

Name:.....

School:.....



WINCHESTER
COLLEGE

Election

History

2022

Total time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes

You may have 10 minutes to study the source documents before the examination starts.

Answer ALL questions in Section A and ONE question from Section B.

Total marks for Section A: **32**. Total marks for Section B: **20**.

Please start Section B on a fresh sheet of paper.

Section A: Why did the USA lose the Vietnam War?

In the early 1960s successive American Presidents supported the government of South Vietnam against a Communist uprising led by a group known as the Viet Cong. The Viet Cong were supported by North Vietnam, a Communist country, and in 1965 180,000 American troops were sent to Vietnam to support the South Vietnamese government.

The war did not go well for the United States. Tens of thousands of troops were lost, and at the same time hundreds of thousands of South Vietnamese civilians were killed in the fighting. Despite defeating a large-scale attack by the Viet Cong in 1968 called the 'Tet Offensive', by the late 1960s many felt the war could not be won. In 1973 American troops withdrew. In 1975 North Vietnam invaded and defeated the government of the South Vietnam, uniting the country.

Why did the United States lose? Was it because of what was happening in Vietnam, or in the United States itself?

The following sources explore this issue. You are not expected to know anything about the material but, if you do, deploy your knowledge only to further your analysis of the sources. You are advised to spend about 50 minutes on this section of the paper.

Source A:

From a book about the Vietnam War written by an American historian, and published in 1983.

The American soldiers in Vietnam could rely on the latest equipment. He was transported to the battle scene by helicopter, and if wounded flown out by helicopter. Tanks and armoured cars supported any attack and he had the most up-to-date arms – mortars, machine guns, grenade and rocket launchers, and the M16, a fully automatic rifle. The Americans had air-to-surface missiles and bombs of every shape and size from napalm bombs that roasted their victims alive to cluster bombs whose hundreds of pellets burst out to rip deep into the body of anyone within range. They also had electronic instruments which detected guerrillas, and chemical weapons which could destroy jungles and crops.

Source B

A British journalist speaking on a television programme, 27 June, 1993.

The American story was that the heavy use of tunnels by the Viet Cong was an example of the success of their bombing and shelling campaigns. They told me that it showed that the Viet Cong were so demoralized that they were having to take refuge underground. Well I must confess that I believed that version of the story. It was only later when it was discovered how enormous the tunnel complex was and how skilfully the Viet Cong used it and how the tunnels actually extended under the American base camps, that I started to

think for myself and I realised that this was not a sign of how demoralized the Viet Cong had become, but how determined they were.

Source C

A description by a US marine of US tactics when searching for Viet Cong in villages in South Vietnam.

We would go through a village before dawn, forcing everybody out of bed and kicking down doors, dragging them out if they didn't move fast enough. They all had underground bunkers inside their homes to protect themselves against bombing. But to us all the bunkers were Vietcong hiding places, and we blew them up. If we spotted extra rice lying around, we'd confiscate it to keep them from giving it to the Viet Cong. The villagers were herded like cattle into a wire compound, and left to sit in the hot sun. If they had the wrong identity card they'd be beaten badly, maybe tortured. At the end of the day they would be turned loose. Their homes had been wrecked, their rice confiscated – and if they weren't pro-Viet Cong before we got there, they sure as hell were by the time we left.

Source D

A cartoon published in Britain in 1966.



(The US is spending more than \$40,000,000 per day on the war in Vietnam; compensation payments for South Vietnamese civilians killed 'by mistake' are \$34 per head.)

Source E

From General Westmoreland's autobiography, published in 1976. General Westmoreland was in overall command of US troops in Vietnam.

Even after the introduction of American troops into South Vietnam in 1965, the war might still have been ended within a few years except for the ill-considered policy of our own government against North Vietnam.

Yet even so, the war could have been won following the defeat of the enemy's Tet Offensive in 1968. The United States had the finest military force ever assembled. Had the President allowed a change in strategy and taken advantage of the enemy's weakness to enable the military to carry out planned operations in Laos and Cambodia and north of the demilitarized zone, along with intensified bombing, the North Vietnamese would have been broken. Press and television had created an atmosphere not of victory, but of defeat, which coupled with the vocal anti-war elements, profoundly influenced timid officials in Washington. The President allowed public opinion to become a liability.

Source F

From a memorandum written by Robert McNamara (the US Secretary of State for Defence) to President Lyndon Johnson on 19th May 1967, opposing a request from General Westmoreland for more troops to be sent to Vietnam.

The Vietnam war is unpopular in this country. It is becoming increasingly unpopular as it escalates – causing more American casualties. Most American do not know how we got where we are, and most are convinced that somehow we should not have got this deeply in. All want the war ended and expect their President to end it. Successfully. Or else.

There may be a limit beyond which many Americans will not permit the United States to go. The picture of the world's greatest superpower killing or seriously injuring 1000 innocent civilians a week, while trying to pound a tiny backward nation into submission, is not a pretty one.

Source G

A letter to American Anti-War protestors, dated 14 October 1969, from the Premier of North Vietnam.

Dear American Friends,

Large sections of the American people, encouraged and supported by many peace-loving people, are about to launch an offensive through the United States to persuade President Nixon to put an end to the Vietnam War.

Your urgent demand is to save American honour and prevent sons and brothers from dying uselessly in Vietnam. It is a timely answer to the government which is intensifying and prolonging the war in Vietnam in defiance of American and World protests.

The Vietnamese and world people fully approve of your just struggle... and are firmly confident that the Vietnamese and American people will certainly be crowned with total victory.

Affectionately yours
Pham Van Dong
Premier of North Vietnam

Source H

A list of Viet Cong 'heroes' drawn up by an American journalist. He compiled the list after visiting in a South Vietnamese village, who said that Viet Cong fighters would call meetings in the village during which they were told about these 'heroes'.

Two young women who tempted some United States soldiers to lay down their weapons, and then killed them.

An old woman who assisted guerrillas in setting up an ambush against American soldiers.

A young boy who befriended some United States soldiers and then led them into a Viet Cong ambush.

A government soldier who deserted to the Viet Cong, bringing several weapons and stolen documents with him.

A schoolboy who secretly spread the teachings of Ho Chi Minh among his classmates.

Questions

Read Sources A and B.

1. Compare these sources as evidence for the military superiority of US forces. [6]

Read Source C.

2. What does this source suggest about the effectiveness of American tactics? [4]

Read Source D.

3. What is the message of this cartoon? [4]

Read sources E and F.

4. How far do these sources agree? Explain your answer. [6]

Read sources G and H.

5. Is one of these sources more valuable than the other to a historian studying the Vietnam War? Explain your answer. [4]

Consider all of the sources.

6. How far do the sources support the view that the United States lost the war in Vietnam because they lost the support of the South Vietnamese people? Explain your answer. [8]

Total for Section A: 32 marks

Section B: Essays

Answer ONE of the following questions. Use examples from your own knowledge to support your answer. Wherever possible, anchor your arguments in your knowledge of the past. All questions are worth 20 marks.

1. What are museums for?
2. Write a critical review of any history book you have read. You might like to consider the argument of the book, and then assess its strengths and weaknesses before reaching a judgement.
3. Explore the relative significance of the causes of any historical event you have studied.
4. How might historians use novels and other fiction writing to enhance their understanding of the past?
5. Assess the consequences of any rebellion, revolt, or revolution you have studied.
6. To what extent does the history of Ukraine help to explain the current conflict?

Total for Section B: 20 marks

Total for paper: 52 marks

END OF PAPER