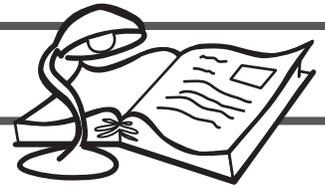


Study Guide



Chapter 30, Section 3

For use with textbook pages 904–909

VIETNAM DIVIDES THE NATION

KEY TERMS AND NAMES

- William Westmoreland** American commander in South Vietnam (page 905)
- credibility gap** a lack of belief in government reports regarding the Vietnam War (page 905)
- teach-in** an informal discussion held between college faculty and students about issues relating to the war and the reasons for opposing it (page 905)
- doves** those who wanted the United States to withdraw from the Vietnam War (page 907)
- hawks** those who wanted the United States to stay and fight (page 907)
- Tet offensive** a surprise attack in January 1968, by the Vietcong and the North Vietnamese of all American airbases in South Vietnam and most of the nation’s major cities (page 907)

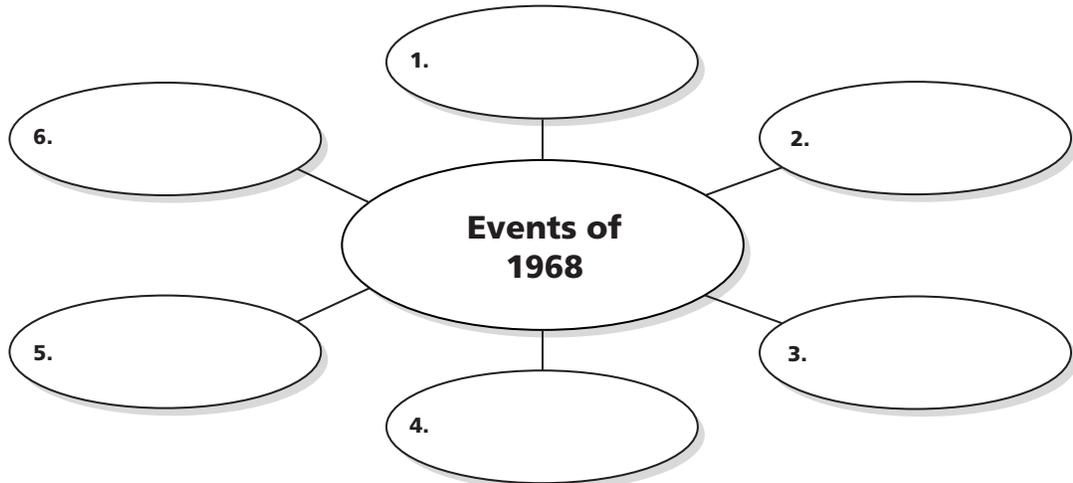
DRAWING FROM EXPERIENCE

Imagine that you are an American living in the United States during the Vietnam War. Would you have supported or opposed the war? Why?

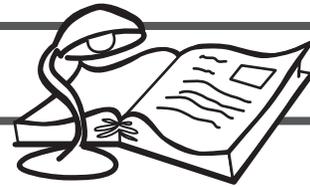
The last section described the U.S. military involvement in Vietnam. This section discusses how the Vietnam War led to a division between supporters and opponents of the war.

ORGANIZING YOUR THOUGHTS

Use the diagram below to help you take notes. The year 1968 was a very critical year in the nation’s history. Identify the events of that year in the diagram.



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Chapter 30, Section 3 (continued)

READ TO LEARN

- **A Growing Credibility Gap** (page 904)

Opposition to the Vietnam War grew in the United States in the late 1960s. One of the main reasons for the increased opposition was that many Americans were suspicious of the government's truthfulness about the war. In 1967 General **William Westmoreland**, the American commander in South Vietnam, reported that the United States was near victory. However, daily media accounts, particularly on television, showed images of wounded and dead Americans. These images made Americans doubt the optimistic government reports. Many Americans believed a **credibility gap** had developed. Congress also grew uncertain about the war. The Senate Foreign Relations committee held hearings on Vietnam. The committee called in Secretary of State Dean Rusk and other presidential advisers to explain the war program.

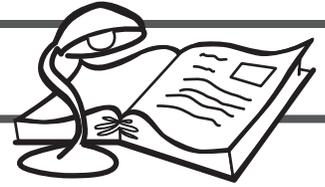
7. What led to a credibility gap in the United States in the late 1960s?

- **An Antiwar Movement Emerges** (page 905)

As more Americans died in Vietnam, many people, especially college students, began to protest against the war. In March 1965, a group of college teachers and students at the University of Michigan joined together in a **teach-in**. This was an informal discussion about the issues surrounding the war and their reasons for opposing it. Soon teach-ins were being held in other college campuses.

People opposed the war for different reasons. Some believed that it was a civil war that did not have anything to do with the United States. Others believed South Vietnam was a corrupt democracy, and supporting it was immoral. Some protesters believed the United States had an unfair draft system. At the beginning of the war, college students were able to postpone military service until after they graduated. A young person from a low-income family was more likely to serve in the war because he could not afford college. As a result, minorities made up a large percentage of the soldiers in Vietnam. The high number of African Americans and poor Americans dying in Vietnam angered African American leaders. In April 1967, Martin Luther King, Jr., publicly condemned the war.

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Chapter 30, Section 3 (continued)

As the war continued, more people were drafted. Many draftees refused to go. Some fled the country, moving to Canada or other nations. Others stayed and went to prison rather than fight in a war they opposed. In 1969 the government issued a lottery system for the draft. Only those who had low lottery numbers were drafted.

Demonstrators against the war were not only college students. In October 1967, a rally at the Lincoln Memorial drew tens of thousands of protesters. Although the antiwar protesters were a vocal group, a majority of people in early 1968 supported President Johnson's determination to keep fighting. The nation seemed to be divided into two groups. Those who wanted the United States to withdraw from Vietnam were known as **doves**. Those who wanted the United States to stay and fight became known as **hawks**.

8. Why did minorities make up a large percentage of the soldiers in Vietnam?

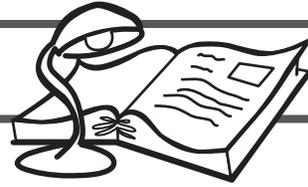
• **1968: The Pivotal Year** (page 907)

On January 30, 1968, the Vietcong and North Vietnamese launched a huge surprise attack during the Tet, the Vietnamese New Year. It was called the **Tet offensive**. The guerrilla fighters attacked all American airbases in South Vietnam and most of the nation's major cities. After about a month of fighting, the American and South Vietnamese soldiers fended off the enemy troops, who suffered heavy losses.

However, the North Vietnamese scored a major political victory. Americans were shocked that the North Vietnamese, who were supposedly near defeat, could launch such a huge attack. General Westmoreland called for additional troops. This seemed to indicate to Americans that the United States could not win the war. In addition, the media criticized the military effort. The media also indicated that the United States could not win the war.

After the Tet offensive, President Johnson's approval rating fell drastically. As a result, in March 1968, Johnson announced that he would not run for reelection in 1968. Even before his announcement, Democrats began looking for

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Chapter 30, Section 3 (continued)

an alternative candidate to nominate. Eugene McCarthy, a dove, announced his candidacy in November 1967. Senator Robert Kennedy also announced his candidacy.

In April 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was shot and killed. This led to riots in several major cities. Then in June 1968, Senator Robert Kennedy was shot and killed just after winning California's Democratic primary. Violence continued in 1968 with a clash between police and protesters at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. Protesters demanded that the Democrats adopt an antiwar platform.

The delegates to the convention chose Hubert Humphrey, President Johnson's vice president, as their presidential nominee. At the same time, the protesters and police began fighting in a park near the convention hall. A riot broke out on the streets of downtown Chicago.

The violence associated with the Democratic Party worked to the benefit of the Republican presidential candidate, Richard Nixon. It also encouraged a third candidate, Governor George Wallace of Alabama, to run as an independent. Nixon promised to unify the nation and to restore law and order. He also announced that he had a plan to end the Vietnam War. Nixon defeated Humphrey by a slim margin.

9. Why did President Johnson not run for re-election in 1968?
