

# Essay on weekend writing prompt

[Politics](#), [Communism](#)



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## **Essay Prompt**

Ho Chi Minh

Many credit Ho Chi Minh for his significant role in the independence movement and rise to power as the first president of North Vietnam. He saw people within Vietnamese society as one that is undergoing a transition towards French influence, from which he sought to liberate them. Ho became a kitchen boy by educating himself, which became the key for him to travel around the world. His travels in Europe and the United States (US) greatly influenced his political thinking, having acquired several books that mostly leaned towards Communist ideologies. Books by Karl Marx and Leo Tolstoy, among many others, and various observations during travel have given Ho a strong foundation on knowledge of politics. Eventually realizing that many more people in parts of Europe are as deprived of education as with people in Vietnam, Ho eventually used his inclination towards politics as he went out

of being a kitchen boy. The acquisition of Communist beliefs by Ho led him to become supportive of Communism than Socialism. Ho joined the Communists abroad and eventually proved instrumental to the formation of the French Communist Party (FCP). Communism harbors national liberation absent under Socialism, hence the move of Ho to affiliate with the former.

### **Phan Boi Chau**

A colleague of Ho within the FCP, Phan Boi Chau actively promoted the concept of nationalism during his lifetime. The formal education Phan received in Japan formed his conception of a Vietnam independent from French control, with the help of his sharp mental acumen. The sharpness of Phan in using the pen entailed his production of several materials that promoted Vietnamese nationalism. Phan Chau Trinh, another nationalist, collaborated with Phan, a fellow supporter of nationalism, to create a viable blueprint for freeing Vietnam from France. However, Phan saw himself disagreeing with the other Phan over the issue of retaining the monarchy, which he saw as an instrumental generator of financial support, as against the other proposal to abolish it and form a new platform of national sovereignty. Although Phan and the rest of the Vietnamese people eventually departed Japan as it went under pressure from France, he found himself eventually transferring to China. Under the tutelage of Sun Yat-Sen, Phan gained an idea on the operation of a republican system. Phan eventually formed the Vietnamese Restoration League (VRL) based on the lessons he received from Sun. However, the French saw the VRL as a threatening organization that may arouse further calls for independence.

Therefore, the French seized Phan from China and placed him in house arrest until his death.

## **Phan Chu Trinh**

Nationalism also served as a deep influence of Phan Chu Trinh in his desire for Vietnam to gain independence from France. Phan saw that the Vietnamese society has suffered greatly under the indignant oppression and exploitation by France, especially with his personal experience of losing his mother and father due to French attacks that led him to become an orphan when he reached 13 years of age. Having attained a government post due to the possession of a high Mandarin Degree, Phan eventually left for Japan in a movement he joined alongside Phan Boi Chau, with which he eventually clashed over different nationalist ideals. The observation gathered by Phan in his travels fortified his thinking on the abolition of the monarchy in Vietnam after France pulls out its control and his apparent disapproval of the militarism espoused by the Japanese. Phan turned to producing writings to improve on his nationalist stand vastly, making his nonviolent way of resistance from French rule. Believing that the liberation of Vietnam would best transpire if the Vietnamese becomes more educated, Phan sought for other nations to support his cause. Furthermore, Phan saw the democratic principles set by France as a suitable model for Vietnam.

## **Vu Trong Phung**

One of the most popular literary figures in Vietnam, Vu Trong Phung is another notable example of a nationalist that sought to fight using nonviolent means. The strong flavor of comedic satire present in many of the

works of Vu makes him different from the likes of Ho and the two Phans, who were usually straightforward in their approach to upholding nationalism. Vu saw the problem of French colonialism in Vietnam in the form of attitudes shifting away from Vietnamese identity, especially in terms of language and technology. Such observation led Vu to write several of his works criticizing such transformation as he implicitly calls for the liberation of Vietnam from such attitudinal control. Perhaps the best known of all the works of Vu is the novel entitled *Dumb Luck*. The main character, Xuan, is an uneducated trickster who has found himself in situations that, without his natural wit, would have become highly compromising for him. The success of Xuan in tricking people that he belongs to the elite has allowed him to criticize members of the real elite in several events, such as his famous castigation of French-speaking Vietnamese intellectuals over their non-usage of their native language (Vu 112-119).

## **Conclusion**

Ho, the two Phans and Vu have amassed their respective ways of expressing their nationalist concerns for their homeland Vietnam. All of the foregoing political figures proved that they have an adequate grasp of the colonialist reality of Vietnam under the French through their respective sets of consciousness centered on oppression. In a revolutionary scale, the most effective nationalist policy would most likely come from Ho, as he has strategically placed himself within crucial organizations that he thought as instrumental in attaining the independence of Vietnam from France. The leniency of Ho towards Communist ideologies supporting liberation from colonial rule makes him a highly capable leader that commanded the respect

of the Vietnamese people and the whole world. Yet, in terms of popularity, Vu stands out as the winner of the most effective nationalist policy, if he converts his criticisms into one. A return to traditional living in Vietnam could prevent the country from losing its national identity due to the spread of French influence. National identity serves as a crucial foundation of independence from France, hence the reason why Xuan in *Dumb Luck* has criticized the French-speaking Vietnamese intellectuals, even to the point of receiving a marriage offer from a wealthy Vietnamese family.

## **Written Response**

The movie *Indochine* is an exposition of the conflicting nature of Vietnamese national identity in the case of a French individual who has formed his consciousness fully in Vietnam. Eliane, being a French-born person that grew up in Vietnam, has received favorable treatment from the Vietnamese since her physical appearance and social status places her above everyone else in the colony, despite the fact that she has never been to France before. In contrast to the oppression of native Vietnamese people by the French, Eliane did not experience such discrimination even though he is not a full-fledged French person. In fact, Eliane even shows her free will to raise an adopted native Vietnamese daughter by the name of Camille, whose parents – among the closest friends of Eliane, perished in an accident. The adoption of Camille served as a paradoxical symbolism for Eliane, given that the latter has placed the former in an arranged marriage. Eliane arranged a marriage between Camille and an educated and wealthy native Vietnamese named Tanh. Although Camille finds the company of Tanh as a comfortable one, she never saw him as a viable life partner suitable for marriage. Instead of Tanh,

Camille fell in love with a French naval officer named Jean-Baptiste. Eliane deeply rejected the idea of a relationship between Camille and Jean-Baptiste, but the fact that even Tanh has shown his support for the two of them has left her helpless. The deep disdain shown by Eliane towards the relationship of Camille with Jean-Baptiste stems from the fact that she was once a lover of the latter. Therefore, conflicts between Eliane, Camille and Jean-Baptiste emerged from a string of overlapping interests that entailed their lack of independent action (Indochine).

Dumb Luck exposes the hypocrisy of Vietnamese society in the midst of growing French influence towards the 20th century. Xuan, the main character, has successfully pretended to be a member of the higher class when he eloquently recited poetry before a woman that desired his courtship. Such recitation was, in fact, just a snake-oil chant that proved highly convincing enough for the woman to think that he is highly educated (Vu 96-103). Further deception followed the convincing act of Xuan, as he enjoyed a warm reception from upper class circles. In a particular case at a tennis club attended by native Vietnamese intellectual figures, Xuan saw that people around him have talked in French. Still maintaining the desire to conceal the inability to understand such a foreign language, Xuan expressed his frustration wisely by pointing out the use of the Vietnamese language instead of French. The result saw the intellectuals apologizing to Xuan, with the respect accorded to him backed by their impression that he is a learned individual (Vu 112-119). Another scene featuring Xuan successfully tricked the upper class is when a wealthy couple asked him to marry their daughter. With the impression that Xuan has high educational credentials, the wealthy

couple desperately sought him as the person their daughter would marry. However, Xuan - aware of the truth that he is uneducated, promptly declined the offer. In response, the wealthy couple kept on begging Xuan to change his mind (Vu 157-164).

## **Works Cited**

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