awareness

- Most Americans did not understand anything about the country they were at war with. US soldiers found the war very difficult as a result.
- Many Americans underestimated their enemy and held ignorant and racist views about their inferiority.
- US military leaders and strategists did not try to understand the conflict from the point of view of the Vietnamese people, which meant they did not plan effective strategies.

Political Weakness = economic weakness

- There was no clear public support for the war
- War veterans wanted the war to stop and even handed their medals in protest.
- There was a lot of media criticism about the war's aims and the methods they used.
- The government tried to ignore public opposition to the war.
- However, in the end they HAD to listen to them as Presidents and Congress needed the public's support to be voted into office.
- This led to economic weaknesses as Congress restricted funding for the war after 1971 so there were shortages of equipment for US troops which made the war harder to win.

Failure of US tactics

- The US army benefitted from superior military technology, including helicopters and advanced weaponry, but this did not help them to win as their tactics were weak.
 - They believed that victory could be won by deploying more troops and ordering more bombing of North Vietnam
 - They overestimated its successes, basing calculations on how many villages they destroyed or Vietcong they killed rather than how much territory they controlled.
- The US army was young and inexperienced and lacked training of guerrilla warfare.
- Their failures caused low morale and soldiers not wanting to fight.
- Flagging occurred (intentional killing of officers) and drug abuse.

Failure to win hearts and minds of the Vietnamese

- Propaganda claimed the USA wanted democracy for South Vietnam but all they saw was the USA (a foreign power) interfering in their country.
- This means that the US backed government in South Vietnam was very unpopular.
- Many local people in South Vietnam had far more sympathy for the values of the Vietcong than with the government imposed on them by the USA.

Impact of opposition to the war

It divided US society

- The war led to the public mistrusting institutions like the government and the armed services. They had been largely trusted before the war.
- Returning soldiers were sometimes met with real hostility. Veterans were targets as 'baby killers'. They were sometimes verbally or physically attacked. Some found it hard to find work. This caused a division in society.
- There was a high suicide rate among returning soldiers. After the 2WW veterans were treated as heroes, yet men returning from Vietnam felt like outcasts.

Financial Impact

- As well as the war expenditure, US society was affected by the lack of resources they had domestically (at home).

- Johnson's 'Great Society' agenda which aimed to reduce inequality and racial divisions, lost money that was spent on the war instead.

Pressure on the US government of anti-war movement

- The reputation of the USA was diminished as a result of the war
- The US government became concerned that involvement abroad should not lead to similar problems to those encountered in Vietnam.
- By the end of 1973 the whole of Vietnam was under a communist government, so the war seemed to have been pointless.
- This had a huge impact on the way the government was viewed. In the 1950s the American people have respect for its government. 20 year later the general feeling was that they should be more questioning of the power of and the decisions made by the government. This shift in attitude had a lot to do with the Vietnam War.