Name_____

Chapter 29 Document Analysis

Brown v. Board of Education Decision, 1954

The plaintiff in this pivotal court case was Oliver Brown, whose daughter, Linda, was forced to walk a significant distance through a dangerous rail switching yard in order to get to the black elementary school in Topeka, KS, even though the white school was just several blocks away. Prompted by the NAACP, Brown sued the Topeka Board of Education, arguing it was unconstitutional to force his daughter into this situation and that while black and white schools were separate, they most assuredly were not equal (The "separate but equal" clause was established in 1896 in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* court case.) In a surprising unanimous decision, the Earl Warren-led Supreme Court agreed.

1. How does Warren describe the importance of education? How, then, does this provide a reason to allow blacks and whites to go to school together? Use specific quotes from the decision.

2. What other reasons does Warren give for reversing the *Plessy* decision of 1896? Use specific quotes from his decision.

3. Beyond the obvious desegregation of schools, why do you think this case was important? Think about its ramifications on the larger American society and its effects today.

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, "I Have a Dream" Speech, Aug. 28, 1963

Martin Luther King, Jr. was clearly the Civil Rights Movement's most important leader. Drawing upon inspiration from everyone from Jesus to Henry David Thoreau, King's eloquence, nonviolence stance and forthright logic against racism made him the nexus of the movement and appealed to many, not just blacks. However, his popularity/notoriety (depending on your perspective) also made him a target. He was killed in April 1968 while protesting on behalf of sanitation (garbage) workers in Memphis, TN. This speech remains perhaps one of the most inspiring, copied speeches in American history.

1. King gave this speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. In fact there is a small marker on the steps designating where he stood. Why is it symbolically important that he gave this speech at this memorial?

2. The title of the speech is perhaps more famous than the speech itself, which somewhat decreases the significance of the speech to today's generation. However, it contains ideas vital to America. Using specific excerpts from the speech, explain what King's dream is.

3. Do you think King's dream has been fulfilled yet? Explain why or why not?

Images of Vietnam

Vietnam was a unique conflict in the fact that American citizens could follow the war in relative "real" time. That is, thanks to the role of the media and advancements in technology, they didn't have to wait to read about events several days after they happened. Often called the "television war," Vietnam was quite literally broadcast into the living rooms of Americans. What they saw heavily influenced public opinion.

1. The first picture shows Buddhist monk Thich Quang Duc lighting himself on fire in June of 1963 to protest the government and policies of then-president Ngo Dinh Diem. How do you think American reacted to this image? How do you think it influenced public opinion about Vietnam?

2. The second picture shows South Vietnam's chief of National Police General Nguyen Ngoc Loan executing suspected Vietcong guerilla Nguyen Van Lem during the Tet Offensive of 1968. This has been ranked as one of the most important and iconic photos of the 20th century. Why do you think this picture was so important?

3. During Vietnam, reporters could pretty much roam the countryside, filming or photographing nearly everything. Since then, the government has restricted media access to war. Do you agree with the decision to limit media access to war? Why or why not? In doing so, also answer what you think the appropriate role of the media should be.

"Ohio" by Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, 1970

Neil Young is a Canadian-born musician who is seen as one of the most talented, honest and irreverent songwriters of his generation. After spending several years with a variety of bands, he and several friends (Stephen Stills, Graham Nash and David Crosby) decided to form their own group. The band's tight harmonies and thought-provoking, socially aware lyrics made them one of the iconic groups of the late 1960's and early 1970's. This song, written in less than a day by Young, is a great example.

1. Think about the lyrics and the year in which this was written. To what specific event is this song referencing? Describe what happened at this event. If you are stuck, look at page 791 in your textbook.

2. Who are the "tin soldiers?" Explain what he means by this reference. Why are they "tin?" (hint: Think about the characteristics/mannerisms of the Tin Man from the *Wizard of Oz*.)

3. Why do you think Young wrote this song? What was his motivation?

House Judiciary Committee's Conclusion on Impeachment, 1974

Watergate is clearly the biggest and most famous political scandal in American history. Not only did it destroy Richard Nixon's presidency and the careers of many men, but, coming on the heels of the quagmire in Vietnam, it also fostered even more disillusionment and cynicism among the American people.

1. This document lists numerous indiscretions by President Nixon. List which three you feel are most serious and explain why.
   a.

   b.

   c.

2. With what specific crimes did the House Judiciary Committee charge Richard Nixon? Although not crimes, the Committee accuses Nixon of what other actions that seriously harmed the integrity of the government? Use specific excerpts from the report to validate your answer.