

Media during the vietnam war

[War](#), [Vietnam War](#)



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TTC Argumentative Essay

During the Vietnam War, television was just being introduced, meaning the citizens of the United States could see the war right in the comfort of their living rooms. However, the media's broadcasting of the Vietnam War was detrimental because it twisted the views of citizens, sparked protests, and ended innocent lives. Sometimes people even referred to it as the "television war". It seemed as if life back at home was becoming as violent as life on the war front, but how violent?

When television was first released about 9% of Americans had them in the early 1950's, but by 1966, about 93% of American homes had a television. The increase of television ownership happened about halfway through the Vietnam War, so it was one of the main topics of news channels in America. In order to get the full story, journalists and reporters had to go to Vietnam themselves, putting their lives in danger. It makes people wonder was it really worth it to go, and some got their answer when about 63 journalists and reporters died in Vietnam for what seemed like no reason.

There has always been bias in the media, because everyone has opinions, including reporters. This however, can really get out of hand when citizens are being fed false information because somebody wanted to give their two cents. During the Vietnam war, there were plenty of opinions, whether it was supporting the war or not. Often times, considering it was war, there wasn't much good news, so many people developed a hatred towards the conflict. They started to blame the soldiers for what they were doing, but what is

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really fair to blame them considering they were just doing their jobs? It reached the point where the government started to censor certain news, and began to filter what the citizens were seeing on screen, so nobody could avoid the bias. “ Journalists and reporters were now able to take much more photographs and record video materials. As a consequence, the government had to face a big challenge in censoring all the new media for the first time” (Rohn). Due to this increase in censoring, it started to spark protests in the United States, and even this resulted in more death than the war itself.

Thich Quang Duc's name became famous when he set himself on fire, as a protest to the government for the persecution of Buddhists in South Vietnam, but this wasn't the only protest that came about because of the war. Like today, many protests are coming from college students because they've reached a point where they are figuring out themselves, and their opinions. A large organization known as Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) played a large role in the anti-war protests. In May of 1970, at Kent State, there was a student protest happening, which ended violently when the guardsmen shot and killed four students. This all happened due to media bias making the citizens believe the government had no reason to be there. In reality however, it was only that the United States didn't make their intentions clear, despite having them. It makes some wonder however, why does the United States have to state their intentions if it is not entirely necessary? Maybe the intentions were not intended to be shared.

63 or more reporters and journalists were killed in Vietnam. Naturally when the media gets ahold of this information, they'll bring a larger severity to the

situation because it was their own colleagues, but did they have the right to alter the news just because of their own personal feelings? From the Cambodian Campaign, to the Battle of Quang Tri City, many journalists died, but for what cause? Getting out a story seems like it wasn't worth all the pain, especially if it cost a life. It wasn't just American journalists either. Reporters from France, Australia, and Japan alike were all reporting for their countries because citizens believed that their news was more important than a life. How could someone possibly justify right and wrong in that situation though? It goes right back to personal opinion. It ends up just becoming one giant circle that's hard to break out of. This makes the media particularly harmful to the war and country alike.

Could there be a good thing to come out of the media? That's debatable, but it comes down to how it affects the majority of people, and from the looks of it, it doesn't seem too good. Although, some people could argue that the media was beneficial during the war. Now people could stay up to date on what it is that is happening over at Vietnam, and it was easier to see what it was that the government was doing. As stated earlier however, the ability to see what is happening every minute of every day might not be beneficial. It sparked violent protests, and was a large influence to the start of bias. This makes it almost impossible to argue that media was a good thing to come to the Vietnam war.

So even though it all comes down to personal opinion and affect, nine out of ten people's lives would show that not much benefit has come out of the media during the war. From death, to protests, to false information, bias

played a huge role in the Vietnam war, much as it does today, and it seems that isn't going to change anytime soon.