

Differing Views
of Australia's
Involvement in
the Vietnam
War

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XXXXXXX

Australia

16th of May 1970

Appropriate letter writing formation

Dear Granddad,

I understand why you believe I should do my duty in the Vietnam War as it shows the ANZAC spirit and because you believe I should do what you and other Australians did for Australia in World War II. I am though a "conscientious objector" and refuse to go to the Vietnam War no matter what the situation I am put in. I do not wish to go and I am willing to go to jail if I have to, because going to the war is going against my beliefs and spending time in jail wouldn't be as bad as having to go to war! Everyone I know is telling me different things that I should do, and your views are affecting me most, but I will not go to the war just because you believe it is my duty to go!

Consistent empathetic approach and understanding of varying perspectives

The reasons Australia is fighting in this war is not a good enough reason for me to believe that I should have to fight and risk my life when Australia doesn't need to be involved. This is nothing like World War II, and our country isn't proving anything by fighting. Innocent people are being killed and I don't see how this is good at all.

A thorough understanding of international relationships

I realised by you being a part of the Returned Servicemen's League that you would like me to follow your footsteps and do as you did participating in the war, but I should be able to make my own decisions, especially now that I am a man. I know that in the past, men were considered to be a man once they went to war. But I do not hold the same views. It ruins men, not makes them. No one is ever the same after going to war and how could you be! You have never talked much about World War II, but I am sure it wasn't anything like you expected and there was no fun and games involved. Let the politicians find another way to show our alliance to the Americans than getting our young men killed! I don't want to have to

An in-depth understanding of the different perspectives Australians had on the Vietnam War

experience the pain and torture that war brings to people!

I think conscription is wrong! People should have a choice about what they want to do and it is not right to force us to do things we don't want to do! Fair enough if they want to take the men that are in the Army, Navy and Air Force, which is their job. It is what they have chosen to do as a career and they have trained for these situations. But not everyone is cut out for war! You of all people should understand this! Conscription shouldn't be used, because going to war is a big deal and everyone's life is on the line, literally. It is wrong to make people suffer through this, especially young men like me who haven't been prepared for the things that they will witness. Wars don't solve anything and the only thing it brings is death, there are no good aspects that arise from them. None of the wars before them have solved anything. We don't even have the excuse this time that we are helping the Motherland, because we are trying to get on side with the Americans. They are happy to send our innocent young men so they don't have to send their own! Besides they have begun to withdraw their troops, so why are we increasing ours!

Communicates ideas coherently and empathetically

There are so many groups opposing the war, such as the Labour Party, Student organisations, Trade unions, 'Save Our Sons' and the Vietnam Moratorium Movement. Mrs XXXX, my best friend Harry's mum is a member of 'Save Our Sons' because she doesn't want Harry or any of her other sons and other young men, to have to go through war. I agree with this because no one should have to go through war, especially when they have been conscripted and don't want to be fighting

Appropriate use of historical knowledge and understanding of society, political and cultural developments

All these groups are against the decision to send Australian troops to Vietnam. Student Organisations are uniting with unions, politicians and local peace groups to support us men refusing to register to conscription. 'Save Our Sons' is a group made up of mothers who object to the war because their sons and others are being conscripted to fight. The first Vietnam Moratorium Movement brought our nation to a standstill and hundreds of thousands of people stopped work to demand the United States

Government to turn away from the Vietnam War.

All the marches rallies happening at the moment show how many people are against the war. It is nothing like the war you were part of! Innocent people such as women and children are being killed for no reason. It is inhumane.

I understand that you believe helping America in the war is important because they are attempting to stop the spread of communism using the Cold War strategy and this is therefore helpful to stop communism spreading to Australia. Of the men who are lucky enough to come home they will always suffer physical and psychological impacts from the war. Which affects them and even their loved ones because they may come down with serious illnesses and will never be the same person again.

Communism hasn't occurred in Australia yet so we shouldn't have to worry about it happening to our country, with it being a threat for so many years it seems very unlikely. Australia is part of the ANZUS Treaty and SEATO, and these treaties are in line with the Forward Defense policy we have in place. If Communism comes to Australia we will have help! We have shown America we are loyal allies! Here to help! We are such a small country. Haven't we helped enough already! We have done so much more than some of the bigger countries. Australia has done its part in the war and should be allowed to be brought home. The Australian's who want to fight in the war can fight if they believe they should and want to but those who don't shouldn't be conscripted into doing it so when the country has already done enough to help. The war is becoming bloodier and even more lives are being lost, and no one should be forced to experience this.

I want to make PEACE not WAR! Please understand Granddad!

*Sincerely,
Your Grandson
John*

A well-structured letter that presents a range of arguments in a logical manner and consistently shows empathetic understanding of the character

Uses persuasive language

Bibliography (Please note these links have not been verified and may not work)

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<http://vietnam-war.commemoration.gov.au/conscription/> - 28/3/12

<http://vietnam-war.commemoration.gov.au/conscription/moratoriums-and-opposition.php> - 28/3/12

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Grade Commentary

Jules has demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the Vietnam war debate in its historical context. The response explains the emotional aspects of the debate, with use of historical empathy and appropriate letter formatting. Many of the main conflicts, effects on Australian society and reasons for Australian involvement have been included. The response could have been improved with the inclusion of more of the Grandfather's views and a more extensive and reliable bibliography. This work sample demonstrates characteristics of work typically produced by a student performing at a grade B standard.