

#9020

1973: GUERRILLA WARS

PBS VIDEO
Grade Levels: 10-13+
57 minutes



DESCRIPTION

Uses Castro's takeover of Cuba, the Vietcong's war against the United States, and Afghanistan's struggle with Russia as examples of the effectiveness of guerrilla warfare. Includes personal reflections and archival video. NOTE: Contains some graphic depictions of violence.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject Area: United States History

- Standard: Understands the causes of the American Revolution, the ideas and interests involved in shaping the revolutionary movement, and reasons for the American victory
 - Benchmark: Understands the major political and strategic factors that led to the American victory in the Revolutionary War (e.g., the importance of the Battle of Saratoga, the use of guerilla and conventional warfare, the importance of King's Mountain in defining the war)

Subject Area: Geography

- Standard: Understands the forces of cooperation and conflict that shape the divisions of Earth's surface
 - Benchmark: Understands why some countries are land-locked (e.g., wars between rival countries, isolation due to the size of landmasses and due to racial and cultural divisions)

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To define *guerrilla warfare*.
2. To examine how, despite their small numbers, guerilla movements defeat larger, more sophisticated military forces in Cuba, Vietnam, and Afghanistan.
3. To analyze strengths and weaknesses of the guerrilla movements in different countries.

BEFORE SHOWING

1. Define the term *guerrilla warfare*. How is it different from *conventional warfare*?
2. Describe what you know about the geography and political history of Cuba. Is Cuba a political threat to the United States? Why or why not?

DURING SHOWING

Applications and Activities

1. Have students write down examples that illustrate or expand their definition of guerrilla warfare.
2. Have students write down the guerrillas' strategies and what the guerrillas promised to bring the people, if they won.

AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. What were the similarities among the uses of guerrilla warfare in Cuba, Vietnam, and Afghanistan? What were the differences?
2. Based on the quotation by Ahmed Shah Massoud, what were the strengths and weaknesses of the guerrilla movements in each country? How did the guerrillas' tactics in each country capitalize on their strengths? What tactics did the American and Soviet militaries use to try to defeat guerrillas? How did guerrillas respond? Why did the more sophisticated militaries fail?
3. What reasons did people give for supporting or participating in guerrilla movements? What were some of the hardships they faced and why do you think they were willing to endure them? How do their experiences and attitudes compare to those described by American and Soviet soldiers? What psychological factors contributed to and affected the outcome of the guerrilla wars?
4. Why did the guerrillas' victory inspire fear in the United States and Latin American governments? What qualities made the Cuban Revolution an appealing model for rebels in other countries?
5. Why do you think the guerrillas succeeded in defeating the military forces that outnumbered them? How did the guerrillas earn the loyalty of peasants? How did they use peasants?

Applications and Activities

1. Divide students into small groups to research the historical context of the guerrilla movements depicted in the program. Assign each group one of the three countries and one of the following time periods: the period leading up to the war, the war, or the period since the war. Ask groups to prepare a timeline of key events and to present the significance of the events in relation to the war or the goals of the guerrilla movement.
2. Have students explore the ways in which the American Revolution was a guerrilla war. What tactics did the American soldiers use against the British? Create a chart comparing and contrasting the American Revolution's goals and tactics with those of the Cuban Revolution or the Vietnam War.
3. Have students research guerrilla tactics used in the U.S. Civil War by the Confederate army.
4. Have students explore the motivations and experiences of guerrilla fighters through Latin American poetry. First, give students the poem "Song to Fidel" by Cuban Revolution leader Che Guevara, written on the eve of the Granma expedition. Discuss how the poem relates to the events portrayed in the program segment, how it expresses the idealism and commitment of the guerrilla soldiers, how it might have helped build support for the Cuban

Revolution, and how it might have inspired guerrilla movements in other countries. To follow up, have students read poems by other revolutionary Latin American poets and identify important themes such as the quest for justice, anti-imperialism, justification of violence, and confrontation of death and discuss why guerrillas and their supporters chose poetry as a vehicle for self-expression.

5. Have students investigate the United States' recent history with Cuba by exploring different points of view on the United States' embargo with Cuba. First, ask students to bring in news clippings on the issue. Then ask them to take the points of view of different interest groups (U.S. trading partners, the Clinton administration, the Cuban government, Cuban émigrés living in the United States, Cuban citizens, and American business groups) and conduct a roundtable discussion on the pros and cons of maintaining the embargo.

RELATED RESOURCES



Captioned Media Program

- Changing Faces of Communism: Vietnam #3019
- Cuba #2462



World Wide Web

The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- **BIOGRAPHY.COM**
<http://www.biography.com>

Provides a biography of over 70 guerrilla warfare leaders. Search by "guerrilla leaders" or by individual names.

- **FIRSTGOV**
<http://www.firstgov.gov>

Search on this U.S. government-sponsored site under "guerrilla warfare" and read numerous articles and publications on the subject.