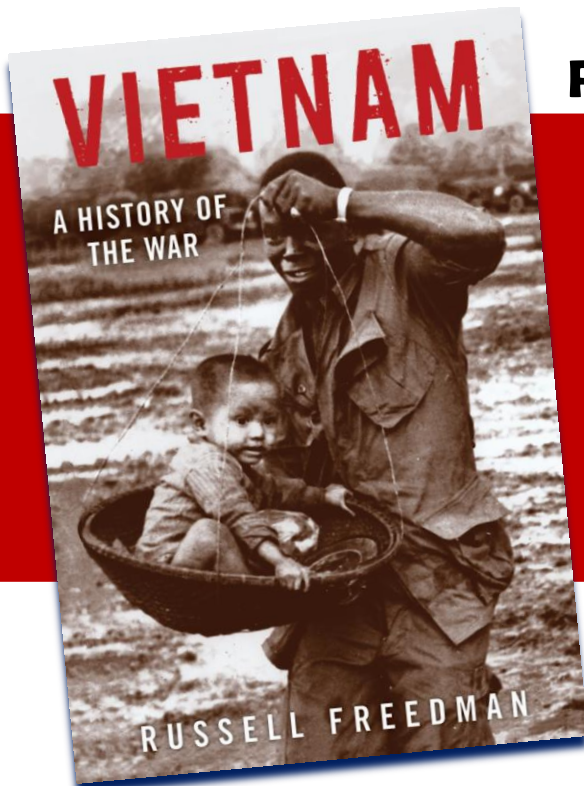


HOLIDAY HOUSE | BONUS Discussion Guide



Read the book. Watch the series.

LINKING

VIETNAM: A HISTORY OF THE WAR
by Russell Freedman
with
THE VIETNAM WAR
A FILM BY KEN BURNS & LYNN NOVICK

Ages 10 up • 978-0-8234-3658-3 • E-book available

Discuss the two.

- Define documentary. Burns and Novick produce film documentaries, while Russell Freedman commits his documentaries to print. What is the responsibility of a documentary to tell a story? Discuss the storytelling skills of Burns and Novick and those of Freedman in their accounts of the Vietnam War.
- How does the live testimony of those who fought in Vietnam make the war seem more real to those who weren't alive during that era? Discuss how watching the film might help veterans come to terms with the horror of what they witnessed. How might some veterans take issue with the film documentary? Debate whether they might have similar issues with Freedman's book.
- Compare and contrast the way Freedman begins his book to the way Burns and Novick start the film.
- The Vietnam War spanned almost twenty years and the administrations of five US presidents. Explain how Burns and Novick and Freedman deal with the way these presidents handled the Vietnam War.
- Ken Burns has said that he wanted the film to be a lesson. What is the lesson to be learned? How does Freedman's book teach the same lesson? Debate what our nation has learned from Vietnam, if anything.
- How do the film documentary and the print documentary present different points of view regarding the war? Why is it important to see all sides of this controversial war?

Guide prepared by Pat Scales, retired school librarian and independent consultant, Greenville, South Carolina.