Lesson Rationale & Summary

This lesson will serve as a deeper understanding of what the soldiers experienced during the Vietnam War. Giving the students the opportunity to read letters, both to and from soldiers will provide the students a rich insight into the humans that survived or maybe didn’t survive this historic event.

It is important for the students to see what was sacrificed in order to protect them as U.S. citizens. It is also relevant for our students to have a clearer understanding of the characters in the novel, *The Things They Carried*. This will provide the students evidence with which to empathize with the characters given in the novel.

Teaching this lesson using the Library of Congress and its wealth of primary sources allows the students to see the value in what has been preserved in these letters. The students will also be provided the opportunity to make the connection to current situations as they will write a letter as well to the active units supporting the U.S.

Essential Question

What were the concerns of the soldiers, both directly linked to the war and those outside of the war?
What effect has the author Tim O’Brien had on both his characters as well as his audience?
How does our study of past wars affect our thinking as we react to our current military situations?
What would you say both to the soldiers in Vietnam and also to our active duty members?

Primary Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letters About Literature National Winners</th>
<th>This will be one of the letters we will read and discuss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correspondence of Stephen E. Kirkland</td>
<td>This will be a soldier’s letters we will read and discuss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christine Ann Fraley Mauler</td>
<td>This will be a collection of soldier’s letters we will read and discuss</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Common Core Standards for English Language Arts

- CCSS.ELA.Literacy.W.9-10.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- CCSS.ELA.Literacy.W.9-10.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Assessments: Formative & Summative

Students will be assessed on their grammatical accuracy when writing. They will be evaluated on their effectiveness to organize and analyze content and convey their message clearly. The students will also be evaluated for their ability to articulate gratitude to current members of our military.
### Academic Language & Vocabulary

| The students will need to have a good understanding of compare/contrast, but also the value of gratitude. We will look deeply into the meaning of sacrifice and what is the true cost. We will review and decipher handwriting and even discuss the lost art of the written word. The students also will review analysis of what a message from one person to another means. |

### Interdisciplinary Connections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading: We will read the letters from soldiers and <em>The Things They Carried</em></th>
<th>Writing: The students will write a letter in the time of Vietnam war and then make the connection to today and write one to an active duty member.</th>
<th>Speaking &amp; Listening: The students will read their letters and listen as their classmates present.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other discipline: History will address all of the content surrounding the Vietnam War as well as discussing current events as they relate to today’s war.</td>
<td>Other discipline: Visual art; we will walk down to the Vietnam memorial in downtown Toledo and hope to gain inspiration for their letter writing assignment.</td>
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### Differentiated Instructional Strategies - DI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIFFERENTIATION:</th>
<th>FOR WHOM?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audio of letters</td>
<td>Students with reading comprehension challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small groups</td>
<td>Students who need one on one time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher edit</td>
<td>Students who have specific writing goals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### THE LESSON PROCEDURES

1. **READINESS (also called “Motivation” or the “Engage” segment)**  
   **Allotted Time:** 5-10 min.  
   The teacher will read aloud the first letter by Alexandra McLaughlin and discuss how literature affects a reader.

2. **CENTRAL LESSON OR ACTIVITY (Explore, Explain, Extend)**  
   **Allotted Time:** 100 min.  
   The students will read and discuss Stephen E. Kirkland and Christine Ann Fraley Mauler’s letters at their four tables, 4-6 students per group. They will analyze what the soldier was feeling and the message they were trying to convey.  
   The students will then take this knowledge of letter writing and apply it themselves. We will take a walk and sit in the Vietnam Memorial as the students compose a letter to a fictional soldier, a character in our novel by Tim O’Brien.  
   The next day the students will share their letters aloud. The students will then work on the composition of a letter to a current member of the military. After revision those too will be shared and then packaged and sent to the active duty soldier.

3. **CLOSURE**  
   **Allotted Time:** 30 min.  
   The students will be given time to discuss in an open format their feelings about letter writing, soldiers
and war as we have compared both the Vietnam War and our ongoing situations. We will use this time as a debriefing of all of the content we have studied and analyzed.

**Enrichment/Extension (This can’t be just tacked on; it has to be woven throughout your design.)**

1. Have the students analyze what they carry, personally, daily and how that effects who they are.
2. Encourage students to explore the LOC.GOV and select more letters to analyze
3. Have students speak with someone from another generation, outside of their own and gain knowledge on that person’s perspective of the wars they have lived through.