

# “The Art of War”

## War Photography: World War II & Vietnam War

By Rachel Miller, PhD

Adaption of a lesson plan by Heather Bettinardi

**Grade: 6-8, 9-12**



Title: “Fighting Through the Downpour”

Cape Gloucester, New Britain – In spite of the tropical downpour that literally falls in sheets, drenching the fighters and their equipment, our Marines carry on in their battle for Cape Gloucester. His uniform plastered to his body, a Leatherneck gun crew member raises his hand to give the firing signal to men manning this 75mm Howitzer. Credit: -WP-(ACME Photo by Frank Prist, Jr., for the War Picture Pool);

From the Allison Collection of World War II Photographs, MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History

### Lesson Plan Overview

This lesson plan will explore the human side of war through wartime photography. Students will utilize historic photographs documenting World War II and the Vietnam War. Through analysis and discussion of selected photographs, students will learn how to “read” a primary source that is not a document and summarize its content. By using the MacArthur Museum’s collections of digitalized historic photographs, students will be exposed to new and diverse images of war and its impact on humanity.

## **Content Frameworks**

### **Grade 6-8**

H.6.6.11- Analyze the scientific and technological innovations that affected society in the mid to late 20th century (e.g., camera and photography, impact on societal perceptions and understanding of war).

H.6.7.1 –Examine ways viewpoints expressed in *primary* and *secondary source* (e.g., censorship of wartime photographs, using photographs as protest).

H.6.8.1—Examine ways viewpoints expressed in political cartoons and other *primary* (e.g., *photographs*) and *secondary source* documents have changed policy and public perception.

H6.8.17—Explain the influences that changing technology had on World War I and World War II (e.g., development of the camera and documentation of war).

### **Grade 9-12**

WC.18.AH.6 Investigate the contributions of technology and science during World War II (e.g., technological advancement of the camera and photography)

CUS.19.AH.7 Investigate the role of the United States in global conflicts: Vietnam

CUS.19.AH.8 Examine the cultural and technological changes in American society that began in the 1950s using primary and secondary sources.

## **Connection to CCSS**

### **History/Social Studies**

#### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2**

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary *or* secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

#### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2**

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

#### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.2**

Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

## **Lesson Objective**

To analyze a primary source that illustrates the history and progression of wartime photography and articulate primary source analysis into a summary of the topic. The suggested outcome would be a series of student composed summaries illustrating the progression of war photography between World War II and the Vietnam War.

## **Essential Question**

How do you “read” and summarize the content of a primary source that is not a document?

## **Key Terms**

- **Wartime** – a time or period of war
- **Censorship** – the practice of censoring (verb). A censor (noun) is an official who examines documents, photography, film, etc., for the purpose of suppressing certain information deemed objectionable on moral, political, military, or other grounds.
- **Homefront** – the civilian sector (for ex: friends and family) of a nation at war when its armed forces are in combat abroad.
- **Technology** – a scientific or industrial invention or method that improves or enhances cultural and scientific activities or processes.

**Time Frame** 4 Part Lesson, 1-3 classes. Each lesson section is designed to either be implemented together or separately depending on desired length of classroom instruction.

### **Materials Needed for Lesson Plan**

- **Allison Collection of World War II Photographs:** During World War II, James Allison, a sports writer working for the Houston Press, noticed that many photographs not printed in the daily newspaper were routinely discarded. He received permission to save these images, and by war's end he had amassed a collection of more than 4,600 photographs. In August 1977, Allison donated his collection to the Arkansas Museum of Science and History, located in the historic Arsenal building in MacArthur Park. Today, the MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History owns and preserves these images.

\*To access the MacArthur Museum's Allison Collection Flickr album:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/macarthurmuseum/sets/72157646042914841/#>

- **Vietnam, America's Conflict:** The color photos featured in the MacArthur Museum's exhibit "Vietnam, America's Conflict" were taken by Bruce Wesson from 1966 -1968. Wesson was a 2nd Lt. in the U.S. Army. While in Vietnam, he led the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) combat photography and film team. The team's mission was to produce material for release to worldwide media outlets through the Department of Defense. His photos have been used by NBC, ABC, CBS, and several documentaries on the Vietnam War.

\*To access the MacArthur Museum's "Vietnam, America's Conflict" Flickr album:

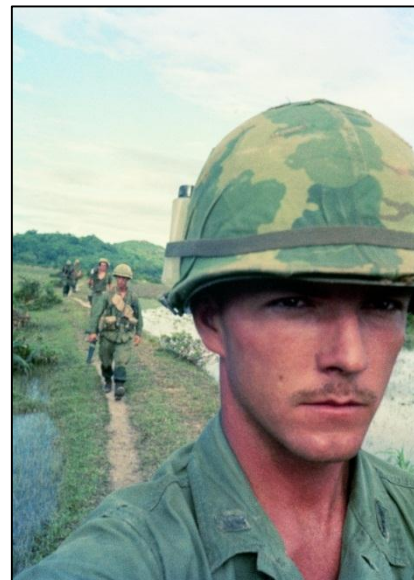
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/macarthurmuseum/sets/7215764704433239/>



Title: Get That Picture!

NETTUNO, ITALY – Squatting on a pile of bomb-debris, Charlie Seewood, Acme Newspictures photographer for the war picture pool, is ready to make a picture of the bomb ruins of battle-scarred Nettuno. Credit Line – WP – (Acme)

From the Allison Collection of World War II Photographs, MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History.



Vietnam War era selfie: Second Lt. Bruce Wesson on combat patrol. From the "Vietnam, America's Conflict" exhibit at the MacArthur Museum.

### Instructional Strategies

**Part One – Secondary Source Summary:** Either read the “Introduction” to students or have students read the “Introduction” on their own. Afterwards, students will compose a summary of the reading, focusing on how changes in technology impacted the way Americans understood war. \*If needed, see provided secondary source summary organizer.

**Part Two: Primary Source: Photo analysis**

**Activity 1:** Divide the students into pairs. Ask each pair to select 1-2 photographs from the Allison Collection. (**Note:** Allison Collection Flickr Album features the entire collection, over 4,000 photos. In order to conserve time, you might confine their search to the first 100 photographs or do a preliminary search before the lesson, selecting a set of 100 photographs for the students to use.)

- A. Using the \*provided photograph analysis worksheet, students will analyze the content of each photograph.
- B. When they have finished their discussion, ask students to review their analysis worksheet, identifying 1 – 2 central themes.
- C. Next, students will respond to the five questions listed on the \*provided primary source summary worksheet. Afterwards, using their responses, students will create their own five sentence caption for the photo, summarizing their responses to the prompt questions.

**Part Three – Photo Analysis Activity 2:**

Working in pairs, students will select 1-2 photographs from the “Vietnam, America’s Conflict” collection. After students have selected their photos, they will follow the same process (A – C) for Part Two.

**Part Four- Venn Diagram:** Students will then create a Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting the content of 1 of the 2 photographs they selected from each photo collection. For example: One photo from the Allison Collection and one photo from the “Vietnam, America’s Conflict” collection.

**Using their completed Venn Diagram, students will compose a paragraph summarizing the differences and similarities of the two photographs.** Students can use the primary source “5Ws” question prompts. \*See provided Venn Diagram worksheet.

**Part Five – Primary Source 2: Wartime**

**Photographers’ Direct Quotes:** Ask students to read the two direct quotes by well-known war photographers, followed by a class discussion of the relevance of the direct quotes to the overall theme of the lesson plan.

- A. After the discussion, have students rewrite each direct quote into their own words.
- B. Next, students will select a (new) photo from each collection to illustrate their summaries of the direct quote.
- C. Lastly, students will share their summaries and explain their photo selections.

### **Enrichment Activity: Cultural Diversity**

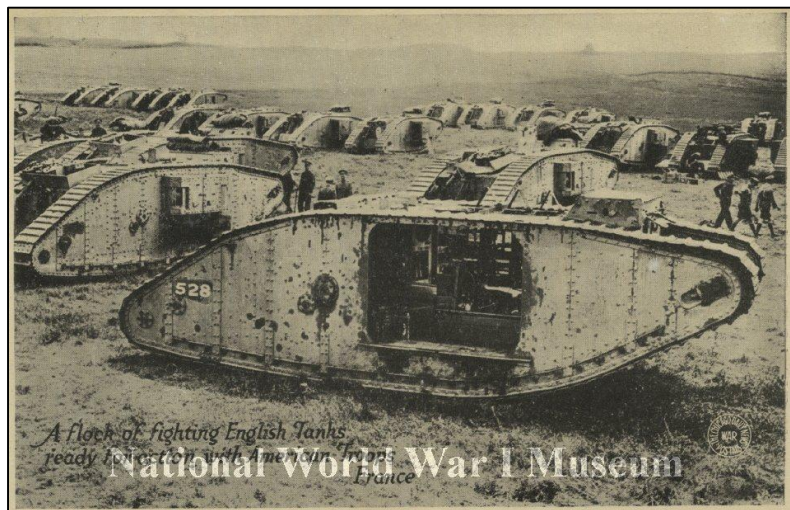
Women were wartime photographers too. Have students research female wartime photographers, either focusing on a particular conflict or a historical and contemporary conflict. Explore such issues as gender biases, access and restriction to certain locations, and changes in societal perceptions concerning a woman’s ability to document war through photography. The topic can also be expanded to researching wartime photographers of different cultures and ethnicities and their documentation, perceptions, and interpretations of war and conflict.

## Introduction: Wartime Photography

**Technology** can influence society through new products. Many inventions have changed our impressions of society. One invention, the camera, created images that readily appeared allowing society to view the world in a new light. In 1839, Louis Daguerre developed a process which left an image on a copper plate. The end result was called a daguerreotype. The same year, John Herschel developed the ability to create the first glass negative, permitting the multiplication of prints. A similar process was used by Matthew Brady during the Civil War, but since it took up to 15-30 minutes to develop, the photographers had to have a dark room on site. The modern photographic process was developed within the first 20 years of photography's start. In 1884, George Eastman developed a new type of paper giving everyone the opportunity to own a camera. Eastman Kodak's new slogan was "You press the button, we do the rest." Since its invention the camera, through photographs, has provided a window to the world, society and the past, present or the future.

The advent of the camera changed the way people experienced war. For thousands of years, most people only experienced war through the stories of those who lived to tell about it. **Wartime** photographers gradually made the realities of war accessible, whether the **homefront** was prepared or not. Wartime photographs of U.S. conflicts were first taken in the Mexican-American War of 1846, and later during the Civil War. But equipment at the time was too bulky and slow for action shots, so most photographs were staged or taken after battles.

Photography became an official military function by World War I (1914-1918), but the photographs that were made available to the public were generally sanitized. All wartime photographers, no matter their affiliation, were required to submit their photographs to the Signal Corps laboratory, a U.S. government agency, for **censoring**. A government **ensor** would then decide which photographs were "suitable" for distribution and publication. If a photograph was published without official government permission, the photographer and the publisher could be arrested. Any photograph that was perceived as having an adverse impact on American soldiers' morale was banned. This included photographs depicting under-equipped soldiers, such as a soldier in



Caption: A flock of fighting English Tanks ready for action with American Troops, France.  
Source: National World War I Museum online collection:  
<http://theworldwar.pastperfectonline.com/35156cgi/mweb.exe?request=random>

a battered uniform without proper weaponry or aid. Graphic photographs of dead American soldiers, but not enemy soldiers, were censored. Also, photographs showing such scenes as severely injured soldiers, a military operating room, and destroyed airplanes or naval boats were subject to **ensorship** because of their potential to cause anxiety and depression among the soldiers' families back home.

Wartime photography became much more graphic in World War II. In January 1942, the Associated Press, Acme Newspictures, International News Photos, and *Life* magazine formed the Still Photographic War Pool. The agreement meant that the news organizations would send photographers to the frontlines and share the photographs. By mid-January 1943 there were 28 photographers in various theaters, and the photographs were available to all major publications. Male and female foreign correspondents struggled to meet deadlines, find transportation, send photographs over the wire, and avoid censorship from government agencies. Photographers also had to transport cumbersome equipment that could total several hundred pounds. *Life* magazine had 21 wartime photographers that spent a combined 13,000 days on assignment, with half of that time near combat. The photographs that wartime correspondents produced came at a high cost. Thirty-seven print and photo-journalists were killed in World War II, 112 were wounded, and 50 were taken prisoner. The casualty rate among wartime journalists was four times higher than among soldiers.

By the early 1960s, photographic technology had greatly advanced. The first digitally scanned photograph was produced in 1957. Cameras became smaller and lighter than their early 20<sup>th</sup> century counterparts. Furthermore, cameras were more affordable, which made them accessible to the general public. In 1962, as the U.S. government began to pay more attention to the conflict in Vietnam, photojournalists equipped themselves with 35mm cameras that had the capability to take a wide range of shots at faster shutter speeds in a variety of settings. Most importantly, their photographs were in color. The use of color photography, coupled with audio-visual news footage broadcasted into people's living rooms through televisions, drastically impacted how Americans perceived and understood war.

Although the government tried to control the distribution of news and images from Vietnam, the popularity of the television and advances in satellite technology made it almost



Title: "Captured Pilot of Nazi One-Man Sub"

ITALY -- This **17-year-old** German lad, (left), looks frightened and very unhappy as he is questioned by a British captain after his capture in a Nazi one-man submarine at Peter Beach in the Anzio beachhead area. The sub consisted of a driving tube which housed the pilot, and a detachable torpedo slung underneath. As the pilot reached his objective, he released the lethal charge and then piloted the driving tube to safety. Credit Line (U.S. Army Photo from ACME);

From the Allison Collection of World War II Photographs, MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History.



Combat cameramen of the MACV Army A-Team take a break during a patrol in Vietnam's Mekong Delta. Keeping gear and film in working order in the wet and muddy environment of the Delta was extremely difficult. Photo by Bruce Wesson, "Vietnam, America's Conflict" exhibit, MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History.

impossible. The photography documenting the Vietnam War was produced by military combat photography teams and public and private news agencies. Their photographs, intentionally or not, provoked national and international protest against the atrocities committed against humanity. Up until the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Vietnam Conflict was the longest war the United States had fought. Expanding a decade, the war defined a generation of young people.

War photography implies more than military combat. It's an artistic medium that encompasses the impact of war on civilians, environments, and culture. Many wartime photographers became internationally recognized artists. In general, the invention of the camera allowed for a person to document and record history or daily living as he or she experienced it. Today, photography is high tech and continues to be considered an art form, whether it depicts cultural activities or documents war. Not only can it be viewed in a gallery, but we also use it to gain information regarding past and current events, as well as the future. Photography continues to provide a window into the world at large.

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Maslowski, Peter. *Armed With Cameras: The American Military Photographers of World War II*. New York: The Free Press, 1993.

Moeller, Susan D. *Shooting War: Photography and the American Experience of Combat*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1989.

#### *Websites:*

Freeze Frame: Eadweard Muybridge's Photography of Motion, National Museum of American History, [http://americanhistory.si.edu/muybridge/htm/htm\\_sec1/sec1.htm](http://americanhistory.si.edu/muybridge/htm/htm_sec1/sec1.htm)

History of Photography timeline, PBS "The Wizard of Photography," <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eastman/timeline/>

## Introduction Glossary

Adverse impact – having an unfavorable or unwanted effect

Atrocities – cruel or brutal treatment or act

Casualty rate – the amount of people killed during a conflict

Correspondents - a person employed by a news agency, periodical, television network, etc., to gather, report, or contribute news, articles, and the like regularly from a distant place.

Daguerreotype - photographic process, invented in 1839, in which a picture made on a silver surface sensitized with iodine was developed by exposure to mercury vapor.

Frontlines – in front of an action, fighting, or activity

Morale – the emotional or mental state of a person or group, whether it's cheerful or sad, especially when faced with a hardship.

Over the wire – the phrase refers to when news was sent by telegraph – over the wire – now, it's used to refer to news sent by any form of media.

Sanitized – to make something less offensive or more wholesome.

Theaters – in the context of war, a theater refers to a place of action, field of operations. For example, during WWII, the fighting that took place in Europe was referred to as the European Theater.



A Civil War daguerreotype, MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History collections.



## Secondary Source Summary Worksheet

★ **Secondary source:** an account, record, or evidence of an event, historical period, etc., taken from an original or primary source. Secondary sources are, for example, textbooks, magazine articles, reference books, encyclopedias, and online articles.

**A summary is a brief account of the central ideas of a source written in your own words.**

**Step One:** For each paragraph of the Introduction reading, complete the below secondary source summary chart.

**Step Two:** After you have completed the chart, compose a five sentence summary of the paragraph.

2. Topic Sentence:	3. Key Idea 1:	
4. Key Idea 2:	1. Central Theme:	5. Key Idea 3:

## Photo Analysis Worksheet\*

### Observation

Study the photograph for 2 minutes. Form an overall impression of the photograph and then examine individual items. Next, divide the photo into quadrants and study each section to see what new details become visible. Afterwards, use the chart below to list people, places, objects, and activities in the photograph.

People	Places	Objects	Activities

### Inference:

Based on what you have observed above, list three things you might infer from this photograph.

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### Questions

What questions does this photograph raise in your mind?

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Where could you find answers to them?

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If you were present at this moment in time, how would you feel experiencing it?

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\*Adaption of the National Archives and Records Administration's photo analysis worksheet.

## Primary Source Summary Worksheet

★ **Primary source:** a document or object written or created during a particular time or moment by an eyewitness/someone involved in the event. Primary sources can be letters, diaries, audio or film recording, photographs, and government documents.

**Step One:** Using your completed photo analysis worksheet as a guide, respond to the following five questions. Your responses will create a summary of the photograph's "text."

**Q1: Who?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Q2: What?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Q3: When?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Q4: Where?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Q5: Why?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Step Two:** After you have responded to the five questions, write a five sentence summary to use as *your own caption* for the photograph.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

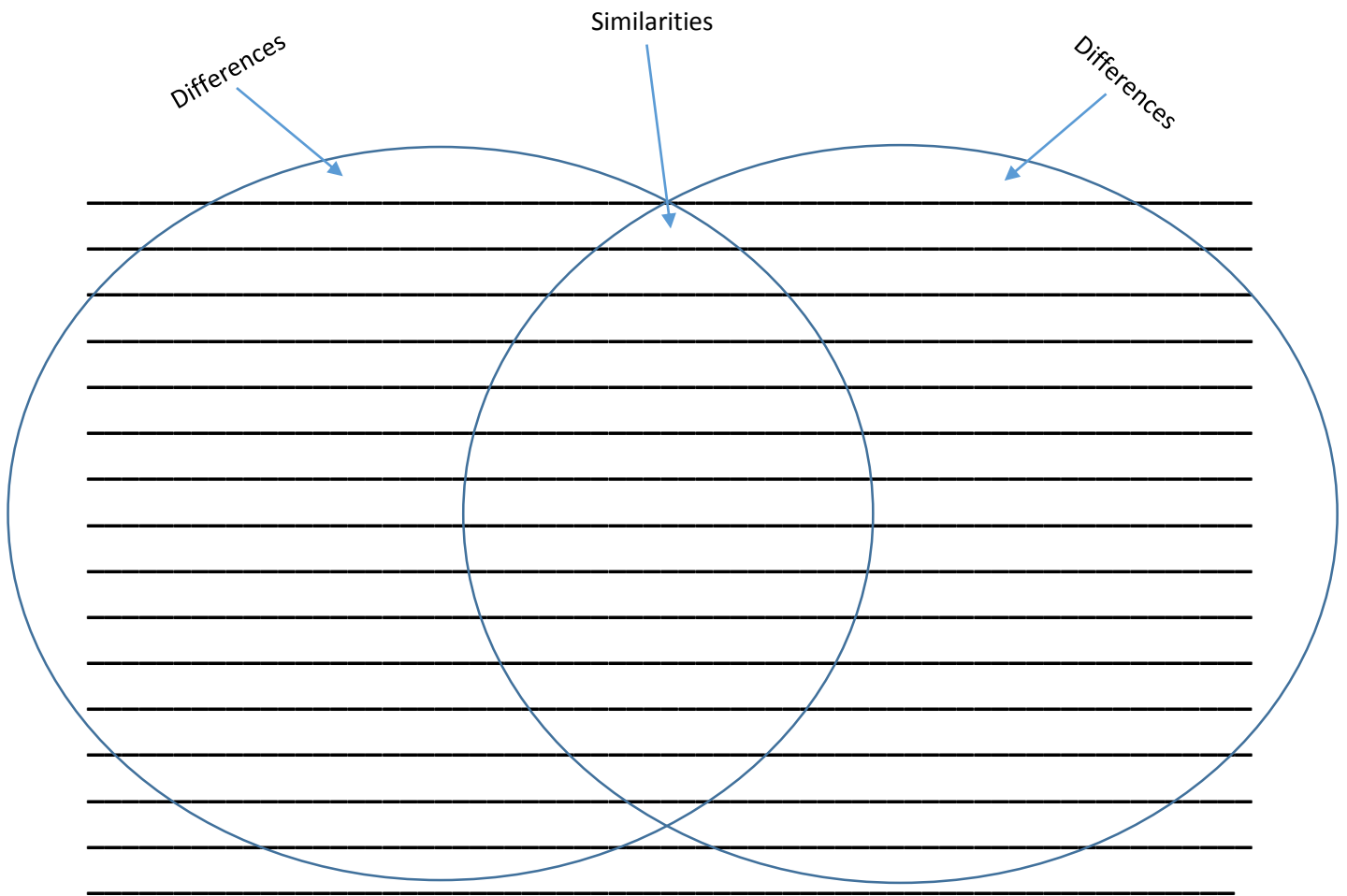
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Venn Diagram Worksheet

What's the photo title?

What's the photo title?



## Primary Source: Wartime Photographers' Direct Quotes\*

**Step One:** Read both direct quotes. Discuss with your classmates the meaning of the photographer's words. Consider: who, what, when, where, and why of the direct quotes. How do these photographers' words address the reality of documenting war through pictures?

**Step Two:** Rewrite the direct quotes into *your own words*.

**Step Three:** Select a photo from each photo collection to illustrate each one of your direct quote summaries.

### Direct Quote One

"You see only those photographs that a correspondent was able to take. You don't see all the things that were happening all around him when he couldn't raise his head."

~ Carl Mydans, a photojournalist for Time Life pictures for over fifty years.



<http://documentaryshooters.com>

### Direct Quote Two

"I think all war should be done in black and white. It's more primitive; color tends to make things look too nice. Makes the jungle of Vietnam look lush—which it was, but it wasn't nice."

~ Eddie Adams, combat photographer during the Korean War, and later a photojournalist for several news media outlets. In 1969, he won the Pulitzer Prize for Spot News Photography.



<http://www.eddieadamsworkshop.com>

\* Susan D. Moeller, *Shooting War: Photography and the American Experience of Combat*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1989.

## Summary Assessment Rubric

Criteria	Advanced	Proficient	Limited
Student includes essential elements of a summary: topic sentence, identify central theme(s), and addresses key details of source.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*A clear and relevant topic sentence.</li> <li>*Key concepts are identified and concisely present.</li> <li>*Demonstrates an ability to synthesize information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*A mostly clear topic sentence.</li> <li>*Some key concepts identified and concisely presented.</li> <li>*Demonstrates an ability to generalize information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Topic may be identified, but no key concepts presented.</li> <li>*Limited examples provided or student indiscriminately lists information.</li> </ul>
Student presents information from source in a logical format.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Organization is logical.</li> <li>*Transitions are used to link key ideas.</li> <li>*A clear sequence of key ideas and supporting points are present.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Organization is orderly.</li> <li>*Some transitions words are used to connect information and concepts.</li> <li>*A noticeable logical flow of information from the source.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Absence of organization or its random.</li> <li>*Does not follow a sequence of ideas from the source.</li> </ul>
Student demonstrates understanding of source information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Demonstrates an obvious understanding of information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Demonstrates an adequate understanding of information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Demonstrates a limited or no understanding of information.</li> </ul>
Student demonstrates written form, paraphrasing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Writing is clear and expressive.</li> <li>*Few convention errors occur.</li> <li>*Creative and appropriate word choice.</li> <li>*Successfully paraphrases key concepts and details into student's own words.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Writing is understandable.</li> <li>*Convention errors don't make writing hard to understand.</li> <li>*Word choice is appropriate for subject.</li> <li>*Paraphrases key concepts and details mostly in student's own words.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Writing is unclear.</li> <li>*Convention errors make writing too hard understand.</li> <li>*Word choice is simple or not appropriate for subject.</li> <li>*Student may substantially copy original source information.</li> </ul>