

VIETNAM WAR INTERACTIVE

Reaction to the Vietnam War

SOURCE A: From a letter written by a US soldier fighting in Vietnam in 1969

Christmas came and went, marked only by tragedy. I'm tired of going to sleep and listening to rockets and mortars and artillery. I'm sick of facing every day a new bunch of kids ripped to pieces. They're just kids – 18, 19, their whole lives ahead of them, cut off. I'm sick to death of it.

SOURCE B: From an article published in Time Magazine in January 1970. This described a massacre of Vietnamese civilians in My Lai in March 1968. It was written by a US army reporter who was present at the time

Troops accosted a group of women, including a teenage girl. A GI grabbed the girl and started stripping her. A photographer jumped in to take a picture of the group. The picture shows the thirteen year old girl trying to hide behind her mother.

Then a soldier asked, "Well what'll we do with them?" "Kill them," said another soldier. I heard a light machine-gun go off and when we turned around, all of them and the kids were dead.

TASK

Read sources A and B.

1. Explain why there were such different reactions in the USA to the country's involvement in the conflict in Vietnam in the 1960s.