



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE
HUMANITIES



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

Name of Educator: Lindsey Lester

Educator's Teaching Plan Number & Title: Project 64, "What was the cause of the Kent State Shooting?"

Level of Students for Educator's Teaching Plan: 11-12 grades

Subject Area for Educator's Teaching Plan: Civics and Economics

Educator's State: North Carolina

Description of Educator's Teaching Plan: Multiple perspectives/types of sources—testimonial, chronological, comparable, legal—prepare students to consider motive and justice in the Kent State shootings case & student activism then and now.

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:

Lester, Lindsey, Project 64, "What was the cause of the Kent State Shooting?," Making Meaning of May 4. Kent State University, accessed [add date], 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 (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] 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.

What was the cause of the Kent State Shooting?

The day the war came home; aftermath and legacy

1. Introduction:

The decades surrounding the Vietnam War are controversial for many reasons. This war divided the country for many reasons, but more so after the shootings at Kent State University on May 4, 1970. We will look at why our country was so divided about the war before this and then after. This lesson should also get students questioning the line that separates when the government is protecting us and when the government is potentially violating those rights as American citizens. I will incorporate this unit into my Civics and Economics class. Unit 4 is Law and Order: Courts and the American Legal System. I plan on covering this towards the end of the unit after we have covered everything including amendments and their relationship to court cases, legal procedures and rights that citizens have in our country. Biggest questions- How and why did the Kent State shootings happen? Was there one group of people that were legally responsible? Did rights get violated on campus before, during, and after? What happened in the decades after?

2. Objectives:

During this lesson:

- Students will evaluate the tension that draped the country during Vietnam War
- Students will question the idea of protests as well as appropriate responses to protests
- Students will analyze the thought processes of the students, guardsmen, and government concerning the Kent State shooting
- Students will use maps as well as primary and secondary sources to evaluate relevance, bias, and conclusions for an event
- Students will identify possible reasons for the Kent State shooting

3. Durham Public Schools Civics/Economics Unit 4 Goals and Understandings

Students will understand that...

- In a democracy, rule of law influences the behavior of citizens, establishes procedures for making policies, and limits the power of government.
- Citizens look to the principle varieties of law for protection of individual rights.
- The nature of citizenship and the rights associated with it have changed over time.

4. Connection to North Carolina State Standards

- Apply the inquiry models to analyze and evaluate social studies topics and issues in order to communicate conclusions and take actions.
- Analyze the various responsibilities of individuals living in the United States in terms of citizenship, civic participation, and the political process.
- Understand how values, beliefs, and norms influence the American system of government.
- Analyze how the judicial, legal, and political systems of the United States and North Carolina embody the founding principles of government.
- Understand how individual rights and the American system of government have evolved over time

5. Time: This lesson plan should take 5, 50-minute class periods or about 3, 90-minute block periods.

6. Materials Needed:

- Printed hard copies of sources as needed
- Computers/Wi-fi for research
- Whiteboard, Smart board, Projector
- Google Docs or Microsoft Word to record answers
- Google Slides, Microsoft Powerpoint, etc to make presentations

Day 1: The day the 60's died...Overview

As students arrive that day, have the warm-up/ bell ringer question- **What events have we considered tragic in our history? Why?** posted on the board for them to answer. Lead them through a discussion of similarities and differences of the answers they have given. The rest of the items and documents for the day can be done in an order of your choosing to introduce and give background information on May 4th. Distribute the following documents if you would like to print them, or have the websites ready to go for the students to use. You may choose to read these together as a class, or have them projected on the screen to point out the important information.

- **Document 1:** [Vietnam Timeline](#): Background on Vietnam War- differences and issues America had.
- **Document 2:** [Controversy over Kent State](#) (Basic facts on the events leading up to May 4th)

After going through Document 1 and 2, ask students to individually write down their first thoughts about **What was the cause of the Kent State Shooting?** Have students write down at least 3 different reasons that may answer the main question.

Now, move on to play the song "OHIO" and have lyrics projected or printed. You may want to use a Youtube video that plays the song with pictures and lyrics- there are several out there for your choosing. I have one selected below.

- **Document 3 : OHIO- Crosby, Stills, and Nash Lyrics**

You may choose to analyze the lyrics and break down specifics in the song so everyone understands the meaning. Listening to the song will get students ready for the video.

- [Four Dead in Ohio](#) show the video to students, stopping throughout to explain certain points. You may choose to watch half of the video one day and the other half the next. Immediately after viewing the video, give students a few minutes to add or update their hypothesis. This will get students prepared for the next day and next group of documents.

Day 2- The Facts

Put students in groups pre chosen by the teacher to balance out the class evenly. Have student desks arranged so students can immediately sit with their groups and distribute the documents the day. Review information from yesterday. (Finish video from Day 1 if needed). Have them go over all of their original hypotheses from the day before. Are there any similarities? Then distribute...

- **Document 4: Campus Map with Details on May 4th Shooting:** [A graphic timeline with details](#)

The map shows the positions of the National Guardsmen and where the victims were shot. In their groups, students should discuss the map and whether it shows any undermining or supporting evidence for their

hypotheses. Next, students should read the NY Times article that came out the following day after the shootings

- **Document 5:** [May 5th, 1970 – New York Times Article](#)

After reading through it as a group, have them go back to hypotheses to see if they find facts that support it based on that information.

- Can you now find facts that support your hypothesis from Day 1?
- After reading your evidence...can you cross out or eliminate a hypothesis?
- Have groups finalize their hypotheses and ask a student to come up to the board and add to Google Slides, etc to write down the hypotheses from each group to keep for the rest of the lessons...no need to repeat them.

Day 3- Interview from a National Guardsman and Student Protestor

Have students get back into their groups to answer the following questions before you listen to the interviews:

- *What rights do protesters have? What does the **1st Amendment** cover for this? Are there limits?*
 - *Did the protestors cross a line as far as free speech, right to assemble, etc.?*
- *Was this the best way to influence the policies the protestors disagreed with or could they have found a better way that wouldn't have resulted in violence and death?*
- *In that way are the protesters responsible?*

After listening to a selected portion of the interview...

Document 6: Student Protest interview and transcript

- *Do the protestors think the National Guard should have been called in? If so, should they have been called in earlier?*
- *What do you think were the ethical decisions made by protestors?*

Document 7: National Guardsman Interview and transcript

- *Why did the guardsmen fire?*
- *Provide an argument for the guardsmen fearing for their lives and only shooting in self-defense.*
- *Although Nixon wasn't even on campus that day, do his policies bare ANY responsibility for the event?*
- *Do you think the National Guard went too far?*
- *Would the protestors or Guardsmen behave this way if they were alone or were they influenced by the crowd? Can we trust this source?*

Psychology behind May 4th

Document 8: Mary Ann Vecchio article

Have students come up with a group decision about whether or not the protestors and guardsmen acted differently as groups than they would have as individuals? (group mentality...psychology of groups) Answer the following questions...

1. Do you believe the government or the students went too far on May 4th?

2. What effects on protestors or passersby that day ? Physically, mentally, etc?
3. Do you notice any themes or similarities of how protestors are treated throughout history?

Day 4- Aftermath: Court cases, findings, verdicts

Document 9: [Jackson State vs. Kent State](#)

Shortly after the Kent State Shootings on May 4, 1970, there was a shooting at Jackson State that didn't get nearly as much press coverage, why?

Document 10: [Legal Chronology](#) Court cases and results

Document 11: Kent State Questions [6 years after May 4](#)

Have students read through the chronology of the decade following the shootings and the findings 6 years later in the NY Times article. Answer the questions below: Cite evidence from the chronology...

- Based on what we have learned in Unit 4, why does a court cases or cases potentially take so long to go to court?
- Why would the cases start out at the state level case?
- Did they move to the the federal level? Why?
- After the trials, were the guards found guilty or not? Why?
 - What about the students- guilty or not? Charges?
- What did the trials show us about legal system?
 - Find evidence that show the use of 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and/or 14th Amendment in the trials

Day 5- Legacy today and beyond

Students will use the following articles to help with their formal assessment in addition to the material from the rest of the week.

- [40 years later- new evidence?](#)
- [50 years later- why?](#)
- [Activism today- 50 years later](#)
- **2020 Protests** <https://c3teachers.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/2020-Protests-Inquiry.pdf>

Assessment:

Informal assessment- based on students' participation throughout the lesson (Teacher may choose to grade or collect bell ringers, exit tickets, etc.)

Formal assessment- Student Project in groups from the week.

Students are to create a culminating project using resources from the week. They may choose to make physical posters, powerpoint presentations, poems, songs, videos, Prezi, or a combination of any. The project must answer and display the following and cite specific sources where the information was found: (Teacher can make a rubric to guide students while they're working)

- As a team, you need to come up with your best hypothesis as to why the Kent State Shootings happened why?
- Pictures comparing student activism then and now
- Pictures of what represents democracy and student activism to you today! (You may include personal photos, videos, etc)
 - What student activism have you seen in the last 10 years?
- (Current city you live in) similarities and student protests- have social movements changed in the past 50 years?
- Be sure that you use a variety of primary and secondary sources, beyond those presented this week.
- Why is the legacy of Kent State and other events in history important to be remembered?
- How have local, state, and federal governments responded to incidents in history?
 - Did changes come about? Clear patterns and conclusions?

[New link will be available in 2022 for the video titled *Allison, Bill, Sandy and Jeff*]

Citations

"Anonymous Oral History," Kent State University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives,
<https://omeka.library.kent.edu/special-collections/items/show/1823>

"Art Krummel Oral History," Kent State University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives,
<https://omeka.library.kent.edu/special-collections/items/show/1593>

Four Kent State Students Killed by Troops, NY Times Article May 5, 1970,
<https://www.nytimes.com/1970/05/05/archives/4-kent-state-students-killed-by-troops-8-hurt-as-shooting-follows.html>

How 13 Seconds Changed Kent State University Forever, Smithsonian Magazine article,
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/fifty-years-ago-kent-state-massacre-changed-university-forever-180974787/>

Kent State Questions, NY Times Article, <https://www.nytimes.com/1976/05/04/archives/kent-state-questions.html>

Kent State Shooting, History Channel Website <https://www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war/kent-state-shooting>

Kent State shootings: How events of May 4, 1970 influence student activism today, Akron Beacon Journal Article, <https://www.cincinnati.com/in-depth/news/history/2020/05/03/kent-state-shootings-how-events-may-4-1970-influence-student-activism-today-50-years/3061410001/>

Kent State Shootings: MAY 4 COLLECTION CONTENTS, Kent State University Libraries, Special Collections and Archives, <https://www.library.kent.edu/special-collections-and-archives/kent-state-shootings-may-4-collection-contents>

May 4, 1970. Kent State University, 2021. <https://www.kent.edu/may-4-1970>. (website)

May 4th Chronology, Kent State University Libraries, Special Collections and Archives
<https://www.library.kent.edu/special-collections-and-archives/may-4-chronology>

New analysis of 40-year-old recording of Kent State shootings reveals that Ohio Guard was given an order to prepare to fire, Cleveland Plain Dealer Article,
https://www.cleveland.com/metro/2010/05/new_analysis_of_40-year-old_re.html

OHIO song- Crosby, Still, Nash, and Young

The Girl in the Kent State Photo, Washington Post Magazine, April 19, 2021,
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/magazine/2021/04/19/girl-kent-state-photo-lifelong-burden-being-national-symbol/>

THE MAY 4 SHOOTINGS AT KENT STATE UNIVERSITY: THE SEARCH FOR HISTORICAL ACCURACY, *Kent State University Libraries, Special Collections and Archives*, <https://www.kent.edu/may-4-historical-accuracy>