
Research Kit

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I. **Themes/Habits of Mind**

Vital Theme and Narrative: Values, Beliefs, Political Ideas, and Institutions;
Conflict and Cooperation

Habits of Mind: understand how things happen and how things change, how human intentions matter, and how their consequences are carried out, in a tangle of purpose and process; acquire at one and the same time an appreciation of diverse cultures and shared humanity; understand the relationship between geography and history as a matrix of time and place, and as a context for events

In this research kit, the Vital Theme and Narrative chosen was that of Values, Beliefs, Political Ideas, and Institutions as well as Conflict and Cooperation. Two themes were chosen because the idea of war highlights a few different areas of discussion. Values, Beliefs, Political Ideas, and Institutions bring forth a set of questions for discussion. People in the country question whether our values are in good faith and whether our beliefs are in question or are challenged. The politics of war and the government's role in the war influences our values and beliefs and how the war is fought. Conflict and cooperation works together to try to find a common goal and cooperate to successfully to win the war and make it known that our purpose is guided in good faith.

The historical habits of mind found throughout this research kit will demonstrate how things happen and how things change – wars constantly change not only physical environments, but also cultural and political environments. The war in Iraq and Afghanistan is bringing forth democratic change in these two political and social countries and trying to end the war on terrorism – another change our country can benefit from. This kit demonstrates how what happens in war affects not only the soldiers and government, but also the people who knew and loved the soldiers. Many of the documents included in this research kit bring together the way the homeland environment is affected by war and not just what is happening overseas. The war has taken on many different sides – from protests to support and fallen soldiers to mourning families – our country's history is writing itself as the war continues.

- II. **Key Question:** How do the effects of war, such as injury and casualty, affect not only soldiers but also their families and those on the home front (friends, civilians, media, government, etc)?

III. First Order Document:

This is a piece that could serve as both our key link to other materials but also be able to stand alone as a source that specifically deals with the issues of the injured and fallen in regard to the Iraq war.

The President's speech at Arlington on Veterans Day 2009 takes the leading role as our first order document, specifically paragraph 9 in which the president addresses the crowd:

...we call this a holiday. But for many veterans, its another day of memories that drive them to live their lives each day as best as they possibly can. For our troops, it is another day in harm's way. For their families, it is another day to feel the absence of a loved one, and the concern for their safety. For our wounded warriors, it is another day of slow and arduous recovery. And in this national cemetery, it is another day when grief remains fresh. So while it is important and proper that we mark this day, it is far more important we spend all our days determined to keep the promises that we've made to all who answer this country's call.

This research kit draws upon the key issues presented by President Obama in his speech because the kit addresses not only fallen veterans but also those who have been injured, either physically or psychologically, as the undergo the hardships of the aftermath of war.

Given the fact that this is a contemporary piece, students are going to take notice when their own President praises soldiers of the day, who might be friends and family, along with soldiers of the past, either their grandfathers or great grandfathers who could have served for their country in previous wars. Either way, this document showcases an emotional link between past and present, between student and historian.

With this document, our central objective was to link issues such as post traumatic stress disorder, depression, physically injured, fallen soldiers, and emotional hardships experienced by family members together with a broad narrative like President Obama's speech.

IV. Second-Order Documents

Fulcher Interview

This interview, provided by the Cantigny Museum, speaks to the significance of injury and the loss of life caused by war. The subject of this interview (Fulcher) is responsible for notifying immediate family members of the death or injury of their loved ones as a result of combat. He describes his emotions regarding this task, the frequency with which his duties are necessary, and the

effectiveness of the policies in place by the military dealing with these situations. This piece of oral history lends itself to aspects of our guiding themes and habits of mind with its emphasis on beliefs, institutional policies, and the cooperation among all individuals involved in dealing with fatalities and injuries as a result of war.

Image of Casket and Accompanying Article

In early 2009, the Pentagon lifted a nearly two-decade old ban on the photographing of caskets upon their return from war. This is significant in that the American public and people around the world are now able to see the costs of war in human lives and experience the realities of conflict that had previously been reserved for families and close friends of fallen soldiers.

Mother of Fallen Soldier

Cindy Sheehan, mother of Casey Sheehan, a soldier killed in action in Baghdad in 2004 was denied a meeting with former President George W. Bush to talk about the reasons for the death of her son in battle. This article from the *Washington Post* lends itself to the values and beliefs held by some members of military families and the political ideas regarding war, which supports the themes and habits of mind promoted by this research kit, emphasizing how (and why) things happen and the shared humanity that exists among the citizens of this nation both in times of peace and in times of tragedy.

Houses Armed Services Subcommittee of Military Personnel

The statement by Brigadier General Reuben D. Jones was used to emphasize the importance and care that is taken with notifying family members of a killed or wounded soldier. The importance of steps that are taken to ensure that the family is notified is crucial to the process of helping or informing the family of any way the Army can help the victim's family. This speech given by Brig. Gen. Jones shows that the Army takes utmost respect in caring and providing for the fallen or wounded soldier and makes sure that the Army takes all precautionary steps to make the process as smooth as possible. By reading this, people interested in the subject on army procedures in regards to injuries and deaths will be informed on what is expected of the Army, its duties, and procedures.

Newsweek

The article "PTSD: The VA's New Approach" featured in *Newsweek* October 1, 2009, highlights the transition the Veteran Affairs are making in order to make post traumatic stress disorder one of their top priorities in dealing with returning soldiers from Iraq and Afghanistan. The soldiers are in constant need of help and care once they return, even if it is simple checkups. This article was used in the research kit to help demonstrate the many different facets of war, especially the ever-evolving world of psychological disorders

and the affects they can have on the soldiers and their families and friends. PTSD is a serious effect of war, which soldiers should all be aware of returning home. This research kit should include information on the rippling effects of coming home from war – from dealing with civilian life as well as dealing with flashbacks, harsh memories, and the remembrance of fallen soldiers.

Neglect of Soldiers and Veterans

This article from the *Washington Post* sheds light on a viewpoint that challenges the main ideas and concepts of this research kit, specifically the first-order document. President Obama’s speech emphasizes the importance of taking care of our military men and women both in service and veterans. This article will give students the other side of that story. The poor treatments of some of our nations heroes are brought to the forefront in this story. This source challenges the values and beliefs that America holds, which are also represented by our habits and themes chosen for this kit.

V. Possible Third-Order Sources

Map of Iraq War death toll (by state)

A map providing students with current statistics showing the deaths of American soldiers in combat from each of the 50 states

Image of a wounded veteran

Numbers of images are available to show students the aftermath of war. Physical markings and injuries shown in an image will give the students a realistic idea of what service men and women may be forced to deal with as a result of combat.

PTSD pamphlets

These can be downloaded of the Internet or picked up from many local doctors offices or VA hospitals. Allow students to read information related to this illness and ask them their thoughts and what they believe the government should do to treat and aid these patients.

Inside Edition video clip

Can be accessed online. Describes one soldier’s journey to live a productive life after he returns from combat with a prosthetic leg.

VI. Resources

Fulcher Interview on DVD

Cantigny Museum

Casket Image

<http://hannah.smith-family.com/archive/casket04a.jpg>

Casket Article

<http://www.stltoday.com/blogzone/the-editors-desk/the-editors-desk/2009/02/pentagon-lifts-ban-on-photographing-caskets-of-slain-soldiers/>

Mother of Fallen Soldier Story

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/08/12/AR2005081201816.html>

Subcommittee on Military Personnel

http://armedservices.house.gov/pdfs/MilPers062707/Jones_Testimony062707.pdf

Newsweek Article

<http://www.newsweek.com/id/216534>

Neglect of Soldiers and Veterans Article

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/02/17/AR2007021701172_pf.html