



EXPEDITIONARY
LEARNING

Grade 8: Module 1: Unit 1: Lesson 9

Building Background Knowledge: Vietnam as a “Battleground in a Larger Struggle”



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Long-Term Targets Addressed (Based on NYSP12 ELA CCLS)

- I can determine the central idea of an informational text. (RI.8.2)
- I can use a variety of strategies to determine the meaning of unknown words or phrases. (L.8.4)
- I can analyze the impact of word choice on meaning and tone in informational text. (RI.8.4)
- I can effectively engage in discussions with diverse partners about eighth-grade topics, texts, and issues. (SL.8.1)

Supporting Learning Targets

- I can determine the central idea of two key paragraphs of “The Vietnam Wars.”
- I can explain how Vietnam was a “battleground in a much larger struggle.”
- I can use context clues to determine word meanings.
- I can participate in discussions about the text with a partner, small group, and the whole class.

Ongoing Assessment

- QuickWrite 4 (from homework)
- Students’ annotated texts

Agenda

1. Opening
 - A. Review of Results from Mid-Unit 1 Assessment and Review Learning Targets (10 minutes)
2. Work Time
 - A. Reorienting to Informational Text and Read-Aloud of Section 5 of “The Vietnam Wars” (15 minutes)
 - B. Guided Note-taking on Two Key Paragraphs: Vietnam as a “Battleground for a Much Larger Struggle” (15 minutes)
3. Closing and Assessment
 - A. Exit Ticket (5 minutes)
4. Homework
 - A. Complete the “Questions and Notes: A Battleground for a Much Larger Struggle”; reread and annotate Section 5, “Doc-Lap at Last”

Teaching Notes

- In advance: Select an exemplary student response for the last question on the Mid-Unit Assessment. Type this paragraph up (without the student’s name) and prepare copies to share during the opening of this lesson. Be sure to approach the student in advance to seek his/her permission to share his/her good work.
- Students revisit “The Vietnam Wars,” which they worked with in Lessons 6 and 7; be sure students have their texts, or prepare new ones. Throughout the module, reinforce how important it is for students to keep track of their texts. Their annotations provide a record of their thinking and learning. And they will often revisit a text multiple times across a module.
- Continue to help students distinguish between historical fiction and informational text. (Review Lesson 6 Teaching Notes and Opening Part B, and Lesson 8). Remind students that Ha is a fictional character, experiencing and describing actual historical events from her particular subjective perspective. By contrast, the article “The Vietnam Wars” presents a more “objective” account of historical events.
- This lesson hones in on one “big idea” regarding the conflict in Vietnam: how the country became a battleground in the broader struggle related to communism.



Lesson Vocabulary	Materials
<p>central idea; “doc-lap,” battleground, communism, committed, contain, back (v.), fell, cringed, peace accord</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An anonymous model of an exemplary student response to the mid-unit writing prompt (one per student) • “The Vietnam Wars” article (from Lesson 6; one per student) • “The Vietnam Wars” Questions and Notes: A Battleground for a Much Larger Struggle (one per student) • Half sheet of paper or index cards (one per student)

Opening	Meeting Students’ Needs
<p>A. Review of Results from Mid-Unit 1 Assessment and Review Learning Targets (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students should be seated in their small, heterogeneous “numbered heads” groups for today’s work. Collect students’ homework (QuickWrite 4) to review. Tell students that they will work more with this homework during the next lesson. • Share results with students from their first assessment. • Show and distribute an anonymous model of an exemplary response. Give students a few minutes to compare this model to their own response and think about how they might revise. (Consider allowing students to revise their work for credit, based on your classroom culture or specific school policies.) • Briefly read the learning targets aloud, or ask a volunteer to do so. Tell students that for the next two days, they will return to the article “The Vietnam Wars” to help them build more background knowledge about the historical events that influenced Ha and her family and their decision. • Tell them that they will return to the second learning target in particular later in the lesson, after they are reoriented to the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing models of expected work supports all learners but especially supports challenged learners.



Work Time	Meeting Students’ Needs
<p>A. Reorienting to Informational Text and Read-Aloud of Section 5 of “The Vietnam Wars” (15 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell students that in Lesson 8 and for homework, they were focused on Ha’s subjective perspective of the events around her. For the next few days, they will continue to build background knowledge about this historical era. Ask students to get out their “The Vietnam Wars” article (from Lessons 6) and/or re-distribute it (one per student). • Invite students to take 5 minutes to work with a partner to recall key ideas from Sections 1–4, which they have already read. • Circulate and listen in to gauge how much students are remembering about the four key historical eras described in these first four sections, and to note any patterns of confusion. Clarify as needed. • Tell students that for the next two lessons, they will focus on Section 5, “Doc-lap at Last.” Ask students, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “What does ‘doc-lap’ mean?” • Listen to see if students recall the meaning from their previous reading of Sections 1–4. If not, encourage them to reread to see if they can find and define this key term. (If necessary, direct them to the section of the text where this answer can be found: the very last line of Section 3 (Life, Liberty, and Ho Chi Minh), and help students remember that this word means “independence.”) • Remind students that this article is challenging: it has lots of difficult words, and lots of new information about a very complicated period of history. Orient students further to this key section of the text, Section 5 (“Doc Lap at Last”). Cold call a student to answer this question, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “What are the relevant dates of this last section? How does that fit into the timeline of what we’ve read so far in the novel <i>Inside Out & Back Again</i>?” • Listen for students to recognize that this informational text takes place in the same place and time as Ha’s story but slightly after what they have read so far in the novel. • Tell them that as they did with Section 1, they will first hear the text read aloud and will stop to think about each paragraph. Then in the next lesson, they will reread using specific questions to guide their thinking. • Read Section 5 aloud, one paragraph at a time, as students read along in their heads. Note that as with other read-alouds in this unit, this is a “pure” read-aloud: simply read slowly and fluently. Do not stop at this point to explain anything. • After each paragraph, stop. Give students time to think and jot a note about the gist in the margins: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “What is this paragraph mostly about?” • Continue to reinforce this strategy of annotating text. It’s a “thing close readers do” to help them focus, name key points, and keep a record that they can return to if they reread the text at a later point. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some students may benefit from having key sections pre-highlighted in their texts. This will help them focus on small sections rather than scanning the whole text for answers.



Work Time	Meeting Students’ Needs
<p>B. Guided Note-taking on Two Key Paragraphs: Vietnam as a “Battleground in a Much Larger Struggle” (15 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reread the second learning target: “I can explain how Vietnam was a ‘battleground in a much larger struggle.’” Tell students that to help them meet that target, today they will focus on just two key paragraphs: paragraph 1 of “Doc-Lap at Last,” plus a paragraph from Section 4. (They will return to the rest of Section 5 during Lesson 10.) Distribute the “The Vietnam Wars” Questions and Notes: A Battleground in a Much Larger Struggle. Direct students to this quote from the text (in Section 4, paragraph 3, the paragraph that begins “By 1950...”). Ask students to pair up and use the Think-Pair-Share protocol to work through specific questions. Tell them they will have 10 minutes to think, reread, talk with their partner, and write notes. They will then discuss whole group. Remind them that these historical concepts are complicated; encourage them to persevere. Circulate to listen in and support students as they work. Listen for patterns of confusion in order to determine which specific questions to address whole group. When 5 minutes remain in work time, pause students and refocus them whole group. Remind students that they will reread these paragraphs as a part of their homework, so it is fine if they are not yet finished. Check for understanding, focusing on specific questions you noted were more difficult for students. If time permits, ask a few students to orally share a summary of these two key paragraphs. Encourage students to complete their notes and a summary statement as a part of their homework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For students needing additional supports, you may want to provide a partially filled-in graphic organizer. For this lesson, consider adding some sentence starters to the notes section of the “The Vietnam Wars” Questions and Notes: A Battleground in a Much Larger Struggle document to further support some students.

Closing and Assessment	Meeting Students’ Needs
<p>A. Exit Ticket (5 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students to complete the following exit ticket on a half sheet of paper or index card: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “A lot of this history happened many years before Ha was even born. Why might it be important to have this background knowledge to help you understand the situation Ha and her family face?” Describe students’ homework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing self-assessment and reflection supports all learners, but research shows it supports struggling learners most.
Homework	Meeting Students’ Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the Questions and Notes: A Battleground in a Much Larger Struggle and reread and annotate Section 5, “Doc-Lap at Last.” 	



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Supporting Materials



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Questions	Notes
<p>1. In paragraph 4 of the section “The Fall of the French 1945–1954,” the author says, “By 1950, the French war in Vietnam had become a <i>battleground</i> in a much larger struggle.” Why did the author choose this word? What does this sentence mean? HINT: Give this question a try now. But you may be better able to answer this question after you answer all the other questions below.</p>	
<p>2. In that same paragraph, the author writes that “The U.S, <i>committed</i> to containing the spread of Communism, <i>backed</i> the French.” In this context, what do the two italicized words mean? How do those words help you understand what the “larger struggle” was: who was struggling with whom, over what, and why?</p>	
<p>3. What does it mean that “Dien Bien Phu <i>fell</i>?” What happened?</p>	
<p>4. In paragraph 1 of the section “Doc-Lap at Last,” the author says, “The Americans <i>cringed</i> at the thought of a Communist Vietnam.” The word <i>cringe</i> literally means “to bend your head in fear.” In this context, what does <i>cringe</i> mean? What feeling does the word “cringe” give you, and how does that help you understand the main idea of this paragraph?</p>	
<p>5. A <i>peace accord</i> is a peace agreement. Who agreed to what?</p>	

Summary: The main idea of these two paragraphs in the text. (Write a complete sentence.)
