

# Analyzing Evidence...comparing sources... *The Vietnam War*

## From the 2015 Revised Framework:

Student Will...

**ANALYZE EVIDENCE...** Explain the relevance of the **author's point of view**, author's purpose, audience, format or medium, and/or historical context as well as the interaction among these features, to demonstrate understanding of the significance of a primary source. Analyze diverse historical interpretations.

*Reminder: Just as historians pull information from a plethora of different sources, you must also consider more than one source when analyzing history. Remember at least one of your SAQs on the AP exam will include opposing views and require synthesis! ...At least one multiple choice set will, as well.*

## **Step 1: Read each pair of excerpts and explain the POVs in the space provided. Remember to GO BEYOND THE OBVIOUS and connect to something YOU know about the event.**

### Source A: President Lyndon Johnson, 1964

"The first reality is that North Vietnam has attacked the independent nation of South Vietnam. Its object is total conquest... Women and children are strangled in the night because their men are loyal to their government. And helpless villages are ravaged by sneak attack... Our objective is the independence of South Vietnam and its freedom from attack. We want nothing for ourselves—only that the people of South Vietnam be allowed to guide their country in their own way."

LBJ's POV:

### Source B: Neil Sheehan, journalist, 1964

"The regimes [of South Vietnam] were and are composed of men... who are allied with mandarin families.... Most of the men who rule Saigon have, like the Bourbons, learned nothing and forgotten nothing. They seek to retain what privileges they have and to regain those they have lost.... The Communist party is the one truly national organization that permeates both North and South Vietnam. The men who lead the party today... directed the struggle for independence from France and in the process captured much of the deeply felt nationalism of the Vietnamese people."

Sheehan's POV:

### Source C: President Johnson, 1968

"Our power, therefore, is a very vital shield. If we are driven from the field in Vietnam, then no nation can ever again have the same confidence in American promise or American protection.... Three Presidents—President Eisenhower, President Kennedy, and your present President—over 11 years have committed themselves and have promised to defend this small and valiant nation.... We just cannot now dishonor our word, or abandon our commitment, or leave those who believed us and trusted us to the terror and repression and murder that would follow."

LBJ's POV:

### Source D: Senators Stuart Symington and Joseph Clark, 1968

"I believe what is going on now in Vietnam has hurt the concept of our capability in the minds of our friends and allies as well as our enemies. It has hurt the national will in this country because of increasing dissension and I am afraid it has made the people who are opposed to us reduce their belief in our capacity... "Vietnam is a cancer which is devouring our youth, our morals, our national wealth, and the energies of our leadership. "

Symington and Clark's POV:

**Step 2: Answer the SAQs.**

Review the sample. Consider what makes the entries effective. Identify each of the essential parts to a high quality SAQ answer. Then, answer the second set in complete sentences. Do not use evidence used in the sample.

Label your answers a.-b.-c., and answer them IN ORDER.

Make sure your answers can stand alone, and back up each explanation with at least one specific piece of historical evidence NOT found in the excerpts.

Do not allow any of your answers to depend on the others, and do not repeat yourself. [These are three separate answers, not three parts to one paragraph.]

- a. Briefly explain ONE way President Johnson's point of view in Source A regarding the Vietnam War differs from Sheehan's view in Source B.
  - b. Briefly explain how ONE event or policy not mentioned in either source from 1950-1975 supports Johnson's point of view.
  - c. Briefly explain how ONE event or policy not mentioned in either source from 1950-1975 supports Sheehan's point of view.
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- a. In Source A, President Johnson justifies escalating the war in Vietnam in 1964 with the point of view that the U.S. must protect South Vietnam from the brutality of the communists. This is different from Sheehan's point of view in Source B which focuses on why the U.S. should not intervene due to the will of the people obviously being in support of communism. The key difference is whether or not the U.S. should intervene.
  - b. The failure of the Geneva Accords to secure free elections and a democratic future for South Vietnam supports Johnson's point of view that action was needed in order to preserve the nation and protect the people from communism.
  - c. During the Vietnam War, a tremendous amount of environmental damage from Agent Orange caused illness and destroyed rain forests. This damage supports Sheehan's point of view that U.S. intervention wasn't wise, because we caused long term damage to a young nation by trying to contain communism.
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- a. Briefly explain ONE way President Johnson's point of view in Source C regarding the Vietnam War differs from Symington and Clark's in Source D.
  - b. Briefly explain how ONE event or policy not mentioned in either source from 1950-1975 supports Johnson's point of view.
  - c. Briefly explain how ONE event or policy not mentioned in either source from 1950-1975 supports Symington and Clark's point of view.