

## Teaching with Primary Sources Lesson Outline

**Grade Level:** High School (9-10)

**Standard(s) or Objectives:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.3: Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.5: Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).

### Library of Congress or Morris Special Collections Resources:



Interview with Tony Aragon (Vietnam War Veteran 1970-72), 2003

<https://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.17869/transcript?ID=sr0001>

### Topic Background:

The Vietnam War was a long, costly armed conflict that pitted the communist regime of North Vietnam and its southern allies, known as the Viet Cong, against South Vietnam and its principal ally, the United States. The war began in 1954 (though conflict in the region stretched back to the mid-1940s), after the rise to power of Ho Chi Minh and his communist Viet Minh party in North Vietnam, and continued against the backdrop of an intense Cold War between two global superpowers: the United States and the Soviet Union. More than 3 million people (including 58,000 Americans) were killed in the Vietnam War; more than half were Vietnamese civilians. By 1969, at the peak of U.S. involvement in the war, more than 500,000 U.S. military personnel were involved in the Vietnam conflict. Growing opposition to the war in the United States led to bitter divisions among Americans, both before and after President Richard Nixon ordered the withdrawal of U.S. forces in 1973. In 1975, communist forces seized control of Saigon, ending the Vietnam War, and the country was unified as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam the following year.

Excerpted from: <http://www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war/vietnam-war-history>

### Source(s) Used:

The source used in this assessment includes excerpts from an interview between Tony Aragon, who served in the Vietnam War, and his brother, Don Aragon. The interview was conducted in 2003. Tony was a private in the Army, and served between 1970 and 1972. In the interview, Tony discusses boot camp, arriving in Vietnam, the high number of casualties, everyday life in Vietnam, and coming home.

### Answer Key:

Question 1: B  
Question 2: A

## Interview with Tony Aragon (Vietnam War Veteran 1970-72), 2003 [Excerpt]

There were a lot of casualties. I remember one man had three days left and he was shot in the heart. I carried several out that were either wounded or dead...The night before it was really rainy and every day it was soaking wet. You had to open a can and eat it cold because it can't be warmed up. You can't shave, you don't clean and you don't put on deodorant. You put on your helmet and put on your gear and prepare to go out. The next morning I remember I was second from the front from the lead man. That one night my radio went out from the rain. They told us our helicopter was coming for our equipment and to pack water and all the ammo we could carry. They were going to take us to a hot DMZ (De Militarized Zone) where they expected a lot of Vietnamese. That morning the helicopter did come and took us there. All I had was my canteen and several vandaliars of ammo. As we unloaded we were mortared and shot at. A couple of my friends were shot and hurt. It was kind of like an ambush. There was this black kid named Kennedy that was hurt. It was a trap. We walked into an ambush. They were all over the place. This guy got shot and I helped carry him out. There was this big man that was shot. It took four of us to carry him out and I think he died. Another guy got shot in front of me. He got shot in the chest and was OK. Altogether, there was four to five guys that I helped out. I got a medal for that day-the Bronze Star, That afternoon they called in jets. They came in and they were doing body counts. I don't recall how many were killed. There were quite a few of them a full unit of them. In our company there were quite a few. The next day we swept the village. I was impressed with how they (the people) lived and how they survived the bombings in the jungle and the hatches (huts) they lived in. I went to Cambodia. It was hot and night and day difference crossing the river. The culture was a lot different. To see other temples and the other signs of culture... even the children were different.

### Questions:

- 1) How did Tony Aragon expand upon the first statement, "There were a lot of casualties?" (CCSS-RI9-10.3)
  - a. Aragon discussed how his company swept the village and how impressed he was with the people who lived in the jungle and survived the bombings.
  - b. Aragon gave a description of one particular day in which he witnessed many men being shot: his friends, Kennedy, a big man, and others.
  - c. Aragon described the poor conditions of fighting in Vietnam: no shaving, cleaning, or deodorant; cold food; and radios went out in the rain.
  - d. Aragon described that as one of the survivors of this particular ambush, he received a Bronze Star medal.
  
- 2) Aragon said about the Vietnamese people: "I was impressed with how they (the people) lived and how they survived the bombings in the jungle and the hatches (huts) they lived in." Why is this sentence important to the rest of the passage? (CCSS-RI9-10.5)
  - a. Aragon was showing the difference that he saw in the survival of the Vietnamese people and the high casualty number within his company.
  - b. Aragon was impressed with the homes that the Vietnamese built within the hot and humid jungle of Vietnam.
  - c. Aragon was confused that the Vietnamese survived in huts while American soldiers, who had sufficient weapons and supplies, suffered high casualties.
  - d. Aragon suspected that the Vietnamese in the villages were responsible for the ambush of his company.