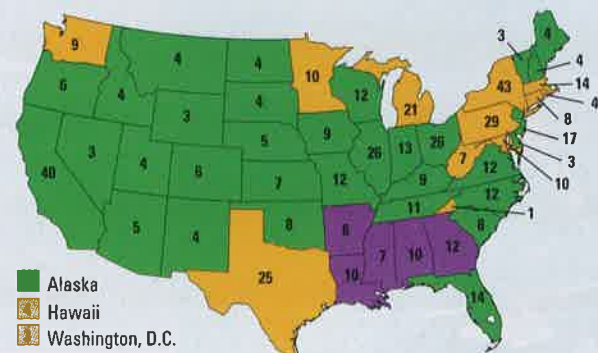


## Election of 1968

### ELECTORAL AND POPULAR VOTES

Party	Candidate	Electoral votes	Popular votes
Republican	Richard M. Nixon	301	31,785,480
Democratic	Hubert H. Humphrey	191	31,275,166
American Independent	George C. Wallace	46	9,906,473



**SKILLBUILDER**  
**INTERPRETING TABLES** By how many percentage points did Nixon defeat Humphrey in the popular vote? How large was Nixon's electoral vote victory?



Richard M. Nixon flashes a victory signal on his way to winning the 1968 Republican nomination for president. Referring to recent years of turmoil, Nixon declared, "We have endured a long night. . . . Let us gather the light."

in the presidential race of 1960, Nixon tasted defeat again in 1962 when he ran for governor of California. His political career all but dead, Nixon joined a New York law firm. However, he never strayed far from politics. In 1966, Nixon campaigned vigorously for Republican candidates in congressional elections, helping

Republicans win back 47 House seats and 3 Senate seats from Democrats. In 1968, Nixon announced his candidacy for president, and on the strength of his many Republican alliances, as well as his voter appeal, he won the party's nomination.

During the presidential race, Nixon campaigned on a promise to restore law and order, which appealed to many middle-class Americans fed up with years of riots and protests. He also promised, in vague but appealing terms, to end the war in Vietnam. Nixon's candidacy was helped by the entry of former Alabama governor **George Wallace** into the race. Wallace, a Democrat running as an independent, was a longtime champion of school segregation and states' rights. Labeled the "white backlash" candidate, Wallace captured five Southern states. In addition, he attracted a surprisingly high number of Northern white working-class voters disgusted with inner-city riots and antiwar protests.

In the end, Nixon defeated Humphrey by more than 100 electoral votes, despite capturing only 43 percent of the popular vote. By winning the presidency, Richard Nixon inherited the quagmire in Vietnam. He eventually would end America's involvement in Vietnam, but not before his war policies created even more protest and uproar within the country.

**THINK THROUGH HISTORY**  
**D. Analyzing Causes** What factors led to Nixon's victory?

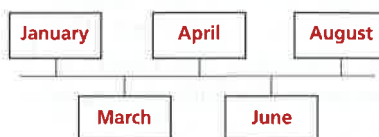
## Section 4 Assessment

### 1. TERMS & NAMES

Identify:

- Tet offensive
- Clark Clifford
- Robert Kennedy
- Eugene McCarthy
- Hubert Humphrey
- George Wallace

**2. SUMMARIZING** Create a time line of major events that occurred in 1968. Use the months already plotted on the time line below as a guide.



Which event do you think was most significant? Explain.

**3. ANALYZING** Why do you think the Tet offensive might be considered the turning point of the Vietnam War? Support your answer with reasons.

**THINK ABOUT**

- its effects on the Johnson administration's credibility
- its effects on public opinion
- Johnson's response to the split within the Democratic Party

**4. COMPARING AND CONTRASTING** Do you think there might have been a relationship between the violence of the Vietnam War and the growing climate of violence in the United States during 1968? Why or why not?

**THINK ABOUT**

- the heavy casualties during the month-long Tet offensive
- peak U.S. involvement in Vietnam in 1968
- Garry Wills's comment on page 904

## 5 The End of the War and Its Legacy

**LEARN ABOUT** President Richard Nixon's Vietnamization policy and the end of the war  
**TO UNDERSTAND** how the war had a lasting effect on America.

### ONE AMERICAN'S STORY

Alfred S. Bradford served in Vietnam from September 1968 to August 1969. A member of the 25th Infantry Division, he was awarded several medals, including the Purple Heart, given to soldiers wounded in battle. Bradford went on to teach history at the universities of Missouri and Oklahoma. One day, Bradford's eight-year-old daughter, Elizabeth, inquired about his experience in Vietnam. "Daddy, why did you do it?" she asked. Bradford recalled what he told himself.

### A PERSONAL VOICE

Vietnam was my generation's adventure. I wanted to be part of that adventure and I believed that it was my duty as an American, both to serve my country and particularly not to stand by while someone else risked his life in my place. I do not regret my decision to go, but I learned in Vietnam not to confuse America with the politicians elected to administer America, even when they claim they are speaking for America, and I learned that I have a duty to myself and to my country to exercise my own judgment based upon my own conscience.

ALFRED S. BRADFORD, quoted in *Some Even Volunteered*

Bradford's mixed view of the war reflected the range of emotions many veterans felt about their service in Vietnam. The war left a deep and lasting impression on many Americans, from soldiers such as Bradford to citizens who did not serve. Richard Nixon had promised in 1968 to end the war, but it would take nearly five more years—and over 20,000 more American deaths—to end the nation's involvement in Vietnam. The legacy of the war was profound, as it dramatically affected the way Americans viewed their government and the world.



A U.S. soldier sits near Quang Tri, Vietnam, during a break in the fighting.

## President Nixon and Vietnamization

In the summer of 1969, recently elected president Richard Nixon announced the first U.S. troop withdrawals from Vietnam. "We have to get rid of the nightmares we inherited," Nixon later told reporters. "One of the nightmares is war without end." However, as Nixon pulled out American troops, he continued the war against North Vietnam to achieve what he called "peace with honor"—a policy that some critics would charge prolonged the "war without end" for several more bloody years.

**THE PULLOUT BEGINS** As President Nixon settled into the White House in January of 1969, negotiations begun by the Johnson administration to end the war in Vietnam were going nowhere. During the peace talks in Paris, the warring factions argued over everything—including the shape of the negotiating table. The United States and South Vietnam insisted that all North Vietnamese forces withdraw from the South and that the government of Nguyen Van Thieu, then South Vietnam's ruler, remain in power. The North Vietnamese and Vietcong demanded that U.S. troops withdraw from South Vietnam and that the Thieu government step aside for a coalition government that would include the Vietcong.



In the midst of the stalled negotiations, Nixon announced his strategy to end America's involvement in Vietnam. Known as **Vietnamization**, the plan called for the gradual withdrawal of U.S. troops in order for the South Vietnamese to take on a more active combat role in the war. By August of 1969, the first 25,000 U.S. troops had returned home from Vietnam. Over the next three years, the number of American troops in Vietnam dropped from more than 500,000 to less than 25,000.



**SKILLBUILDER**  
**INTERPRETING CHARTS**  
What does the chart show about the type of war the U.S. fought in Vietnam?

**"PEACE WITH HONOR"** However, part of Nixon's Vietnamization policy was aimed at establishing what he called a "peace with honor." Nixon intended to maintain U.S. dignity in the face of its withdrawal from war. A further goal was the preservation of U.S. clout at the negotiation table, as President Nixon still demanded that the South Vietnamese government remain intact. With this objective—and even as the pullout had begun—Nixon secretly ordered a massive bombing campaign against supply routes and bases in North Vietnam. The president also ordered that bombs be dropped on the neighboring countries of Laos and Cambodia, which held a number of Vietcong sanctuaries. Nixon told aide H. R. Haldeman that he wanted the enemy to believe he was capable of anything.

#### A PERSONAL VOICE

I call it the madman theory, Bob. I want the North Vietnamese to believe I've reached the point where I might do *anything* to stop the war. We'll just slip the word to them that "for God's sake, you know Nixon is obsessed about Communists. We can't restrain him when he's angry—and he has his hand on the nuclear button . . ."—and Ho Chi Minh himself will be in Paris in two days begging for peace.

RICHARD M. NIXON, quoted in *The Price of Power*

**THINK THROUGH HISTORY**  
**A. Summarizing**  
What was the goal of Nixon's "peace with honor" in Vietnam?

## Trouble Continues on the Home Front

Seeking to win support for his war policies, Richard Nixon appealed to what he called the **silent majority**—moderate, mainstream Americans who quietly supported the president's strategy. To be sure, many average Americans did support the president. However, the events of the war continued to divide the country.

**THE MY LAI MASSACRE** In November of 1969, Americans learned of a shocking event. That month, *New York Times* correspondent Seymour Hersh reported that on March 16, 1968, a U.S. platoon under the command of Lieutenant William Calley, Jr., entered the small village of My Lai in northern South Vietnam in search of Vietcong rebels. Finding no sign of the enemy, the troops rounded up the villagers and shot them. In all, the soldiers massacred more than 100 innocent Vietnamese—mostly women and children. "We huddled them up," recalled 22-year-old Private Paul Meadlo. "I poured about four clips into the group. . . . The mothers was hugging their children. . . . Well, we kept right on firing."

The troops insisted that they were following Lieutenant Calley's orders. When asked what his directive had been, one soldier answered, "Kill anything that breathed." Twenty-five army officers were charged with involve-

ment in the massacre and subsequent cover-up, but only Calley was convicted and imprisoned.

The My Lai massacre shook the nation. *Time* magazine called the incident "an American tragedy," and *Newsweek* appeared to capture the mood of the nation with its headline "A Single Incident in a Brutal War Shocks the American Conscience."

**THE INVASION OF CAMBODIA** Despite the shock over My Lai, however, the country's mood by 1970 seemed to be growing less explosive. American troops were on their way home, and it appeared that the war was finally winding down. Indeed, a *New York Times* survey of college campuses in 1969 had revealed that many students were shifting their attention from the antiwar movement to the environment.

Then on April 30, 1970, President Nixon announced that U.S. troops had invaded Cambodia. The "incursion" into Cambodia was launched, Nixon declared, to clear out North Vietnamese and Vietcong supply centers. Addressing potential critics, the president defended his action: "If when the chips are down, the world's most powerful nation . . . acts like a pitiful, helpless giant, the forces of totalitarianism and anarchy will threaten free nations . . . throughout the world."

Upon hearing of the invasion, college students across the country erupted in protest. In what became the first general student strike in the nation's history, more than 1.5 million students closed down some 1,200 campuses. The president of Columbia University called the month that followed the Cambodian invasion "the most disastrous month of May in the history of higher education."

**KENT STATE** Disaster struck hardest at Kent State University in Ohio, where a massive student protest led to the burning of the ROTC building. In response to the growing unrest, the local mayor called in the National Guard. On May 4, 1970, the guards fired into a crowd of campus protesters who were hurling rocks at them. The gunfire wounded nine people and killed four, including two who had not even participated in the rally.

Ten days later, similar violence rocked the mostly all-black college of Jackson State in Mississippi. National Guardsmen there confronted a group of antiwar demonstrators and fired on the crowd after several bottles were thrown. In the hail of bullets, 12 students were wounded and 2 were killed, both innocent bystanders.

In a sign that America still remained sharply divided about the war, the country hotly debated the campus shootings. Polls indicated that many Americans supported the National Guard; respondents claimed that the students "got what they were asking for." The weeks following the campus turmoil brought new attention to a group known as "hardhats," construction workers and other blue-collar Americans who supported the U.S. government's war policies. In May of 1970, nearly 100,000 members of the Building and Construction Trades Council of New York held a rally outside city hall to support the government.

**THE PENTAGON PAPERS** Nixon's Cambodia policy, however, cost him significant political support. By first bombing and then invading Cambodia without



Mary Ann Vecchio grieves over the body of Jeffrey Glenn Miller, a 20-year-old student shot by National Guard troops at Kent State.

**THINK THROUGH HISTORY**  
**B. Analyzing Issues**  
How did the campus shootings demonstrate the continued divisions within the country?



## KEY PLAYER



**HENRY KISSINGER**  
1923–

Henry Kissinger fled Germany with his family in 1938, to escape the Nazi persecution of the Jews. Kissinger, who helped negotiate America's withdrawal from Vietnam and who later would help forge historic new relations with China and the Soviet Union, held a deep interest in the concept of power. "You know," he once noted, "most of these world leaders, you wouldn't want to know socially. Mostly they are intellectual mediocrities. The thing that is interesting about them is . . . their power."

At first, Kissinger seemed an unlikely candidate to work for Richard Nixon. During the 1968 presidential campaign, Kissinger declared, "That man Nixon is not fit to be president." However, the two would become trusted colleagues. In August of 1974, two days before Nixon resigned as president amid the Watergate political scandal, he summoned Kissinger to the Lincoln Sitting Room upstairs in the White House. There, the two men reportedly knelt together, prayed, and then embraced.

even notifying Congress, the president stirred anger on Capitol Hill. On December 31, 1970, Congress repealed the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, which had given the president near independence in conducting policy in Vietnam.

Support for the war eroded even further when in June of 1971 former Defense Department worker Daniel Ellsberg leaked what became known as the **Pentagon Papers**. The 7,000-page document, written for Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, revealed among other things that the government drew up plans for entering the war even as President Lyndon Johnson promised that he would not send American troops to Vietnam. Furthermore, the papers showed that there was never any plan to end the war as long as the North Vietnamese persisted.

For many Americans, the Pentagon Papers confirmed their belief that the government had not been honest about its war intentions. The document, while not particularly damaging to the Nixon administration, supported what opponents of the war had been saying.

## America's Longest War Ends

In March of 1972, the North Vietnamese launched their largest attack on South Vietnam since the Tet offensive in 1968. President Nixon responded by ordering a massive bombing campaign against North Vietnamese cities, and the mining of Haiphong's harbor, into which Soviet and Chinese supply ships sailed. The Communists "have never been bombed like they are going to be bombed this time," Nixon vowed. The bombings halted the North Vietnamese attack, but the grueling stalemate continued. It was after this that the Nixon administration took steps to finally end America's involvement in Vietnam.

**"PEACE IS AT HAND"** By the middle of 1972, the country's growing social division and the looming presidential election prompted the Nixon administration to change its negotiating policy in Paris. Polls showed that more than 60 percent of Americans in 1971 felt that the United States should withdraw all troops from Vietnam by the end of the year.

**Henry Kissinger**, the president's adviser for national security affairs, served as Nixon's top negotiator in Vietnam. Kissinger, a German emigrant who had earned three degrees from Harvard, was an expert on international relations. Since 1969, Kissinger had been meeting privately with North Vietnam's chief negotiator, Le Duc Tho. Eventually, Kissinger dropped his insistence on the removal of all North Vietnamese troops from the South before the complete withdrawal of American troops. On October 26, 1972, one week before the presidential election, Kissinger announced, "Peace is at hand."

**THE FINAL PUSH** President Nixon won reelection, but the promised peace proved to be elusive. The Thieu regime, alarmed at the prospect of North Vietnamese troops stationed in South Vietnam, rejected Kissinger's plan. Talks broke off on December 16, and two days later, the president unleashed a ferocious bombing campaign against Hanoi and Haiphong, the two largest cities in North Vietnam. In what became known as the "Christmas bombings," U.S. planes dropped 100,000 bombs for 11 straight days, pausing only on Christmas Day.

At this point, calls to end the war resounded from the halls of Congress as well as from Beijing and Moscow. Everyone, it seemed, had finally grown weary of the war. The warring parties returned to the

**THINK THROUGH HISTORY**  
**C. Hypothesizing**  
How might the release of the Pentagon Papers have hurt the Nixon administration's war effort in Vietnam?

**THINK THROUGH HISTORY**  
**D. Evaluating Decisions**  
Why might the United States have refused to reenter the war?

peace table, and on January 27, 1973, the United States signed an "agreement on ending the war and restoring peace in Vietnam." Under the agreement, North Vietnamese troops would remain in South Vietnam, which had Nixon's promise to respond "with full force" to any violation of the peace agreement. On March 29, 1973, the last U.S. combat troops left for home. For America, the Vietnam War had ended.

**THE FALL OF SAIGON** The war itself, however, raged on. Within months of the United States' departure, the cease-fire agreement between North and South Vietnam collapsed. In March of 1975, after several years of fighting, the North Vietnamese launched a full-scale invasion against the South. Thieu appealed to the United States for help. America provided economic aid but refused to send troops.

President Gerald Ford, who entered the White House after the Watergate political scandal forced Richard Nixon out, captured the nation's mood during a speech in New Orleans: "America can regain its sense of pride that existed before Vietnam. But it cannot be achieved by refighting a war that is finished as far as America is concerned." On April 30, 1975, North Vietnamese tanks rolled into Saigon and captured the city. Soon after, South Vietnam surrendered to North Vietnam.

## The War's Painful Legacy

The Vietnam War exacted a terrible price from its participants. In all, 58,000 Americans were killed and some 365,000 were wounded. North and South Vietnamese deaths topped 1.5 million. In addition, the war left Southeast Asia highly unstable, which led to further war in Cambodia. In America, a nation attempted to come to grips with an unsuccessful war. In the end, the conflict in Vietnam left many Americans with a more cautious outlook on foreign affairs and a more cynical attitude toward their government.

**AMERICAN VETERANS COPE BACK HOME** While families welcomed home their sons and daughters, the nation as a whole extended a cold hand to its



Lieutenant Colonel Robert Stirm, a returning POW, receives a warm welcome from his family. The longest-held Vietnam POW was Lieutenant Everett Alvarez, Jr., of California. He was imprisoned for more than eight years.

**NOW & THEN**

### POWS/MIAS

An issue that remains alive for many Americans concerns the thousands of soldiers who did not return home from Vietnam. In 1995, the Pentagon reported that there were still 2,202 American soldiers missing in action (MIA) in Southeast Asia—1,618 in Vietnam.

While far more Americans are listed as missing from the Korean War (8,170) and World War II (78,750), locating missing soldiers in Vietnam has taken on a particular intensity. One reason is that despite the Vietnamese government's denial, a number of Americans believe that some U.S. soldiers may still be alive in Vietnam.

The United States has established an MIA office in Hanoi, whose staff members attempt to locate the remains of missing Americans and track down leads about the possibility of surviving soldiers.





## America's Longest War, 1964–1973

1964

• Congress passes Tonkin Gulf Resolution, giving president broad military powers in Vietnam; President Johnson begins bombing North Vietnam.

1965

• First U.S. ground troops arrive in Vietnam to begin fighting the Vietcong and North Vietnamese Army.

1967

• Antiwar protests in the United States intensify.

1968

• Vietcong launch massive Tet offensive on numerous South Vietnamese cities.

1969

• Paris peace talks begin in earnest; President Nixon announces Vietnamization of war—gradual withdrawal of U.S. troops.

1970

• President Nixon orders invasion of Cambodia to destroy enemy supply bases; American college campuses erupt in protest.

1972

• Nixon unleashes “Christmas bombings” on North Vietnamese cities after peace talks break off.

1973

• United States and North Vietnam sign a truce; the U.S. withdraws the last of its troops from Vietnam.

returning Vietnam veterans. There were no brass bands, no victory parades, no cheering crowds. Instead, many veterans faced indifference or even hostility from an America still torn and bitter about the war. Lily Jean Lee Adams, who served as an army nurse in Vietnam, recalled arriving, while still in uniform, back at Oakland Army Base in 1970.

### A PERSONAL VOICE

In the bus terminal, people were staring at me and giving me dirty looks. I expected the people to smile, like, “Wow, she was in Vietnam, doing something for her country—wonderful.” I felt like I had walked into another country, not my country. So I went into the ladies’ room and changed.

LILY JEAN LEE ADAMS, quoted in *A Piece of My Heart*

Many Vietnam veterans readjusted successfully to civilian life. However, about 15 percent of the 3.3 million soldiers who served developed delayed stress syndrome. These veterans had recurring nightmares about their war experience. Many suffered from severe headaches and memory lapses. Some veterans became highly apathetic, while others began abusing drugs or alcohol. Several thousand even committed suicide.

In 1982, the U.S. government, in an effort to honor the men and women who served in Vietnam, unveiled the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. The memorial consists of two black granite walls inscribed with the names of all the Americans who died in the war or who were then still listed as missing in action. Many Vietnam veterans, as well as their loved ones, have found visiting the memorial a deeply moving, even healing experience.

**FURTHER TURMOIL IN SOUTHEAST ASIA** The end of the Vietnam War ushered in a new period of violence and chaos in Southeast Asia. In unifying Vietnam, the Communists initially held out a conciliatory hand to the South Vietnamese. “You have nothing to fear,” declared Colonel Bui Tin of the North Vietnamese Army.

However, the Communists soon imprisoned more than 400,000 South Vietnamese in harsh “reeducation,” or labor, camps. As the Communists imposed their rule throughout the land, nearly 1.5 million people fled Vietnam. They included citizens who had supported the U.S. war effort, as well as business owners, whom the Communists expelled when they began nationalizing the country’s business sector.

Also fleeing the country was a large group of poor Vietnamese, known as boat people because they left on anything from freighters to barges to rowboats. Their efforts to reach safety across the South China Sea often met with tragedy, as nearly 50,000 perished on the high seas due to exposure, drowning, illness, or piracy.

The people of Cambodia also suffered greatly after the war. The U. S. invasion of Cambodia had unleashed a brutal civil war, in which a Communist group known as the **Khmer Rouge** seized power in 1975. In an effort to transform the country into a peasant society, the Khmer Rouge

executed many government officials and academics. During its reign of terror, the Khmer Rouge is believed to have killed as many as 2 million Cambodians.

**VIETNAM’S EFFECT ON AMERICA** Even after it ended, the Vietnam War remained a subject of great controversy for Americans. Many hawks continued to insist that the war could have been won if the U.S. had employed more military power. They also blamed the antiwar movement at home for destroying American morale. Doves countered that the North Vietnamese had displayed incredible resiliency and that an increase in U.S. military force would have resulted only in a continuing stalemate. In addition, doves argued that an unrestrained war against North Vietnam might have prompted a military reaction from China or the Soviet Union.

The war resulted in several major U.S. policy changes. First, the government abolished the draft, which had stirred so much antiwar sentiment. The country also took steps to curb the president’s war-making powers. In November 1973, Congress passed the **War Powers Act**, which stipulated that a president must inform Congress within 48 hours if U.S. forces are sent into a hostile area without a declaration of war. In addition, the troops may remain there no longer than 90 days unless Congress approves the president’s actions or declares war.

In a broader sense, the Vietnam War significantly altered America’s views on foreign policy. In what has been labeled the Vietnam syndrome, Americans now pause and consider possible risks to their own interests before deciding whether to intervene in the affairs of other nations.

Finally, the war contributed to an overall cynicism in Americans about their government and political leaders that persists today. Americans grew suspicious of a government that had provided so much misleading information—as the Johnson administration did—or concealed so many activities—as the Nixon administration did. Coupled with the Watergate scandal of the mid 1970s, the war diminished the optimism and faith in government that Americans felt during the Eisenhower and Kennedy years.

## NOW & THEN

### U.S. RECOGNITION OF VIETNAM

In July of 1995, more than 20 years after the Vietnam War ended, the United States extended full diplomatic relations to Vietnam. In announcing the resumption of ties with Vietnam, President Bill Clinton declared, “Let this moment . . . be a time to heal and a time to build.” Demonstrating how the war still divides Americans, the president’s decision drew both praise and criticism from members of Congress and veterans’ groups.

In an ironic twist, Clinton nominated as ambassador to Vietnam a former prisoner of war from the Vietnam War, Douglas Peterson, a congress member from Florida. Peterson, a former air force pilot, was shot down over North Vietnam in 1966 and spent six and a half years in a Hanoi prison.

## HISTORICAL SPOTLIGHT

### VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL: THE WALL

Shortly after 1980, a national competition was held to determine the Vietnam memorial’s design. Maya Ying Lin, *above*, a 20-year-old architecture student of Chinese descent, submitted the winning design—a long, black granite wall on which are etched the names of the men and women who died or are missing in action, *below*.

“I didn’t want a static object that people would just look at,” Lin said, “but something they could relate to as on a journey, or passage, that would bring each to his own conclusions.” Lin’s design became known simply as the Wall.



THINK THROUGH HISTORY  
E. Recognizing Effects In what way did the Vietnam War alter American attitudes?

## Section 5 Assessment

### 1. TERMS & NAMES

Identify:

- Vietnamization
- silent majority
- Pentagon Papers
- Henry Kissinger
- Khmer Rouge
- War Powers Act

**2. SUMMARIZING** Write a newspaper headline summarizing the historical significance of each date listed below.

- March 16, 1968
- April 30, 1970
- May 4, 1970
- May 14, 1970
- December 31, 1970
- January 27, 1973
- March 29, 1973

Choose a headline and write the first paragraph for the newspaper article.

**3. SYNTHESIZING** In your opinion, what was the effect of the U.S. government’s deception about its policies and military conduct in Vietnam? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

#### THINK ABOUT

- the release of information surrounding the My Lai massacre
- the contents of the Pentagon Papers
- Nixon’s secrecy in authorizing military maneuvers

### 4. DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

How would you account for the cold homecoming American soldiers received when they returned from Vietnam? Support your answer with reasons.

#### THINK ABOUT

- how the Vietnam War ended
- America’s divisiveness over its role in Vietnam
- the media coverage of the My Lai massacre