

Writing Activity: Spinning the News

Directions: As Americans realized there would be no quick victory in Vietnam, both hawks (who supported military action) and doves (who supported peaceful solutions) sought to influence public opinion. Headlines and news reports were the weapons in this war of words and images. For example, doves would emphasize the cost of the war by showing casualties and destruction. Hawks, on the other hand, tended to emphasize American military victories. Select three or four incidents from the following screens and write two headlines for each. One headline should emphasize the hawks' perspective; one should emphasize the doves' point of view. An example has been done for you.

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Incident	Hawk's Headline	Dove's Headline
Tet Offensive 1968	Invasion from the North Defeated	146 American Lives Lost in Tet Offensive
U.S. Navy destroyer <i>Maddox</i> said to be attacked by North Vietnamese PT boats		

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Incident	Hawk's Headline	Dove's Headline
Tet Offensive 1968	Invasion from the North Defeated	146 American Lives Lost in Tet Offensive
U.S. Navy destroyer <i>Maddox</i> said to be attacked by North Vietnamese PT boats	Aggressive North Vietnamese Fire on American Ship	Generals Investigate Alleged Attack on American Ship

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Incident	Hawk's Headline	Dove's Headline
Hippies setting up a free store and commune in San Francisco		
Rico shooting Sergeant Keever to prevent a village from being destroyed		

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Incident	Hawk's Headline	Dove's Headline
Hippies setting up a free store and commune in San Francisco	Hippies Invade Haight-Ashbury	Hippies Promote Peace and Share the Wealth
Rico shooting Sergeant Keever to prevent a village from being destroyed	Private Shoots Commanding Officer in Battle Crisis	Private Saves Village from Extermination

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Incident	Hawk's Headline	Dove's Headline
Hugh Thompson's decision to report the massacre at My Lai		

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Incident	Hawk's Headline	Dove's Headline
Hugh Thompson's decision to report the massacre at My Lai	Little Evidence Supports Atrocity Claim	American Soldiers Slaughter Innocent Civilians

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Remember, **a strong headline**

- is short
- highlights the main topic or issue of the story
- uses strong action verbs (*strikes, uphold, defends*)
- uses the present tense