

Fulbright Investigates the Vietnam War
Teacher Materials

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How important is it that Congress and the President trust each other?

Content Standards	US History	US Civics
	8.1.2 Foreign Policy During the Cold War – compare the causes and consequences of the American policy of containment including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the development and growth of a U.S. national security establishment and intelligence community. the direct and/or armed conflicts with Communism (for example, but not limited to: Berlin, Korea, Cuba). U.S. involvement in Vietnam, and the foreign and domestic consequences of the war. indirect (or proxy) confrontations within specific world regions. the arms race and its implications on science, technology, and education. 	C – 3.3.3 Explain the concept of public opinion, factors that shape it, and contrasting views on the role it should and does play in public policy. C – 3.3.6 Explain functions and possible influence of various news and other media sources in political communication. C – 3.3.7 Analyze the credibility and validity of various forms of political communication.
Staging the Question	Using Google Forms , give students the prompt: “Rank the following factors from most to least important when it comes to deciding whether to trust someone or something.” Have students discuss and rank the options in Google Forms.	
Supporting Question 1		Supporting Question 2
Why did Senator Fulbright's understanding of the Gulf of Tonkin incident change over time?		What did Senator Fulbright’s hearings reveal to the nation?
Formative Performance Task		Formative Performance Task
Students use a modified Claim-Evidence-Reasoning chart to compare the information provided at the time of passage of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution with information that Senator Fulbright and his committee learn after it is passed.		Students will work in teams to create newspaper-style headlines in reaction to the information exposed by the Fulbright Committee’s hearings
Featured Sources		Featured Sources
Source 1A: Tonkin Gulf Incident Map (for reference only) Source 1B: President Johnson's Vietnam Address, 8/4/64 (Video 6:00 mins) Source 1C: Tonkin Gulf Resolution Source 1D: Evidence Strips <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anonymous letter received by Senator Fulbright, January 2, 1968 Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara to Senate Foreign Relations Committee August 6, 1964 Senator Frank Lausche of Ohio on the floor of the Senate, Aug. 5, 1964 Secretary of State Dean Rusk to Senate Foreign 		Source 2A: “Who was J. William Fulbright?” reading Source 2B: Clips of testimony of General Taylor before the Fulbright Committee (Video 7:52 min) Source 2C: Clip of testimony of George Kennan before the Fulbright Committee (Video 2:23 min) Source 2D: Clips of testimony of Secretary of State Dean Rusk before the Fulbright Committee (Video 6:47 min) Source 2E: Clip of testimony of John Kerry before the Fulbright Committee (Video 7:18 min)



<p>Relations Committee, Aug. 6, 1964</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff memorandum written for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee SUBJECT: The 1964 incidents in the Gulf of Tonkin Jan. 17, 1968 • Washington Post, August 16, 1964 • Washington Post September 24, 1964 • Washington Post, June 3, 1966 • Anonymous letter received by Senate Foreign Relations Committee, January 24, 1968 • Top secret paper prepared by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (McNaughton) 	
Assessment	In teams, students will draft a Congressional Resolution that acts as an alternative reaction to the incidents in the Tonkin Gulf. Then, each student will individually reflect on how their new resolution differs from the original and answer the compelling question.
Extension/Taking Informed Action	Students read a recent article about the authorization of military force which was used to authorize military action in Iraq and Afghanistan and answer the accompanying questions.

Required Supplies/Materials:

Day 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pen/pencil (all students) • Access to computer (one per student) • Fulbright Inquiry – Trust Factors Ranking Google Form • Source 1A: Tonkin Gulf Incident Map (one per small group) • Source 1C: Tonkin Gulf Resolution (OPTIONAL-one per student) • Source 1D: Evidence Strips - cut into strips and placed in envelope (one per small group) • Tonkin Gulf Resolution C-E-R handout (one per student)
Day 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pen/pencil (all students) • “Who was J. William Fulbright?” handout (one per student) • “Who was J. William Fulbright?” comprehension questions (one per student)
Day 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pen/pencil (all students) • Headline graphic organizer (one per student)
Day 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised Tonkin Gulf Resolution graphic organizer • Revised Tonkin Gulf Resolution template • Chromebook (one per small group) • Sticky dots or markers for hot dots • Two sheets of paper per team: one labeled “Hot Dots” and one labeled “Feedback”

Suggested Pacing: Four 60-minute class periods.



Lesson Sequence:

Period 1

Staging the Question:

Have students open the [Fulbright Inquiry – Trust Factors Ranking](#) Google Form. Give students two minutes to discuss with a partner and complete the poll. When all students have responded, display the results for the whole class, and take one or two share-outs as to the reasoning behind rankings. Explain that all these reasons to trust or distrust someone apply in the relationship between Congress and the President. Tell students that they will be exploring a time in U.S. History when the Senate made a very big decision based on information given to them by the President and his aides, whom they trusted, which later came into question. **(10 minutes)**

Divide students into teams of 3-4. They will remain in these groups for the entire lesson.

Supporting Question 1:

Tell students that they are going to be introduced to the situation by an address from the President, and that they should look at their map to help them better understand what Johnson is talking about. Pass out the Tonkin Gulf Incident Map (one per small group) and the Tonkin Gulf Resolution C-E-R handout (one per student). Have students watch the video of [President Johnson's Vietnam Address, 8/4/64](#). After the video, have students take 5 minutes to answer question 1 on the handout. Take one or two share-outs. **(10 minutes)**

Next, pass out the source strips, cut up and placed into one envelope per team. Explain to students that the sources they are about to look at are different examples of information available to Congress over time. Tell students to put the sources in chronological order to see how this information changed over time. Have students work in their teams to use the sources to complete the C-E-R handout according to the directions. While they may work together as a team, each student must complete their own C-E-R handout. **(25 minutes)**

Period 2:

Begin with students returning to their groups and C-E-R handout. Have students answer questions 1-3 together. **(10 minutes)**

After they have worked in their teams to answer questions 1-3, give students time to individually answer supporting question 1. **(15 minutes)**

Invite a few students to share their answers to supporting question 1 and have a discussion around the responses. **(10 minutes)**

Explain to students that they will now learn about J. William Fulbright, a powerful U.S. Senator who originally argued in favor of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution. Pass out the document “Who was J. William Fulbright?” and its corresponding comprehension questions. Give students time to read the document and answer the questions. **(15 minutes)**

Period 3

Have students return to their groups. Tell students that Senator Fulbright and his committee saw much of the same evidence that they have seen over the last two periods. However, the statements by the President and his advisors did



not provide enough information. Accordingly, Fulbright decided to continue investigating and digging for facts. He launched a series of hearings which he hoped would educate both himself, his Senate colleagues, and the public.

Pass out the headline graphic organizer. Tell students that they are now going to watch some of the Fulbright hearings.

- [1966 Fulbright Vietnam Hearings, Retired General and Ambassador Maxwell Taylor](#)
 - Play from 00:31:33-00:39:20 (total run time: 7:47 minutes)
- [1966 Vietnam Hearings Preview – Senior US Diplomat George Kennan](#)
- [1966 Fulbright Hearings - Secretary of State Dean Rusk](#)
 - Play from 1:00:23-1:04:00 and 1:06:05-1:08:48 (total run time: 6:20 minutes)
- [Vietnam War Hearing 1971 - Lt. John Kerry](#)
 - Play from 00:12:43-00:18:26 and 00:19:19-00:20:00 (total run time: 6:22 minutes)

Following each video, students should talk in their teams for a few minutes, and then each student should create a newspaper headline that captures the “essence” of what they just watched. **(10 minutes)**

After students have watched the clips and written their headlines, they should take some time individually to answer supporting question 2. Take one or two class share-outs. **(5 minutes)**

Period 4

Summative Assessment:

As the final activity, pass out the revised Tonkin Gulf Resolution graphic organizer. Tell students that for the next 30 minutes, they will revisit the Tonkin Gulf Resolution. Fulbright was one of the original supporters of the resolution, and after what his investigation discovered, he regretted it. Each team will be able to do what Fulbright could not and use the revised Tonkin Gulf Resolution graphic organizer to write an alternative Tonkin Gulf Resolution based on the facts revealed by the Fulbright hearings. Once each team has completed the graphic organizer, they may write their revised resolution on the revised Resolution template (formatted to look like the original Tonkin Gulf Resolution). Each team will turn in one copy of their resolution per team. **(30 minutes)**

Hot Dots:

Once each team has completed their revised resolution, ensure that each team’s resolution is laid out so that students can do a gallery walk to read each one. Next to each resolution should be two blank pages, one labeled “Hot Dots” and one labeled “Feedback.” Students will then proceed to do a gallery walk of the various resolutions. They should use their sticky dots to vote on their favorite version while also leaving one piece of positive feedback for each of the teams. The resolution with the most hot dots will be considered “adopted” by the class. **(20 minutes)**

Wrap-Up:

To conclude, students will answer the “Individual Reflection Handout” on their own and turn it in. **(10 minutes)**



Name: _____

The Tonkin Gulf Resolution C-E-R Worksheet **ANSWER KEY**

Congress passed the Tonkin Gulf Resolution based on President Johnson's word and Senator Fulbright's endorsement. Later, Senator Fulbright felt misled by the Johnson administration.

Directions: Watch President Johnson's Vietnam address from 8/4/64. Refer to your Tonkin Gulf Incident Map as you watch.

What are your initial reactions to what President Johnson just said?

Answers will vary, but may include:

Johnson says we just got attacked for the second time by North Vietnam. We have to fight back. We can't let them do that!

With your team, lay out the primary source evidence from your envelope in chronological order and list the order in the space below.

Primary Sources Listed in Chronological Order:

Source Letter	Date Published
1. <i>J</i>	<i>August 4, 1964</i>
2. <i>D</i>	<i>August 5, 1964</i>
3. <i>E/B</i>	<i>August 6, 1964</i>
4. <i>E/B</i>	<i>August 6, 1964</i>
5. <i>H</i>	<i>August 16, 1964</i>
6. <i>C</i>	<i>September 24, 1964</i>
7. <i>K</i>	<i>June 3, 1966</i>
8. <i>A</i>	<i>January 2, 1968</i>
9. <i>F/G</i>	<i>January 17, 1968</i>
10. <i>F/G</i>	<i>January 17, 1968</i>
11. <i>I</i>	<i>1971 (This source was written March 10, 1965, but was only published and made common knowledge in 1971)</i>

Next, match each piece of evidence with the claim it best fits. All evidence will be used only once but some claims may have multiple pieces of evidence. As you work, think about whether the evidence suggests the claim in the chart is true, or whether it suggests the claim is misleading. When your group has finished discussing, write the evidence letter in the chart.

Claim (Source 1C: Excerpts from The Tonkin Gulf Resolution, passed by Congress August 7, 1964)	Evidence	
	Suggests claim is true	Suggests claim is misleading
<i>"To promote the maintenance of international peace and security in southeast Asia."</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>H</i>
<i>"Whereas naval units of the Communist regime in Vietnam, have deliberately and repeatedly attacked United States naval vessels lawfully present in international waters, and have thereby created a serious threat to international peace"</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>A, F, C, K</i>
<i>"Whereas these attackers are part of deliberate and systematic campaign of aggression that the Communist regime in North Vietnam has been waging against its neighbors and the nations joined with them in the collective defense of their freedom"</i>	<i>D</i>	
<i>"Whereas the United States is assisting the peoples of southeast Asia to protest (sic) their freedom and has no territorial, military or political ambitions in that area, but desires only that these people should be left in peace to work out their destinies in their own way"</i>	<i>J</i>	<i>G, I</i>

1. What do you notice about how the evidence seems to change over time?

Answers will vary, but may include:

The earlier evidence seems to suggest there is no doubt at all that we were attacked. It also seems to come from mostly official administration sources. As time goes on though, the picture gets muddier, and the sources start to suggest we were wrong. They also start to come more and more from the media, the investigation, and the people that the investigation interviews.

Use these excerpts from the rest of the resolution to answer the following questions.

"The United States regards as vital to its national interest and to world peace the maintenance of international peace and security in southeast Asia. Consonant with the Constitution of the United States and the Charter of the United Nations and in accordance with its obligations under the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty..."

"... the United States is, therefore, prepared, as the President determines, to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force, to assist any member or protocol state of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty requesting assistance in defense of its freedom. This resolution shall expire when the President shall determine that the peace and security of the area is reasonably assured by international conditions created by action of the United Nations or otherwise, except that it may be terminated earlier by concurrent resolution of the Congress."

2. According to the section above, why is the United States involving itself in Southeast Asia at all?

Answers will vary, but may include:

We want peace, and we have a treaty that says we have to.

3. Reread the second paragraph. Do you have any questions or concerns about the way that clause is worded?

Answers will vary, but may include:

This section seems to give the president a whole lot of power with no real expiration date, and the President appears to be the only one who gets to decide when he has “finished.” Yeah, Congress could take it back, but you’d have to get the votes for that. Also...isn’t Congress supposed to declare war if we are fighting with another country? ARE they declaring war?

Why did Senator Fulbright's understanding of the Gulf of Tonkin incident change over time? Use two quotes from the evidence strips to support your claim.

Answers will vary, but may include:

Immediately after the supposed attack, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee heard testimony from Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, who stated unequivocally that the United States was attacked on August 4, 1964 by “between three and six North Vietnamese patrol boats.” This is in line with the information given to the nation by the President on August 4th. However, over time, an increasing number of sources start to indicate doubt as to the veracity of these claims. The Washington Post, reporting on August 16 of that same year called the Tonkin Gulf incident a “snafu” and cast doubt on whether or not the Senate was provided with the whole story. It seems from the sources that more and more news reports and testimony started to appear which led to the original facts being brought into question.



Name: _____

Headline Graphic Organizer **ANSWER KEY**

Directions: Each video will be played for you as a whole class. After each video, talk in your teams for two minutes, and create a newspaper headline that captures what you think is the most important or interesting takeaway from what you just saw. Be prepared to share your headline with the class.

Video	Headline
Retired General and Ambassador Maxwell Taylor	<i>Answers may vary</i>
Senior US Diplomat George Kennan	<i>Answers may vary</i>
Secretary of State Dean Rusk	<i>Answers may vary</i>
Lt John Kerry	<i>Answers may vary</i>

What did Senator Fulbright's hearings reveal to the nation?

Answers will vary, but may include:

Fulbright's hearings showed the public that the executive branch had misrepresented military actions to them, and caused public opinion to turn against the war.

