**Subject area/course**: History/U.S. History

**Grade level/band**: 11-12

**Task source**: Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE); Author: Daisy Martin

**Gulf of Tonkin**

**STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS**

1. **Task context**:

In our class we have learned about the Gulf of Tonkin Incident and the Vietnam War and have read historical documents about the reasons the war was fought.

1. **Final product**:

Using the documents provided and your background knowledge of the Cold War and U.S. history, write an argumentative essay in which you evaluate the following statement:

The Gulf of Tonkin Incident was the reason the U.S. fought the War in Vietnam. Do you agree with this explanation of the cause of the Vietnam War? Why or why not? Use and cite evidence from the documents to support your analysis of this statement.

As you read and analyze each of the documents (A-F), take into account its source and any point of view that may be presented in the document.

In your essay, be sure to

* create a thesis statement or central argument;
* use evidence from the primary source documents and outside information to support your thesis;
* provide an analysis of how each piece of evidence helps to support your position;
* cite each document you use;
* consider a counterclaim;
* include an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion;
* include connections to relevant historical conditions and events not mentioned in the documents.

**Additional Information**

1. **Knowledge and skills you will need to demonstrate on this task:**

* An understanding of the Cold War including the nature of the conflict, it’s tensions, and its role in post-War foreign policy.
* Document analysis skills that include sourcing and corroborating documents.
* Argumentative writing skills that require evidence-based claims and consideration of contrary evidence or claims.
* Understanding of historical causation.

1. **Materials needed:**

* Item B – Chronology, Documents A and B, Graphic Organizer
* Item C – Documents C-F
* Item D – Essay Planning Document (optional)
* Item E – Peer Review Sheet

1. **Time requirements:**

This task will take approximately 3-5 days to complete. Your teacher will provide additional details regarding deadlines and due dates.

1. **Scoring:**

Your work will be scored using Argumentative Writing in History (Grades 9-12) Rubric. You should make sure you are familiar with the language that describes the expectations for proficient performance.