**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**

**TEACHER'S GUIDE**

1. **Task overview**:

Students will write an essay that uses evidence from primary sources and their own background knowledge to make an argument and answer the following prompt:

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?

Students will need to read and analyze documents to create a thesis-driven essay. Before students write their individual essays, they will participate in some scaffolding and preparation instructional activities.

1. **Aligned standards:**
2. **Primary Common Core State Standards**

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/9-10/1/) Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/1/) Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12/9/) Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/WHST/11-12/1/) Write arguments focused on *discipline-specific content*.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.1.A](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/WHST/11-12/1/a/) Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences the claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.1.B](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/WHST/11-12/1/b/) Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant data and evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both claim(s) and counterclaims in a discipline-appropriate form that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.

1. **Critical abilities**

Analysis of Information: Integrate and synthesize multiple sources of information (e.g., texts, experiments, simulations) presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to address a question, make informed decisions, understand a process, phenomenon, or concept, and solve problems while evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

Interpersonal Interaction and Collaboration: Develop a range of interpersonal skills, including the ability to work with others, to participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations.

1. **Other standards**

[C3 Framework](http://education.nationalgeographic.com/media/file/C3-Framework-for-Social-Studies.pdf)

D2.His.14.9-12. Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.

D2.His.15.9-12. Distinguish between long-term causes and triggering events in developing a historical argument.

D2.His.16.9-12. Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.

D3.3.9-12. Identify evidence that draws information directly and substantively from multiple sources to detect inconsistencies in evidence in order to revise or strengthen claims.

1. **Time/schedule requirements:**

The entire task should take between 3 and 5 days.

1. **Materials/resources:**

* Item A – Photos
* 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. **Prior knowledge:**

Students should

* know about the Cold War and have, at the least, been introduced to the Vietnam War;
* have experience with using and analyzing multiple sources, including primary sources and timelines.

1. **Connection to curriculum:**

This task fits into a unit on the Cold War or the Vietnam War and is connected to building and showing competencies with using primary sources to construct a written historical argument.

1. **Teacher instructions:**

Timing is approximate.

**DAY 1**

**1. Introduce the task**

Include:

* The point that history is an evidence-based argument;
* One thing that historians argue about is *why* an event happens; and
* Some information about the historical period. *(e.g., Remember that soon after WWII, the Cold War began. The Soviet Union and the United States were the opposing superpowers in this War. The U.S. saw the Soviets as intent on worldwide domination and the Soviets judged the U.S. as intent on the same. The Vietnam War is considered one of the wars fought as part of this larger Cold War. With the new threat of nuclear war, conflicts and events like the Vietnam War, Cuban Missile Crisis and the Korean War became even more dangerous.)*

**2. Set historical context more specifically**

Introduce the topic (the Tonkin Gulf Resolution) and time (1960s) by telling a story using some of the following tools:

1. Images that help tell the story (see *Photos* document, Item A):
   1. Map showing both the Gulf of Tonkin and Vietnam in relation to Asia (available at <http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/mapping/outline-map/?map=Vietnam&ar_a=1>);
   2. [Photo](http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB132/essay.htm) of U.S.S. Maddox attack (http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB132/essay.htm);
   3. [Photo](http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/vietnam-photos/images/seal-team-one.gif) of U.S. soldiers in Vietnam (http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/vietnam-photos/images/seal-team-one.gif)
2. Chronology document (Item B)*.* (See [this digital timeline](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/vietnam/timeline/) for help preparing a story (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/vietnam/timeline/>)
3. And see [here](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active_learning/explorations/vietnam/vietnam_teacher.cfm) (http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active\_learning/explorations/vietnam/vietnam\_teacher.cfm) for more help with background information.

Note: Consider including events that are not on this timeline but that matter to understanding the context like Sputnik, the U2 plane being shot down, and the Cuban Missile Crisis.

**3. Warm-up activity: Analyzing two documents**

1. Introduce the day’s central question: “Which account do you find more believable? Why?” Make this question visible for students.
2. Hand out the Chronology and the packet of documents (Item B – Document A (President Johnson’s Speech) and Document B (NSC Memo) and the Graphic Organizer).
3. (Whole class) Teacher models document analysis using Document A: Use the central question and graphic organizer.

Read the document aloud. Include some version of the following steps:

1. First read the title and then ask sourcing questions: What kind of source is this? When was it written? Explain that you are going to the bottom of the document first to find out information about the origins of the document. Read that information aloud. Then show that this information helps you answer the first three questions on the graphic organizer (included in Item B).
2. Show the other questions on the graphic organizer and explain that you will need to read to answer those questions.
3. Model reading the document with purpose. While reading, you can also notice loaded words, ask questions of the text, summarize its meaning, and use background information to understand the text.
4. (Whole class) Answer the questions in writing on the graphic organizer for Document A.
5. (Pair work) Students read Document B in pairs and complete the graphic organizer.
6. Whole class: Teacher leads discussion of central question: “Which account do you find more believable? Why?” Make the following two points at some point in the discussion:
   * Stop and Source! Sourcing is important to reading and understanding these documents.

In other words, noticing the date and origin of documents is important to accurately analyze the source. For example, these two documents represent the public story that the President told the American people and the top-secret meeting he held with his advisors.

* + Use evidence from the document to support your claims/conclusions.

Ask students to support their answers with evidence from the text. (e.g., What in the text supports that idea? Where do you see that in your document? What is the evidence of that?)

**4. Close:**

1. Tell the students that considering the believability of these documents assumes new importance when we look back at the Gulf of Tonkin more than forty years later. We now know that while the first attack happened, it is unlikely that there was a second attack as the evidence about the attack on August 4 is incomplete and tangled.
2. Ask: Can you tell from these documents whether the Gulf of Tonkin Incident was the reason the U.S. fought the Vietnam War?

**DAY 2**

**1. Remind students about prior lesson and task.**

Include reminders of the reading skills you made explicit on Day 1.

**2. Pairs: Read and analyze documents**

1. Get students into pairs.
2. Pass out Item C (Documents C-F) to each pair.
3. (Pair Work) Students

* Read, annotate, and discuss assigned document
* Answer reading questions on the document:
  + What does this document tell you about the reasons the U.S. fought the Vietnam War?
  + What evidence supports your answer?
* Prepare 1-2 minute presentation for the class that includes:
  + The name of your document;
  + What your document says and implies about the reasons the U.S. fought the war in Vietnam.

**3. Share-out & feedback**:

Randomly select pairs to present each of the four documents. Tell students to listen for what they learn about the reasons the U.S. fought the war in Vietnam. When appropriate, ask students to back up their statements with evidence from the document or clarify their statements. If incorrect information is shared, ask for input from another pair who read the same document or correct it.

NOTE: At the end of this activity, each student has read three documents: A, B and the document from Item C (Documents C-F) that he or she read today. They have heard reports on all the documents.

**4.** **Closing activity:**

Ask students to summarize what they heard about the causes of the Vietnam War.

**5. Preview the writing task:**

Explain that students will be writing an argumentative essay tomorrow about the Vietnam War. Students should bring their work from these instructional days to class for this task.

Pass out or project the Argumentative rubric and read and discuss, explain that these are expectations students should try to meet when they write argumentative essays. Also explain that they will have these to refer to when they write their essays.

**DAY 3**

Students receive or review the prompt (on the Student Instructions) and write an essay in response.

**DAY 4**

Students share essays, do peer feedback (Item E), and revise.

1. **Student support:**

Additional Scaffolding for Day 1:

* Ask students to summarize main point of each article.
* After pair work, project Document B on a screen and have one or a few students show how they annotated that document and made sense of it.

Less Scaffolding for Day 1:

* Eliminate modeling step and have students analyze documents without your example.

Additional Scaffolding for Day 2:

* Use heterogeneous groupings.
* Project each document before a pair reports on that document. Ask students to be prepared to show evidence they used to answer the questions on that projected document (Step 2C).
* Have a more extended discussion about the rubric. Include samples of proficient work related to specific rubric dimensions from essays done on another topic.
* Extend the analysis of the documents so all students read and talk about more than three before writing. Pairs or groups could examine all documents using the two guiding questions while the teacher checks their understanding through pair check-ins.

Less Scaffolding for Day 2:

* Students work individually with single document. They then pair up and share their document. Call on individual students to share their analysis of their single document (Steps 2 & 3).

General

* Additional time may be allotted.
* Extended time and additional supports and tools may be provided. One is provided: the Essay Planning tool (Item D).
* All instructions and questions can be shared in writing and orally.

1. **Extensions or variations:**

None provided.

1. **Scoring:**

Student work can be scored using the Argumentative Writing in History (Grades 9-12) Rubric.