

GCSE History homework

Year 11 terms 1 & 2



Due Date	Revision focus
Tuesday 12 th September 2023	Consequences of the Korean War (8 marks)
Tuesday 19 th September 2023	The Battle of Dien Bien Phu (4 marks)
Tuesday 26 th September 2023	Civil War in South Vietnam (4 marks)
Tuesday 3 rd October 2023	The Vietcong (4 marks)
Tuesday 10 th October 2023	A Fear of Communism in the 1950s (4 marks)
Tuesday 17 th October 2023	President Eisenhower and the Vietnam War (4 marks)
Tuesday 7 th November 2023	The Domino Theory (4 marks)
Tuesday 14 th November 2023	President Kennedy and the Vietnam War (8 marks)
Tuesday 21 st November 2023	President Johnson and the Vietnam War (6 marks)
Tuesday 28 th November 2023	Why was the Gulf of Tonkin important? (8 marks)
Tuesday 5 th December 2023	Vietcong Tactics (8 marks)
Tuesday 12 th December 2023	US Tactics (8 marks)
Tuesday 19 th December 2023	The Tet Offensive (8 marks)
Tuesday 9 th January 2024	My Lai Massacre (4 marks)



Due date:	Tuesday 19 th September 2023
Student number:	
Name:	

Key Knowledge – The Battle of Dien Bien Phu

- During the Second World War a communist resistance group, known as the Vietminh, fought against the Japanese who had invaded Vietnam.
- In 1945, the Vietminh declared Vietnam an independent country, with Ho Chi Minh as their President– the French did not accept this.
- From 1949, China was communist and so helped by providing training, supplies and, equipment to the communist Vietminh.
- To counter this, President Truman sent \$15 million in military aid to the French in 1950, as well as US tanks and planes.
- Within 4 years, America had spent \$3 million helping the French to fight the communist Vietminh. They set up a non-communist government in South Vietnam.
- This initial period of conflict was known as the First Indochina War – a major turning point in this war was the battle of Dien Bien Phu.
- A small French air base with 10,000 French soldiers was surrounded by 50,000 Vietminh troops, bombarding them with rockets and shells.
- The Vietminh destroyed the runway, trapping the French soldiers. They soon ran out of water and medical supplies – neither America nor Britain would help, and so the French surrendered.
- The battle lasted for 57 days, with 3,000 French soldiers killed and 8,000 wounded. The Vietminh suffered 8,000 deaths and 12,000 wounded soldiers. The French survivors were forced to walk to prison camps.



GCSE-Style Question

Source A – A 1960 painting of Vietminh soldiers at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu.

Source A supports the Vietminh. How do you know? (4 marks)

One way

Another way

5 MINS



1 PARAGRAPH



**SKILL FOCUS:
DESCRIPTION**

Due date:	Tuesday 26 th September 2023
Student number:	
Name:	

Key Knowledge – Civil War in South Vietnam

- The Geneva Agreement of 1954 split Vietnam in two. The north was to be ruled by the communist Ho Chi Minh and the south was to be ruled by the anti-communist Ngo Dinh Diem.
- Diem introduced taxation and forced peasants off their land so he could give it to powerful families (nepotism). He imprisoned people who opposed him; despite this, America continued to support him.
- The Geneva Agreement had stated that elections would be held in 1956, but Diem held one in the south in 1955.
- Anyone who opposed the election was arrested – over 100,000 people were sent to prison camps. Diem announced that 98.2% of the country had voted for him.
- There were two main groups who opposed Diem: the National Liberation Front and the Buddhists.

“Oh, He’s A Great Anti-Communist — It’s Just That He Finds The Buddhists Are Easier To Get At”



The National Liberation Front

- Opponents of Diem moved to the jungle and formed a resistance group. When a civil war broke out, the NLF received supplies from Ho Chi Minh using the Ho Chi Minh trail.
- The NLF were fighting the South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) who were supported by America.

Buddhists

- Diem implemented anti-Buddhist policies, including needing his government’s permission to worship. When Buddhists flew their flag, 9 were killed including 8 children.
- Buddhists joined together and went on hunger strikes and mass rallies. One monk burned himself alive whilst others handed out leaflets against Diem’s government.

GCSE-Style Question

Source A – A cartoon by Herbert Lawrence Block. He was a well known American cartoonist who was openly critical of the Diem regime in South Vietnam.

Source A is critical of Diem’s government. How do you know? (4 marks)

One way

Another way

5 MINS



1 PARAGRAPH



SKILL FOCUS:
DESCRIPTION

Due date:	Tuesday 3 rd October 2023
Student number:	
Name:	



Key Knowledge – The Vietcong

- When it became clear Diem would not hold elections to reunify Vietnam, many tried to force him into this, or drive him out.
- Hundreds of Diem’s government officials were murdered by these resistance groups in the south – Diem sent people in the jungle to hunt them down.
- Ho Chi Minh (the leader in North Vietnam) agreed to supply and support these resistance groups – the various groups joined together in 1960 and became known as the National Liberation Front. The South Vietnamese army and US advisors referred to the NLF as the Vietcong (short for Vietnamese Communist.)
- The Vietcong contained some communists but also some nationalists (people who just wanted their country back). They appealed to both peasants and the middle-class.
- The Vietcong had strict rules that they must act respectfully towards the peasants; the peasants therefore hide, and fed the Vietcong in return.
- The Vietcong used guerrilla tactics – they fought in units of 3 – 10 and did not wear uniforms, so they could blend in with villagers.
- The Vietcong would attack only if they outnumbered the enemy, mostly at night, and always by surprise.
- Supplies for the Vietcong came down the Ho Chi Minh trail, which went through the jungle and villages.
- The Vietcong knew these remote jungle areas well, which gave them a huge advantage over their enemy.

The aims of the Vietcong:

- Replace Diem
- Unify Vietnam

GCSE-Style Question

Write an account of how the Vietcong gained the support of the Vietnamese people. (8 marks)

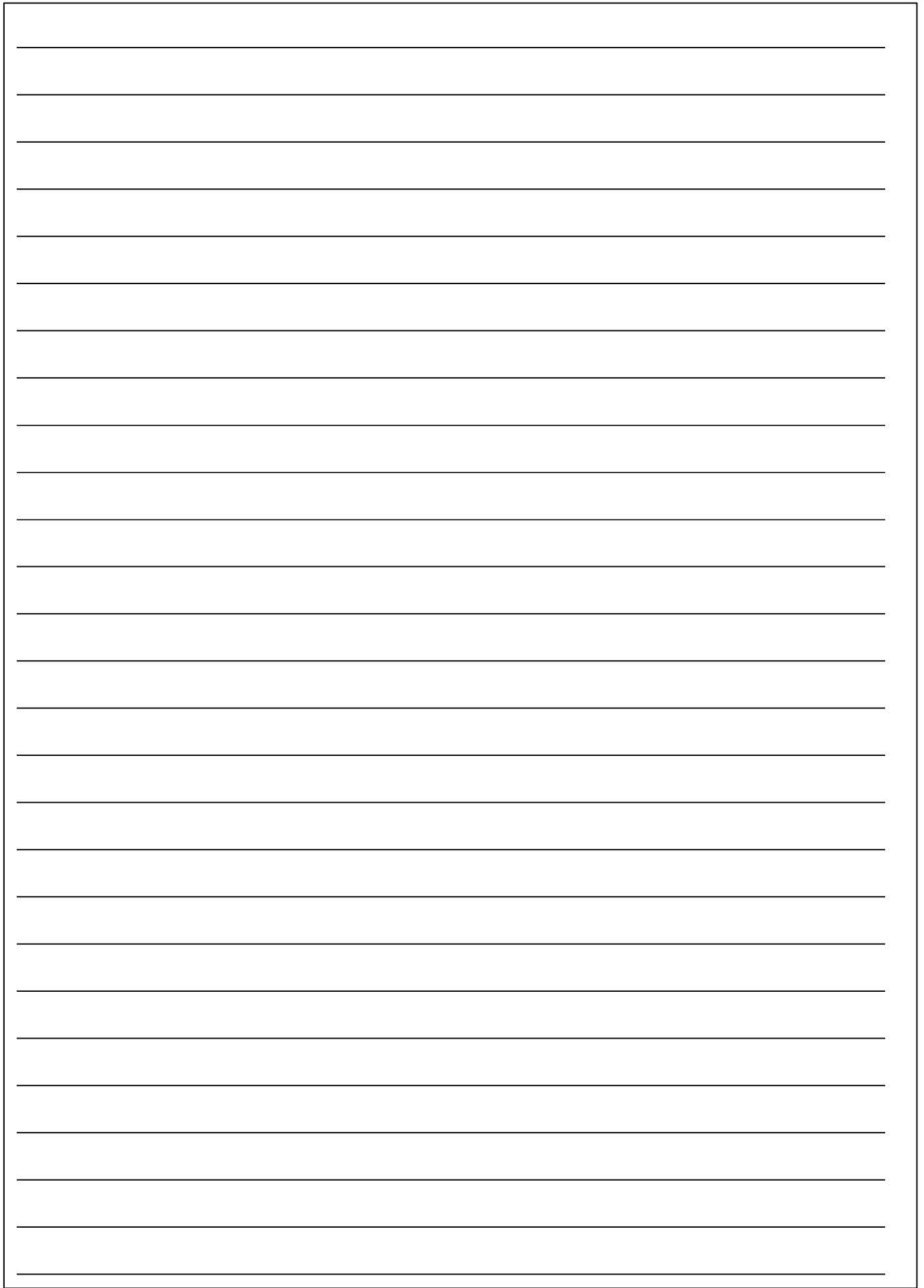
10 MINS



2 PARAGRAPHS



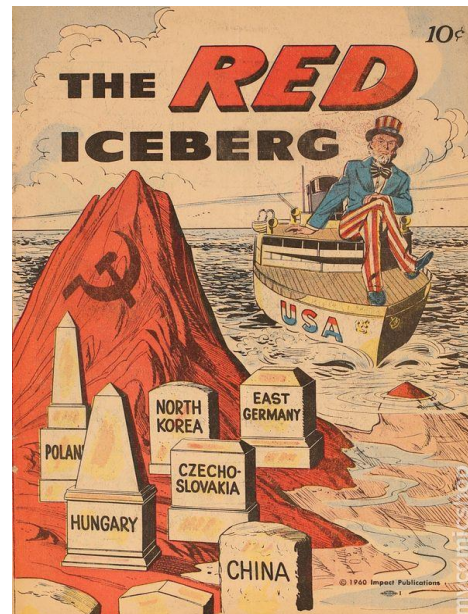
**SKILL FOCUS:
EXPLANATION**



Due date:	Tuesday 10 th October 2023
Student number:	
Name:	

Key Knowledge – A Fear of Communism in the 1950s

- After the Second World War, communist governments (with the support / influence of the USSR) had taken over many Eastern European countries. The USA was committed to stopping this.
- North Korea had become a communist country after the Second World War and in 1949, China also became a communist country.
- President Eisenhower adopted the phrase 'Domino Theory' when talking about South Vietnam – he was sure it would fall to communism as well.
- This sparked a fear of communism in the USA – they were paranoid that Soviet spies were working in the US government. HUAC was set up to investigate these people.
- HUAC's investigations led to some filmmakers being accused of creating communist propaganda.
- This wave of paranoia became known as the Red Scare and increased support for American action against communism in the Vietnam War.
- In 1950, Senator McCarthy alleged he had the names of over 200 communists working for the American government – these trials, investigations and hearings became known as McCarthyism.
- When he accused 45 army officers of being communists, he lost support.



Source A – A comic book cover, 1960, published for American Catholic students.

GCSE-Style Question

Source A shows that the USA was worried about the spread of communism.
How do you know? (4 marks)

One way

Another way

5 MINS



1 PARAGRAPH



SKILL FOCUS:
DESCRIPTION

Due date:	Tuesday 17 th October 2023
Student number:	
Name:	

Key Knowledge – President Eisenhower and the Vietnam War

- The USA’s involvement in Vietnam began in the early 1950s when it supported France in their fight against Ho Chi Minh’s Vietminh.
- In 1953, Eisenhower became president of America – he was replaced by President Kennedy in 1961.
- Eisenhower had served in the American army and in 1950, became supreme commander of NATO.
- In July 1953, he was the president who led the peace talks which ended the fighting in Korea.
- He didn’t think it was in the USA’s best interests to spend too much on military abroad at the expense of investing in America itself.

Actions of Eisenhower

- He broke the Geneva agreement when he didn’t force Diem to hold elections in South Vietnam in 1956.
- He supplied Diem’s government with money, supplies, and military equipment to fight the NLF.
- He did not send combat troops to Vietnam, only military advisors.
- He launched a propaganda campaign against Ho Chi Minh and communist North Vietnam.

GCSE-Style Question

Write an account of how President Eisenhower managed the Vietnam War.
(8 marks)

10 MINS



2
PARAGRAPHS



SKILL FOCUS:
EXPLANATION



Due date:	Tuesday 7 th November 2023
Student number:	
Name:	

Key Knowledge – The Domino Theory

The USA was operating a policy of **containment** and they feared the **domino effect** - that if one country fell to communism there could be a knock-on effect in neighbouring countries. Vietnam was a wobbly domino!

Consequently, the USA supported the anti-communist South Vietnamese dictator, Ngo Dinh Diem, who refused to hold elections to unify the country.

North Korea had become communist at the end of the Second World War.

In 1949 A communist government took over in China.

In 1954, North Vietnam had become a communist state, led by Ho Chi Minh.

By the mid 1950's, key US politicians were convinced that the USSR and China were committed to spreading communism around the globe. Their commitment to the Marshall Plan meant they would give financial aid to countries who needed it.



Source A: this cartoon shows the Domino Theory and some of the countries that might be affected by communism.

GCSE-Style Question

Source D shows that the USA was worried about the spread of communism abroad. How do you know? Explain your answer using the source and your own knowledge. (4 marks)

5 MINS



1 PARAGRAPH



SKILL FOCUS:
DESCRIPTION

Due date:	Tuesday 14 th November 2023
Student number:	
Name:	



Key Knowledge – President Kennedy and the Vietnam War

Kennedy did not want to have US soldiers fighting in Vietnam. He wanted US army advisers to train the ARVN so they could stop the spread of communism.

Kennedy supported the **Strategic Hamlet Programme** in Vietnam. The peasants were moved away from their villages to ‘strategic hamlets’, often many miles away from their village and fields. The ‘hamlets’ were surrounded by barbed wire and ditches. However, the programme backfired. By the summer of 1963 over two thirds of the population had been moved – and most were angry as a result. Many turned to the Vietcong.

Kennedy increased the number of **military experts** in Vietnam to around 16,000; they trained the ARVN (South Vietnamese army).

He approved a **coup** in South Vietnam to remove Diem.

He increased financial aid to South Vietnam to help the ARVN . ARVN troop numbers grew from 150,000 to 170,000 by the end of 1961.

He sent 300 US helicopter pilots to transport ARVN soldiers; the pilots were given strict instructions not to fight, but this was an order that was difficult to obey when they were shot at by Vietcong troops.

1954 – he sent a team of CIA intelligence agents to South Vietnam’s largest city, Saigon, to gather information for the US government.

He kept the US involvement in Vietnam a secret from the US press, as he was worried about public opinion.

GCSE-Style Question

Write an account of how US involvement in Vietnam developed under President Kennedy (8 marks)

One way

10 MINS



2

PARAGRAPHS



**SKILL FOCUS:
EXPLANATION**

Due date:	Tuesday 21 st November 2023
Student number:	
Name:	



Key Knowledge – President Johnson and the Vietnam War

President Johnson, like Kennedy, agreed with Eisenhower’s Domino Theory. He was deeply worried about the spread of communism in Asia. Like Kennedy he was reluctant to commit combat troops. Johnson was also hoping to win the next election in the US and he hoped a more peaceful approach to the situation in Vietnam would help him win the election. However, Johnson’s advisers were keen for him to become more involved in Vietnam. They could see that the ARVN would not be strong enough to fight the Vietcong on their own, but they were certain that if North Vietnam was attacked then Ho Chi Minh and his government would withdraw their support for the Vietcong.

So, Johnson decided to support an increased US presence in Vietnam and approved Operation Plan 34A in August 1964. Johnson would not send US troops to fight but would try to help the South Vietnamese. Operation 34A involved sending South Vietnamese soldiers into North Vietnam and US naval ships into North Vietnamese waters in the Gulf of Tonkin. It was clear to many that US involvement in Vietnam was starting to increase.

“In Asia we face an ambitious and aggressive China, but we have the will and we have the strength to help our Asian friends resist that ambition. But we are not about to send American boys 9 or 10,000 miles away from home to do what Asian boys ought to be doing for themselves”.

Source A: From a speech Johnson made during his campaign for presidency, October 1964.

GCSE-Style Question

How useful is source A to a historian studying US involvement in Vietnam before 1965?

Source A is useful because

I know

10 MINS



1 PARAGRAPH



SKILL FOCUS:

ANALYSIS

Due date:	Tuesday 28 th November 2023
Student number:	
Name:	



Key Knowledge – Why was the Gulf of Tonkin important?

The attack on the Gulf of Tonkin

One of the destroyers sent to support the attacks on North Vietnam was the USS *Maddox*. It supported the attack by monitoring the signals sent out by radar stations that were being targeted. On 3 August 1964, three torpedo boats that belonged to North Vietnam headed for the *Maddox*. The *Maddox* fired at the boats, which in turn fired their torpedoes. The third torpedo hit but did not explode. US jets sank one of the boats and damaged the other two. On 4 August reports came in from the *Maddox* saying that another attack was about to be launched by North Vietnam. However, the US captain who had originally raised the alarm then said that he wasn't sure if the attack was actually going to take place. Despite the doubts Johnson launched an attack on North Vietnam.

The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution

On 7 August 1964 the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution was approved by the US government. This gave the President power to take any military measure he thought was necessary to defend freedom in Southeast Asia. In the months following the Gulf of Tonkin incident, Johnson found himself using these powers.

Operation Rolling Thunder

In response to an attack by the Vietcong on a US helicopter base the USA launched Operation Rolling Thunder. This was a campaign of continuous bombing in North Vietnam that targeted important government buildings. This operation was meant to last eight weeks, but it actually lasted three years. In that time the US dropped nearly one million tonnes of bombs in Vietnam. By 8 March 1965, 3500 US marines had arrived in South Vietnam, by the end of that year the number was up to 200,000. US combat troops were now in Vietnam; the war had started.

GCSE-Style Question

Write an account of how events in Vietnam and the Gulf of Tonkin led to greater US involvement in Vietnam by 1965. (8 marks)

10 MINS



2 PARAGRAPHS



SKILL FOCUS:
EXPLANATION



Due date:	Tuesday 5 th December 2023
Student number:	
Name:	

Key Knowledge – Vietcong tactics

The Vietcong used guerrilla warfare to try to defeat the US army and the South Vietnamese army (ARVN). They were facing one of the biggest, strongest and well-equipped armies in the world. They couldn't compete with technology but they did know the jungles of Vietnam and could easily hide among the local villages. Guerrilla fighters do not wear uniforms they are very hard to tell apart from non-fighting civilians. They have no base camp or headquarters. They work in small well-armed groups and they follow basic principles; retreat when your enemy attacks, attack when your enemy retreats, and raid enemy camps whenever you can.

The Ho Chi Minh trail was a series of paths, tracks and roads. It made up a vital supply route for the North Vietnamese government to keep the Vietcong in South Vietnam supplied with weapons, food and soldiers. The trail ran directly through thick jungle so the Americans struggled to find it. The Ho Chi Minh Trail was an advanced network of 15,000 kilometres that undoubtedly helped the Vietcong outsmart the Americans. The use of guerrilla tactics meant they had to stay close to the Americans and ambush them. This was known as 'hanging on the belts' as they were always so close.

The Vietcong quickly learned that anything visible from the air soon became a target-so they went underground to avoid detection. Vietcong bases were built in extensive underground bunkers. These were complex tunnel systems that stretched for over 300 kilometres under the jungles of Vietnam. They contained workshops, hospitals, storehouses, conference rooms and kitchens. To prevent the US soldiers who found the tunnels gaining access they were carefully booby-trapped.

The US found it hard to fight against the Vietcong and over ten per cent of US deaths were down to the booby-traps created by the Vietcong. The most infamous of these traps the punji trap- involved the use of sharpened bamboo sticks that were hidden in shallow holes covered with leaves. They could easily go through the foot of an army boot and into the foot. The Vietcong would go one step further and cover the stick in animal blood or human excrement to cause an infection when it went through the skin.

The Vietcong tactics were useful for taking the Americans by surprise. These attacks made the Americans nervous and frustrated. They would also use captured US weapons against the American soldiers. However, a lot civilians were killed during the conflict because they were mistaken for Vietcong fighters. Furthermore the Vietcong was never able to fully defeat the US using guerrilla tactics.

GCSE-Style Question

Write an account of why the US soldiers found it so difficult to defeat the Vietcong in Vietnam. (8 marks)

10 MINS



2

PARAGRAPHS



SKILL FOCUS:

EXPLANATION



Due date:	Tuesday 12 th December 2023
Student number:	
Name:	



Key Knowledge –US tactics

The USA had one of the most powerful, well equipped and well trained armies in the world. The Vietcong, on the other hand, was made up of peasant farmers. However, the US army soon realised that their weapons and money were no match for the guerrilla tactics of the Vietcong. When the conflict began, the soldiers that went to Vietnam were experienced.

However, as the war continued increasing numbers of younger and more inexperienced soldiers were sent to fight. Before long the average age of a US soldier in Vietnam was 19. During the Second World War ordinary US troops had started to refer to themselves as 'GIs'. The nickname stuck and US troops in the Vietnam War became known as GIs.

In terms of fighting the war the Americans tried to use their superior technology and firepower to their advantage. Bases were built all along the coasts and borders of South Vietnam, which were used to launch 'search and destroy' missions in the countryside. The idea was that the Americans would search villages for Vietcong soldiers, and if they found any they would destroy the village as a warning to the South Vietnamese who support the Vietcong. These missions became known as 'zippo' raids after the cigarette lighter used to set fire to the thatched roofs in the village houses.

It soon became clear that the US armed forces were not suited to the kind of guerrilla warfare that the Vietcong had perfected. The Vietcong avoided open combat at all costs, denying the Americans the opportunity to use their heavy weapons and air support. It was impossible to tell the difference between an enemy soldier and an innocent civilian. As a result, GIs often killed civilians as well as soldiers.

In February 1965 the USA launched Operation Rolling Thunder. For the next three years giant B52 bombers poured millions of tonnes of high explosive bombs onto North Vietnamese cities, army bases and supply roads. In all, the USA dropped more bombs on Vietnam than had been previously dropped in the whole of human history. New **cluster bombs** sometimes called 'mother bombs' or 'pineapple bombs', were developed. They exploded in the air and released 600 smaller bombs that exploded horizontally, damaging anything or anyone they hit.

The bombing campaigns did not defeat the Vietcong. They reduced the Vietcong's efficiency and disrupted supply routes, but the Vietcong continued to launch attacks on US troops. So the Americans began to target supply routes and the tunnel systems in another way-they began to use chemical weapons most infamously Agent Orange and napalm.

Agent Orange was a highly toxic weed killer that was used to destroy the jungle so the Americans could see Vietcong trails, tunnel entrances and bases from the air. This chemical caused cancer, and pregnant women were likely to give birth to children with abnormalities.

Napalm was a mixture of a gelling agent (a sticky substance) and petrol. It would burn through anything it landed on so it was very effective in destroying thick jungle. However, it would also burn through skin, muscle and bone and caused terrible injuries to civilians.

10 MINS



2

PARAGRAPHS



SKILL FOCUS:
EXPLANATION

GCSE-Style Question

Write an account of the experiences of young men drafted to fight in Vietnam. (8 marks)



Due date:	Tuesday 19 th December 2023
Student number:	
Name:	



Key Knowledge – The Tet Offensive


In April 1967, General William Westmoreland, the commander of US forces in Vietnam told the US public that the war in Vietnam was progressing well and nearing an end: but he was wrong. Months later, there was a series of coordinated massive attacks by North Vietnamese and Vietcong guerrilla forces on US bases and major South Vietnamese towns and cities. This shocked the US forces and pushed them into retreat. The attacks known as the Tet Offensive became a turning point in the war.

Although the Vietcong mainly used guerrilla tactics there were times when they carried out major, large-scale attacks. One of these attacks was in early 1968, in what became known as the Tet Offensive. On 30 January 84,000 Vietcong and North Vietnamese troops simultaneously attacked more than 100 towns, cities and US military bases. The aim was to inspire South Vietnamese civilians rise up against their government and the Americans in their country.


When the Tet Offensive began around 50,000 US troops were already away defending bases in other areas. As a result the Americans were quickly pushed back into re-retreat, but they soon hit back hard. It did not take long for the US forces to regain control of all the towns, cities and bases. In total around 50,000 North Vietnamese and around 10,000 Vietcong fighters were killed. The number of US and South Vietnamese (ARVN) troops killed was just less than 10,000. However, the Vietcong had struck an important blow against the USA and the images of this attack which were shown in America brought home the reality of war to Americans. The Tet Offensive had a major effect on the war: After Tet, the support for the war in the US began to decrease. They realised that when their politicians and army generals had said that victory was close they were wrong. Much of the US public was shocked that the enemy showed little signs of weakness. November 1968 General Westmoreland asked for another 200,000 troops but President Johnson denied this request and in June 1968 replaced him with General Creighton Abrams. The war was costing \$30 billion a years and over 300 US troops were being killed every week. As well as US troops, huge numbers of Vietnamese civilians were killed during the Tet Offensive and cities were destroyed. More and more US citizens were beginning to question why the USA was so heavily involved in such a destructive war.

GCSE-Style Question
Write an account of how the Tet Offensive, 1968, had consequences for those involved in the Vietnam War.
(8 marks)

10 MINS



2
PARAGRAPHS



SKILL FOCUS:
EXPLANATION



Due date:	Tuesday 9 th January 2024
Student number:	
Name:	

Key Knowledge – My Lai Massacre

Early in the morning of Saturday 16 March 1968, nine US helicopters containing around 80 soldiers landed in fields close to the village of My Lai in the Quang Ngai region of South Vietnam. When the troops left around four hours later, as many as 500 people including women, children and the elderly had been shot dead by US soldiers. This event is known as the My Lai Massacre. The My Lai massacre took place shortly after the Tet Offensive and many US troops in Vietnam became increasingly more angry, disillusioned and frustrated. The US soldiers that took part in the My Lai massacre were part of 'Charlie Company', a unit of the US army and they had suffered 28 casualties and five deaths during the Tet Offensive.

The US troops landed shortly after 7.30am and almost immediately began firing at buildings they thought might contain Vietcong fighters. Hand grenades were thrown into houses and crops and animals destroyed. However, no Vietcong fighters were found and only three weapons were recovered. There was no armed fight back from the villagers, who were mostly elderly, women and children. Some of the US soldiers also tortured and raped some of the villagers. When the US soldiers arrived back at base, they reported that 22 civilians had been killed by accident and the rest dead were Vietcong fighters. They were praised by the US army for their actions. Rumours about the truth of the massacre soon began to spread. A year after the event, a young soldier wrote letters to 30 US politicians and military officials about 'something dark and bloody' that had happened at My Lai. General Westmoreland did not believe his troops would have killed villagers in cold blood so he ordered an inquiry. At the same time one of the USA's leading magazines uncovered photos of the massacre and when these were published the nation was horrified.



Source A: A Canadian newspaper cartoon, published January 1969; the caption read, 'Those My Lai atrocities are enough to bombs away.....turn your stomach'

GCSE-Style Question

Source A is critical of the American reaction to My Lai. How do you know? (4 marks)

5 MINS



1 PARAGRAPH



SKILL FOCUS:
DESCRIPTION

