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Making Meaning of May 4 **K-12 Teaching Plan**

Name of Educator: Steve Lucas

Educator's Teaching Plan Number & Title: Project 10, "End of the Sixties"

Level of Students for Educator's Teaching Plan: 9-10 grades

Subject Area for Educator's Teaching Plan: US History

Educator's State: Michigan

Description of Educator's Teaching Plan: This partial plan begins with point-counterpoint excerpts from differing views expressed April 30, 1970, when President Nixon announced his Cambodia invasion, through the Kent State shootings, May 4, 1970. Passages offer valuable practice decoding reliability of sources. Writing an additional stanza for "Ohio" connects students to comparable events and issues in their time.

This educational teaching plan was developed during Kent State University's Summer 2021 workshop titled Making Meaning of May 4: The 1970 Kent State Shootings in US History. The workshop was supported by Kent State and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant program titled *Landmarks of American History and Culture: Workshops for School Teachers*.

This teaching plan is shared to promote understanding of the Kent State shootings on May 4, 1970; enhance humanities education across the disciplines; and illustrate the meaning of May 4 for today.

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This may be a bit broad, but my idea is to use this material to close out a US History (10th grade) unit on Civil Rights, Vietnam, and the counterculture. The Kent State shootings will serve as an opportunity for inquiry.

Working Title:

The End of the Sixties: Campus protests, effects of 1960's movements and events, music of the late 60's and early 70's. Or, maybe a better title would be the 1970's as a Transitional Period".

- Examine public comments of the era from those in leadership positions
- Examine the comments of others in regard to the Cambodia speech
- Learn about the events surrounding the Kent State protests and the shooting of protestors
- Examine the lyrics of protest songs of the era
- Create our own lyrics to add to these songs.

Much of my work is on the attached Google Slides (PDF). When it gets to the inquiry part about May 4, I will use some of the following excerpts.

Working List of Sources:

Grace, Thomas M. *Kent State: Death and Dissent in the Long Sixties*. University of Massachusetts Press, 2016.

Lapsansky-Werner, Emma J. *United States History: Modern America*. Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2008.

Nixon Foundation, Richard Nixon. "President Nixon Addresses the Nation on the Cambodian Sanctuary Operation"."", 19 Dec. 2019,
www.nixonfoundation.org/2014/06/president-nixon-addresses-nation-cambodian-sanctuary-operation/.

"When Nixon Told Us Invading Cambodia Would Save Civilization." *The American Conservative*,
www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/when-nixon-told-us-invading-cambodia-would-save-civilization/.

"Technician, Vol. 54 No. 77 [Vol. 50 No. 77], May 1, 1970." *Technician-v54n77-1970-05-01 - NC State University Libraries' Rare and Unique Digital Collections* | *NC State University Libraries' Rare and Unique Digital Collections*, 3 Feb. 2021,
d.lib.ncsu.edu/collections/catalog/technician-v54n77-1970-05-01#?cv=3&c=&m=&s=&xywh=1998%2C2133%2C3745%2C1360.

"Governor Rhodes' Press Conference." *Kent State Shootings*,
[link removed].

B, Claire. "Two New Perspectives on the Kent State Shootings." *HistoryNet*, HistoryNet, 12 Apr. 2017,
www.historynet.com/two-new-perspectives-kent-state-shootings.htm.

Guerrieri, Vince. "How the Kent State Shooting Changed American Music." *Belt Magazine*, 28 May 2021,
beltmag.com/kent-state-shooting-american-music-punk-new-wave/.

Inquiry into the Cambodia Speech and Response:

Textbook Excerpt in regard to Nixon's Cambodian Speech:

More than a year into office, Nixon had grown impatient with the snail's pace of the peace negotiations. In 1970, he attempted to break the stalemate by ordering a ground attack on North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong bases in Cambodia. Nixon also hoped to aid the pro American Cambodian government in its fight against the Khmer Rouge, a communist movement supported by North Vietnam.

On the evening of April 30, Nixon addressed the American people, informing them of the decision to carry the war into Cambodia. He stressed that the war had become a measure of how committed the United States was to preserving freedom around the world.

Nixon Cambodian announcement:

In the month of May, in Cambodia alone, we captured a total amount of enemy arms, equipment, ammunition. and food nearly equal to what we captured in all of Vietnam in all of last year.

This is some ammunition you see. We have captured more than 10 million rounds of ammunition. That is equal to the enemy's expenditures of ammunition for 9 months.

And here also you see a few of the over 15,000 rifles and machine guns and other weapons we have captured. They will never be used against American boys in Vietnam.

With the quick-strike success of the Cambodian sanctuary operation and the proper post-op withdrawal of American and South Vietnamese troops from Cambodian territory, achieving peace with honor appeared closer to fruition.

"To protect our men who are in Vietnam.....the time has come for action.....we take this action not for the purpose of expanding the war into Cambodia but for the purpose of ending the war in Vietnam.

April 30, 1970 at 9 PM

From the American Conservative: April 13, 2019

Most of this was nonsense, of course. By putting a big enough hurt on the NVA, the invasion of Cambodia might buy a bit more time for ARVN to prepare itself to fight without the assistance of U.S. ground troops. That was about the most that could be hoped for. Sadly, however, the operation failed to accomplish even that. After a few weeks, U.S. and ARVN forces withdrew back into South Vietnam. The NVA repaired the damage it had sustained. Overall, the Cambodia campaign proved irrelevant to the war's ultimate outcome.

From the NC State University Libraries

Nixon is asking us to believe that escalating and enlarging the war is going to bring peace faster.....Nixon is off his rocker if he thinks any intelligent person is going to buy his justification for the Cambodian decision.

All that myth about Nixon's 'plan for peace'[1] should be perfectly clear now: Richard M. Nixon is a fighter, a man of war. He isn't going to end hostilities in Vietnam or Cambodia, or Laos now or ever.

Working list of guiding questions about the above:

1. What does the textbook excerpt say about Nixon's decision to invade Cambodia?
2. What does Nixon say to appeal to the emotions of the American people in his speech?
3. When was the article written from the American Conservative?
4. What does this article conclude about the invasion of Cambodia?
5. What is the tone of the article from NC State libraries?
6. What can you conclude about the opinion of the author of the NC State article?
7. Given everything you have read and talked about in class, what do you conclude about the invasion of Cambodia in 1970?
8. Would you have supported the invasion of Cambodia?

Inquiry into May 4 at Kent State

Textbook excerpt on Kent shootings.

The Cambodian incursion had a profound impact on the peace movement at home. It stirred antiwar activists, who argued that Nixon had widened the war and made the world a more dangerous place. Throughout the country, college campuses erupted with protests. Several demonstrations prompted the police and National Guard to step in to preserve order.

On two campuses, confrontations between students and armed authorities ended in deaths. Four days after Nixon's speech, demonstrators at Kent State University in Ohio threw rocks and bottles at members of the National Guard. When one guardsman thought he heard a sniper's shot, he fired his rifle. The shot prompted other National Guardsmen to discharge a volley of gunfire into a group of protestors, killing four students. The Kent State killings led to demonstrations on other campuses. At Jackson State University, a traditionally African American college in Mississippi, a confrontation between students and police ended with two dead.

From Governor Rhodes press conference:

"These people just move from one campus to the other and terrorize a community. They're worse than the Brown Shirts [Nazis] and the Communist elements and also the Night Riders and Vigilantes. They're the worst type of people that we harbor in America and I want to say that they're, they're not going to take over a campus and the campus now is going to be a part of the County and the State of Ohio:"

General Canterbury (from Ohio National Guard) on May 4:

These students are going to have to find out what law and order is all about".

From the Grace book loc 4644 in regard to the evening of May 3

By the end of the evening helicopters equipped with searchlights circled the city at rooftop levels. The illumination and the deafening roar of the rotors made the campus and town feel like a warzone, setting both students and local residents on edge. Rob Fox, a student senator at the time, remembered Sunday night as "the night of the helicopters": "it was very frightening.... These helicopters with their searchlights, I felt like I was in Vietnam.... Buzzing the Tri-Towers, shouting at us from their speakers." The helicopters also stood out in Mary Homer's memory. Homer, who was the only ten years old at the time, recalled, "I remember the helicopter searchlights going over our house time and again those frightening nights."

Possible Guiding Questions

1. According to the textbook excerpt, who seemed responsible for the shootings?
2. How do you think the comments from Governor Rhodes effected the Kent State students?
3. How do you think the comments from Governor Rhodes effected the National Guard members in Kent?

4. Do you think the comments of Governor Rhodes and General Canterbury influenced the public opinion of the Kent State protests?
5. From the Grace excerpt, describe how you would have felt as a college student at Kent during the evening of May 3rd?
6. Considering all of the other excerpts, do you think the textbook is misleading? Why or why not?

Inquiry: The Aftermath of the Kent State shootings.

I haven't gotten to this yet!

Notes for myself about the Aftermath

From Grace book loc 5090: Erroneous stories quickly made their way into the local media: the *Record-Courier* reported in a corrected edition published later on May 4 that "a search is on for a female sniper who has said to have started the shooting at Kent". Guard commanders, who were probably the source of the false report, embellished the story and began circulating talkies of rooftop marksmen.

Loc 5098 An anonymous guardsman from the same unit complained about the stream of profanity they had endured and told a reporter "it's about time we showed the bastards who is in charge. "

Loc 5098 "men in the headquarters company of the 107th Armored Cavalry complained to a reporter about the "coed shouting obscenities" and their sergeant, Charles Householder, shook his head over the "caliber" of such people

Examination of the song “Ohio”

Guiding Questions

1. What is a Tin soldier and why was that term used to begin the song?
2. In the line “we’re finally on our own”, who is “we”, and what is meant by the line?
3. What is your reaction to the chorus, beginning with “got a get down”?

“Ohio” is a short song with minimal lyrics. I wonder why Neil Young chose to just sing “Na na na na” for the second verse.

In U.S. History, I try to cover important current trends as they come up. In the last couple years, policing, fake news, Black Lives Matter, George Floyd, Antifa, ect. In class, I will move from the topic of 1970’s protests to current events and work with the students on making connections

I am fortunate to be able to play the guitar and sing enough to share this talent with students, when appropriate. Too end this unit I will assign students the chance to write an additional verse for “Ohio”, this time using more current events as the subject matter.