

# The Vietnam War

*Postwar United States*  
*(1945–1975)*



Containment

Escalation

Withdrawal

## Thematic Icons



Economics and business



Geography and environment



Historical concepts and questions



Politics, government and citizenship



Society and culture



War, diplomacy and foreign policy

**Icons:** For more detailed instructions, see the *User Guide*



Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page



By the end of this section, you will learn about the escalation of the Vietnam War and be able to answer these key questions:

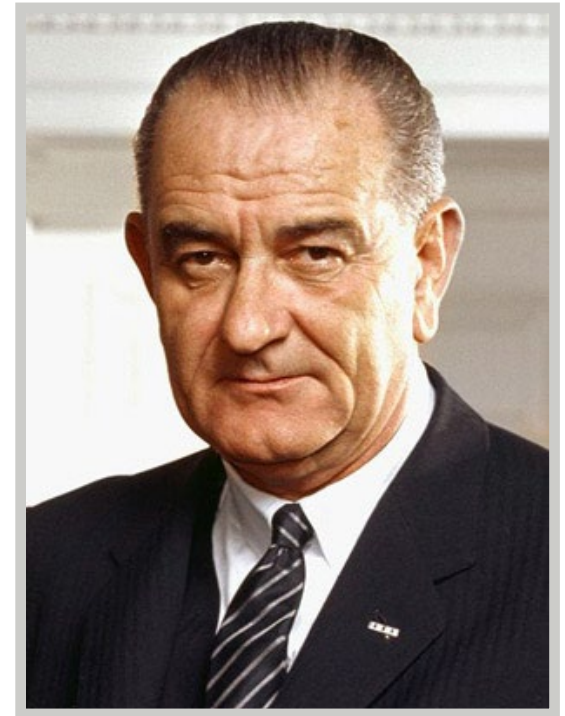
- How did U.S. policy towards Vietnam change after the Gulf of Tonkin incident?
- How was the war conducted and what effects did this have?
- What role did the media play in the war?



**Lyndon B. Johnson** assumed the presidency after the assassination of Kennedy and inherited a rapidly deteriorating state of affairs in Vietnam:

- an unstable series of governments and coups
- a deteriorating military situation
- the results of ineffective policies.

Unlike his predecessors, in order to rectify the situation, he greatly expanded the U.S. military role in the conflict. The decisions he made over Vietnam would forever mark his presidency.





The **Gulf of Tonkin incident** in August 1964 was a key event in the course of the Vietnam War. As a result of it, the U.S. passed a resolution allowing for the escalation of the conflict. Watch this animation to find out about the Gulf of Tonkin incident and its aftermath.

Press **start** to begin.

**start**



Was the incident a good enough justification for war?



After the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, the U.S. massively increased its commitment to war in Vietnam. The war was at its peak under President Johnson from 1965 to 1968. Press on the buttons to find out more about the key weapons and tactics.

Press **start** to begin.

**start**





The stronger U.S. presence in Vietnam made it appear as though the U.S. was winning the war. However, in reality the situation had not changed dramatically.

Drag each statement to the correct place, depending on whether it was an illusion or reality.

Press **start** to begin.

start





The war was the first to be televised on the news, so it was constantly in the media spotlight. The reality it portrayed helped to shape public opinion. Public support for the war declined significantly in 1967 fueled by mounting casualties, enormous costs and a feeling that there was no end in sight.



In an effort to build up public opinion, the government launched a media campaign to alter the perception that the war had reached a stalemate. The media was inundated with a surge of positive reports.

What does the photo say about the morality of war?





The **Tet Offensive** was a major campaign launched by North Vietnam in January 1968 that caught the U.S. off guard and resulted in a huge number of casualties.

Read this passage about the Tet Offensive and select the correct word to fill each blank.

Press **start** to begin.

start





The Tet Offensive had many results and consequences for both sides. Drag each statement to the correct place, depending on whether it was a consequence for the U.S. and South Vietnam or North Vietnam.

Press **start** to begin.

**start**





The Tet Offensive demonstrated the capacity of the North Vietnamese to launch a major offensive, which the public had been told was impossible. It contradicted everything Johnson had been saying about the war. As a result, there was an increasing public willingness to question the costs of the war.

The outcome of Tet, although technically a military victory, was to turn U.S. public opinion against both the war and the policies of the Johnson administration.



However, the illusions of stability and military progress allowed the government to argue that the war was worth the cost.



Was the Tet Offensive a turning point in the war? Why?