



NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE  
HUMANITIES



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

**Name of Educator:** Kevin West

**Educator's Teaching Plan Number & Title:** Project 25, "Kent State Week"

**Level of Students for Educator's Teaching Plan:** 10th grade

**Subject Area for Educator's Teaching Plan:** History/social studies

**Educator's State:** Ohio

**Description of Educator's Teaching Plan:** Following understanding the counterculture belief that social change was needed, students study and analyze the reliability of multiple sources on the May 2, 1970, ROTC fire. Each student gathers additional perspectives by surveying 6 people regarding who was responsible on May 4—to determine *Whose Truth Endures?*

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.

You have permission to use this project for educational purposes. **Commercial use is prohibited.**

Acknowledge use of this teaching plan with the following citation:

West, Kevin, Project 25, "Kent State Week," Making Meaning of May 4. Kent State University, accessed [add date], [www.kent.edu/ehhs/making-meaning-may-4/sample-teaching-plans](http://www.kent.edu/ehhs/making-meaning-may-4/sample-teaching-plans).

### ***Terms of Use***

By using the web site [www.kent.edu/ehhs/making-meaning-may-4](http://www.kent.edu/ehhs/making-meaning-may-4) (the Site), the user agrees to accept the 'Terms of Use' stated here. Any copyrighted content in the Site is made available for personal use only. For any commercial purpose, users are responsible for obtaining the copyright holder's permission.

The digital content contained in the Site is not available for re-sale, re-use, incorporation, or copying into any databases or commercial product without express, written permission from Kent State University [[www.kent.edu/ehhs/making-meaning-may-4/About](http://www.kent.edu/ehhs/making-meaning-may-4/About)] and when applicable the copyright holder. No unauthorized mass downloading or scraping into any format is permitted from this website.

Kent State University requests that citation be provided for use of all material on this Site.

## Kent State Week

### Day 1

- Counterculture vs. Mainstream America debate (from TCI)
- Explain and assign "Whose Truth Endures?" Survey

[Lyrics - "The Times They Are A-Changin',"  
by Bob Dylan]

- What do the lyrics of Bob Dylan's song "The Times They Are A-Changin'" refer to?
- Why did many young people in the 1960s believe American society had to change?
- How do you think young people rebelled against mainstream society in the 1960s?

Discuss, from your notes:

- 3 characteristics of New Left

[Background photo - Members of the New Left]

Discuss, from your notes:

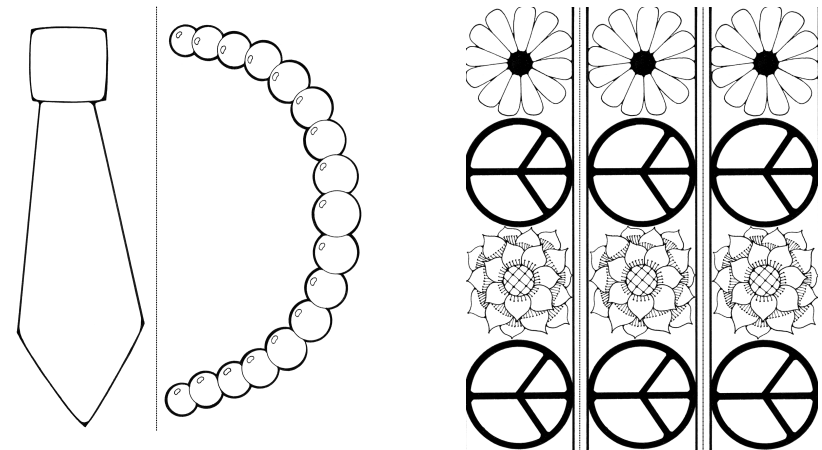
- 3 characteristics of counterculture youth

[Background photo - Hippie Bus]

Discuss, from your notes:

- 3 characteristics of mainstream America

[Background photo - A middle-American family in the Sixties]



## Fashion

[Photo - Hippie]

[Photo - Mainstream  
nuclear family of the  
Sixties]

<b>Counterculture youth:</b>	You dress like everyone else. Be an individual!
<b>Mainstream Americans:</b>	You will never get anywhere in life looking like that! Why can't you dress more appropriately?
<b>Counterculture youth:</b>	The way I dress . . .

## Sexual attitudes

[Photo - Traditional  
marriage]

[Photo - Free Love]

<b>Mainstream Americans:</b>	Your sexual conduct is immoral and degrades the institution of marriage!
<b>Counterculture youth:</b>	You are way off! Love shouldn't be confined within an institution. Why can't you respect my choices?
<b>Mainstream Americans:</b>	I don't understand . . .

# Day 2

- ROTC Building Fire Document Lesson
- Check survey progress

## Who's Truth Endures? Kent State Shooting Unit

Script: On May 4th, 1970, members of the Ohio National Guard fired on students at Kent State University, killing four and wounding 9 others. The event was made famous by the Pulitzer prize-winning photo, as well as the song "Ohio," written by Neil Young.

On a scale of 1-5, "1" being "never heard of this" and "5" being "I am very familiar with that event"; how familiar are you with the Kent State Shooting?

Familiarity: 1 2 3 4 5

(If the respondent replies "1", thank them for their time, and find a different person.)

What do you specifically know or remember about the Kent State Shooting? (As a NEUTRAL interviewer, record their response here):

When you think about the Kent State Shooting on May 4th, 1970, who do you think was at fault? I'm going to ask you about 6 different groups; after each, using a 1-5 scale, please tell me how much you think they were at fault, with "1" being "basely at fault" and "5" meaning "almost entirely at fault." I will ask about the groups in alphabetical order:

Governor of Ohio (James Rhodes) & State leaders

At fault: 1 2 3 4 5

Kent State University Administration

At fault: 1 2 3 4 5

Local Law Enforcement (City of Kent Police, KSU Police, Ohio Highway Patrol)

At fault: 1 2 3 4 5

Ohio National Guardsmen

At fault: 1 2 3 4 5

President Nixon and national leaders

At fault: 1 2 3 4 5

Kent State University Students

At fault: 1 2 3 4 5

Are there other groups you feel were at fault for the Kent State Shooting? If so, who?

## Kent State Shooting Unit

### Document A: The Report of the President's Commission on Campus Unrest

On June 13, 1970, President Richard Nixon established the President's Commission on Campus Unrest, which became known as the Scranton Commission after its chairman, former Pennsylvania governor William Scranton. The Commission was asked to study the dissent, disorder, and violence breaking out on college and university campuses, particularly the national student strike that was then going on. The Commission issued its findings in a September 1970 report; it concluded that the shootings at Kent State were unjustified.

...a crowd had assembled around the Victory Bell by 7:30pm. On the Commons, a young man is reported to have...said, "They're trying to keep the kids penned up in the dorms. Let's go."

...Faculty marshals observed them as they followed the usual student parade route around the dormitories, picking up new recruits as they went...By the time they headed back toward the Commons, the crowd had grown to around 1,000...As they crossed the Commons near the ROTC building, some shouted, "Get it," "Burn it," and "ROTC has to go."

About 8:10pm, a few students began to throw rocks at the ROTC building...some started

## Kent State Shooting Unit

### Document B: Arthur Koushel Interview

Arthur Koushel was an undergraduate student at Kent State University in 1970. 25 years later, he discussed his experiences related to the shootings on campus with an interviewer as part of the May 4th Oral History Project. Here he describes the burning of the ROTC Military Science Building.

...I saw the building, the ROTC building -- someone threw a flare, a roadflare, in the window. And -- and it didn't catch on fire right away. They actually had to -- to go back up there. There was like curtains in the windows. And -- common sense says that, if I'm gonna put out a fire, I'm not gonna run my hoses through large numbers of people that are protesting. But that's exactly what they did. They could have approached it from the -- the power plant, and -- you know, nowhere near anybody. So people say they were cutting fire hoses and things like that. I'm not sure if they didn't want their fire hoses cut. However, when I saw the building the next day, I thought, either they have the worst fire department in the world, or they let the building burn down just to say, "Do you see what these kids -- students did?" Cause I was amazed at how it was totally destroyed...

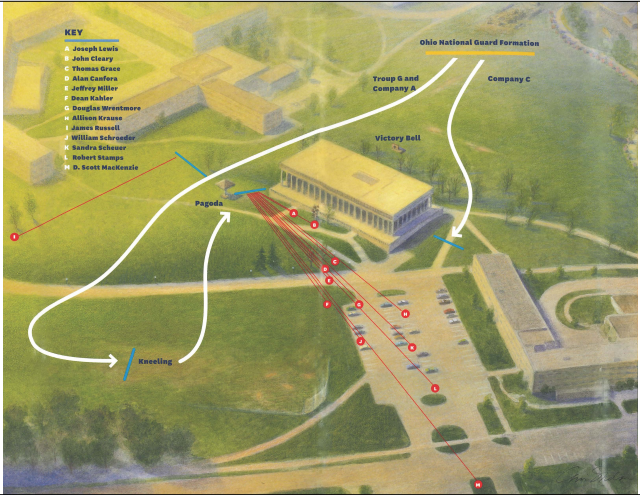
ROTC Building Fire Lesson					
Document	Sourcing: What concerns you about this source?	Sourcing: What can you trust this source for?	Close Reading: What claims does this source make?	How could you corroborate this source?	Imagine this was your only source: why was no one charged?
A: Report of the President's Commission on Campus Unrest					
B: Arthur Koushel Interview					

**Questions:**  
1. Which source did you find more reliable? Why?

# Day 3

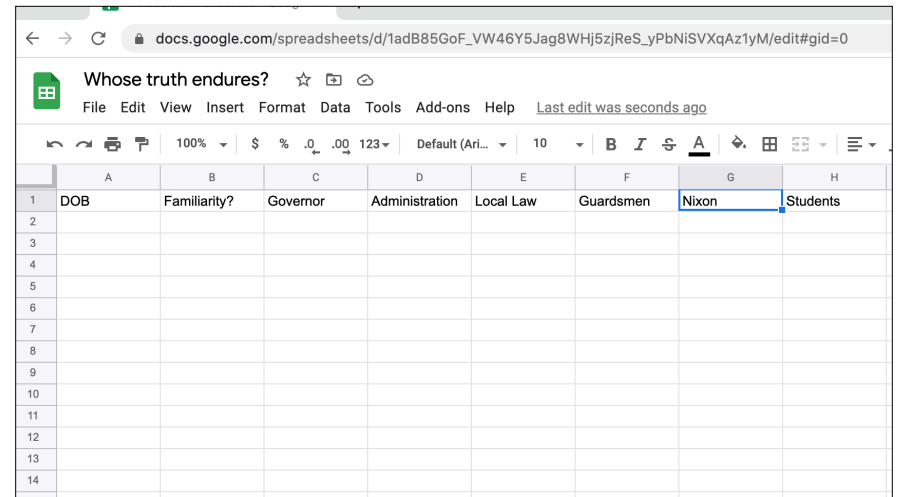
- Lecture on baseline facts from Kent State, May 1-4
- Confirm survey progress

Lecture cancelled



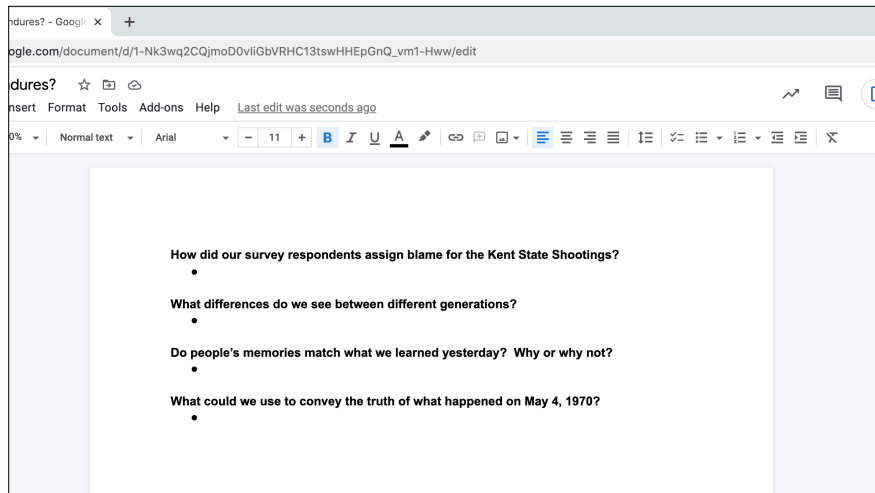
# Day 4

- Data collected in Google Sheet from surveys, analyzed as a class
- May 4th Digital Archives introduction
- 3 artifacts to clarify



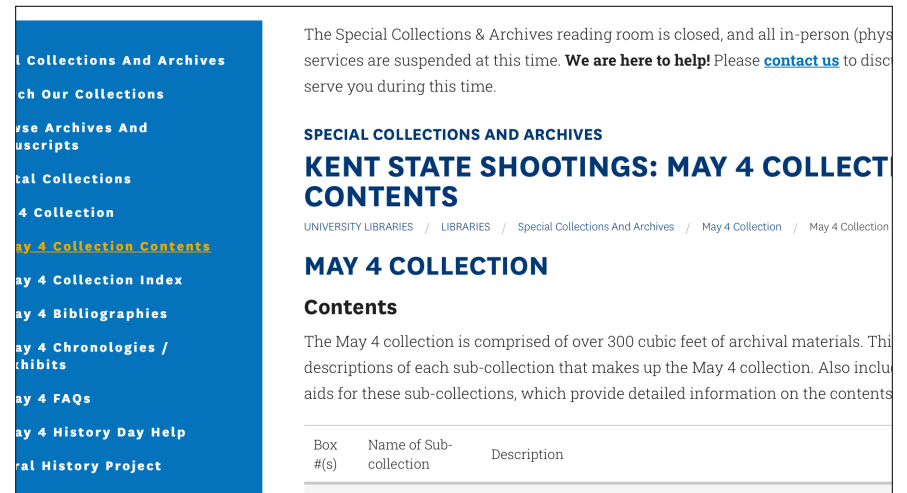
The screenshot shows a Google Sheet titled "Whose truth endures?". The spreadsheet has columns labeled A through H. Row 1 contains the following data: A: DOB, B: Familiarity?, C: Governor, D: Administration, E: Local Law, F: Guardsmen, G: Nixon, H: Students. Rows 2 through 14 are empty.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	DOB	Familiarity?	Governor	Administration	Local Law	Guardsmen	Nixon	Students
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								
13								
14								



The screenshot shows a Google Doc titled "Whose truth endures?". The document contains a list of four survey questions, each followed by a bullet point:

- How did our survey respondents assign blame for the Kent State Shootings?
- What differences do we see between different generations?
- Do people's memories match what we learned yesterday? Why or why not?
- What could we use to convey the truth of what happened on May 4, 1970?



The screenshot shows the "KENT STATE SHOOTINGS: MAY 4 COLLECTION CONTENTS" page. The page is divided into two main sections: a left sidebar with navigation links and a main content area.

**Left Sidebar:**

- Special Collections And Archives
- Our Collections
- Use Archives And Manuscripts
- Special Collections
- May 4 Collection
- May 4 Collection Contents
- May 4 Collection Index
- May 4 Bibliographies
- May 4 Chronologies / Exhibits
- May 4 FAQs
- May 4 History Day Help
- Special History Project
- Special Collections And Archives

**Main Content Area:**

The Special Collections & Archives reading room is closed, and all in-person (physical) services are suspended at this time. **We are here to help!** Please [contact us](#) to discuss how we can serve you during this time.

### SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND ARCHIVES

## KENT STATE SHOOTINGS: MAY 4 COLLECTION CONTENTS

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES / LIBRARIES / Special Collections And Archives / May 4 Collection / May 4 Collection

### MAY 4 COLLECTION

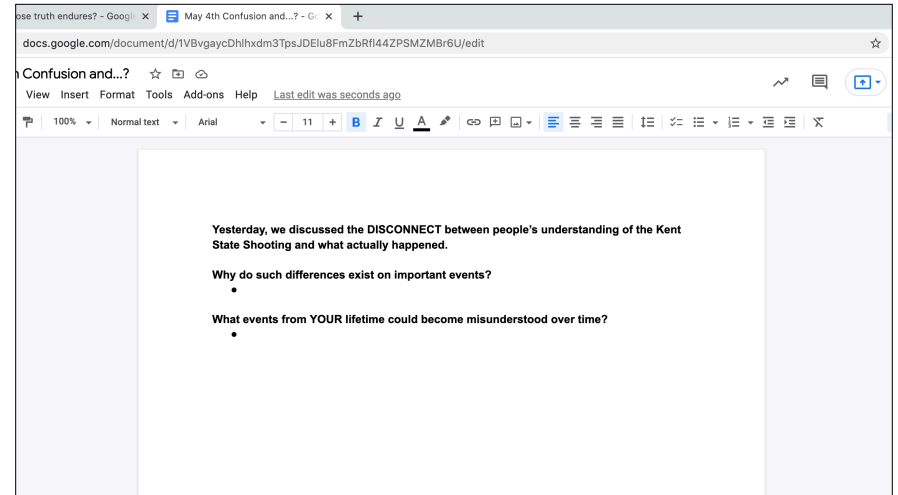
#### Contents

The May 4 collection is comprised of over 300 cubic feet of archival materials. This page provides descriptions of each sub-collection that makes up the May 4 collection. Also included are links to the May 4 collection, which provide detailed information on the contents of each sub-collection.

Box #	Name of Sub-collection	Description
1	May 4 Collection	May 4 Collection

# Day 5

- Discussion on connected events—fear, power differential, disagreement
- Identify list of possible events
- 3 artifacts to clarify





Whose Truth Endures?

Script: *What is your date of birth?: \_\_\_\_\_*

*On May 4th, 1970, members of the Ohio National Guard fired on students at Kent State University, killing four and wounding 9 others. The event was made famous by this Pulitzer prize-winning photo, as well as the song "Ohio," written by Neil Young.*

*On a scale of 1-5, "1" being "never heard of this" and "5" being "I am very familiar with that event", how familiar are you with the Kent State Shooting?*

Familiarity:                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

*(If the respondent replies "1", thank them for their time, and find a different person.)*

*What do you specifically know or remember about the Kent State Shooting? (As a NEUTRAL interviewer, record their response here):*

*When you think about the Kent State Shooting on May 4th, 1970, who do you think was at fault? I'm going to ask you about 6 different groups: after each, using a 1-5 scale, please tell me how much you think they were at fault, with "1" being "barely at fault" and "5" meaning "almost entirely at fault." I will ask about the groups in alphabetical order:*

*Governor of Ohio (James Rhodes) & State leaders*

At fault:                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

*Kent State University Administration*

At fault:                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

*Local Law Enforcement (City of Kent Police, KSU Police, Ohio Highway Patrol)*

At fault:                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

*Ohio National Guardsmen*

At fault:                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

*President Nixon and national leaders*

At fault:                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

*Kent State University Students*

At fault:                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

*Are there other groups you feel were at fault for the Kent State Shooting? If so, who?*

## ROTC Building Fire Lesson

### Central Historical Question:

*Why was no one charged for burning the Kent State ROTC Building?*

#### Materials:

- Keynote/PowerPoint for mini-lecture
- Timeline
- Documents A&B
- Document Analysis Chart

#### Plan of Instruction:

1. Introduction: Slide explaining Dow chemical bombing at University of Wisconsin & charges brought against students
2. Quick-write: comparison slide with picture of Dow and picture of Kent ROTC with the question: Why might no one have been charged for the burning of this building at Kent?
3. Mini-lecture:

##### *Kent State*

- *Founded in \_\_\_\_\_*
- *In 1970, \_\_\_\_\_ # of students, \_\_\_\_\_ largest university in the US, 2nd largest in Ohio, easily the largest in NE Ohio, serving Cleveland and Akron*

##### *ROTC*

- *Stands for: Reserve Officer Training Corps—a group college & university based programs designed to train officers for the military*
- *Participants attend college like other students, but also receive basic military training, officer training, drills, and off-campus training during summer*
- *Can receive partial or full scholarships in return for active-duty service obligation after graduation.*
- *Program is a result of Morrill Land Grant Act—states were given federal land for universities IF they taught Agriculture AND Military Tactics*
- *Momentum for a formal program started as part of the Preparedness Movement, during WWI, and was advocated by military leaders and college administrators, including OSU president—first ROTC at Harvard, 1916*
- *Up until 1960s, many colleges made ROTC mandatory for male students*

4. Timeline: pass out the timeline, ask students which events need more explanation
5. Class Question: **Why was no one charged for burning the ROTC Building?**
6. Pass out *Document A: The Report of The President's Commission on Campus Unrest*
7. Complete pre-reading steps and complete sourcing questions as a class
8. Complete remaining analysis questions for Document A
9. Partner up students & pass out *Document B: Arthur Koushel Interview*
10. Monitor student progress on completing the analysis of Document B
11. Encourage students to complete post-analysis questions 1&2
12. Discuss questions 1-3 as a class; display writing assignment on Canvas

**Document A: The Report of the President's Commission on Campus Unrest**

*On June 13, 1970, President Richard Nixon established the President's Commission on Campus Unrest, which became known as the Scranton Commission after its chairman, former Pennsylvania governor William Scranton. The Commission was asked to study the dissent, disorder, and violence breaking out on college and university campuses, particularly the national student strike that was then going on. The Commission issued its findings in a September 1970 report; it concluded that the shootings at Kent State were unjustified.*

---

...a crowd had assembled around the Victory Bell by 7:30pm. On the Commons, a young man is reported to have...said, "They're trying to keep the kids penned up in the dorms. Let's go."

...Faculty marshals observed them as they followed the usual student parade route around the dormitories, picking up new recruits as they went...By the time they headed back toward the Commons, the crowd had grown to around 1,000...As they crossed the Commons near the ROTC building, some shouted, "Get it," "Burn it," and "ROTC has to go."

...About 8:10pm, a few students began to throw rocks at the ROTC building...some started throwing lighted railroad flares into and onto the building. A curtain caught fire...A student taking pictures was attacked and wrestled to the ground, and his film was taken and exposed(ruined)...Finally, a young man dipped a cloth into the gasoline tank of a parked motorcycle. Another young man ignited it and set the building afire. The building began to burn about 8:45pm...

About 9:00pm, a truck from the Kent fire department arrived. No police protection was provided. Members of the mob grabbed the hose from the firemen. They slashed and stabbed the hose with pocket knives, an ice picket, and a machete. They threw rocks at the firemen, who then withdrew. At this point, the fire seemed to subside (die down).

Yet the fire quickly began to grow again. When the building was burning furiously and live ammunition was exploding inside, the campus police arrived. Their headquarters was only 200 yards from the ROTC building...

*Source: Excerpt from The Report of the President's Commission on Campus Unrest, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970, pp. 249-251.*

## Document B: Arthur Koushel Interview

*Arthur Koushel was an undergraduate student at Kent State University in 1970. 25 years later, he discussed his experiences related to the shootings on campus with an interviewer as part of the May 4th Oral History Project. Here he describes the burning of the ROTC Military Science Building.*

---

...I saw the building, the ROTC building -- someone threw a flare, a roadflare, in the window. And -- and it didn't catch on fire right away. They actually had to -- to go back up there. There was like curtains in the windows. And -- common sense says that, if I'm gonna put out a fire, I'm not gonna run my hoses through large numbers of people that are protesting. But that's exactly what they did. They could have approached it from the -- the power plant, and -- you know, nowhere near anybody. So people say they were cutting fire hoses and things like that. I'm not sure if they didn't want their fire hoses cut. However, when I saw the building the next day, I thought, either they have the worst fire department in the world, or they let the building burn down just to say, "Do you see what these kids -- students did?" Cause I was amazed at how it was totally destroyed...

*Source: Excerpt from "Arthur Koushel Oral History," Kent State University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives, accessed June 24, 2021, <https://omeka.library.kent.edu/special-collections/items/show/1563>.*

### **Timeline: ROTC Building Fire**

- 1965 March** US bombing begins, first US combat troops arrived in Vietnam
- April** Teach-in@U of M, March on DC (smaller one attempted at Kent)
- December** 184,000 US troops were in Vietnam
- 1966 December** 385,000 US troops were in Vietnam
- 1967 December** 485,000 US troops were in Vietnam
- 1968 January** Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) becomes a prominent anti-war student organization at Kent State
- February** Walter Cronkite refers to Vietnam as a “stalemate”
- November** Richard Nixon (R) wins the Presidential election
- December** 535,000 US troops were in Vietnam
- 1969 January** Kent’s SDS delivers demands to university, including ROTC off campus
- 1970 Thursday, April 30** Nixon announces invasion of Cambodia
- Friday, May 1**
- Kent State students bury a copy of the Constitution in symbolic protest of expansion of the Vietnam War
  - windows in downtown Kent are broken, including the Army Recruiting Station.
  - A small amount of damage on campus, broken window on the ROTC building.
- Saturday, May 2**
- a crowd of approximately 2,000 march on campus, arrive at the ROTC building.
  - Repeated & unsuccessful attempts were made to burn the building
  - Eventually, the building caught fire, the fire department was called, the fire was put out, but later flared back up.

### ROTC Building Fire Lesson

Document	Sourcing: What concerns you about this source?	Sourcing: What can you trust this source for?	Close Reading: What claims does this source make?	How could you corroborate this source?	Imagine this was your only source: why was no one charged?
<b>A: Report of the President's Commission on Campus Unrest</b>					
<b>B: Arthur Koushel Interview</b>					

#### Questions:

1. Which source did you find more reliable? Why?
2. What additional sources would help you answer the main question? Explain.
3. At this point, why do you believe no one was charged for burning the ROTC building?