

Grade 9 Answer

12 Mark Essay Question

12
Marks

Question:

Explain why the USA failed in Vietnam.

You may use the following in your answer:

- Vietcong tactics
- Foreign support

You must also use information of your own.

(12 marks)

Answer:

Firstly, the USA failed in Vietnam because of the strengths of the Vietcong tactics. The Vietcong were extremely well organised and their guerrilla tactics including setting traps were very effective during the war. The Vietcong also used a system of tunnels and bases to move supplies, troops and equipment, which allowed them to move quickly and without detection from the US soldiers. These tactics helped North Vietnam in fighting against the US soldiers, who were unfamiliar with the Vietnamese terrain and conditions. Therefore, the USA failed in Vietnam because the Vietcong's tactics were extremely effective in battle.

Secondly, the USA failed in Vietnam because of the foreign support that North Vietnam received. Between 1954 and 1967, China and the USSR sent \$3 billion to North Vietnam in aid, weapons and equipment. This was because North Vietnam followed communist beliefs, and China and USSR wanted to expand communism throughout Asia, so wanted Vietnam to become a fully communist country. Additionally, Laos and Cambodia allowed the North Vietnamese Ho Chi Minh Trail to go through their countries, which helped North Vietnam transport weapons and troops around Vietnam. Therefore, the USA failed in Vietnam because North Vietnam was given extensive foreign support, which allowed them to improve their armies and weapons.

Finally, the USA failed in Vietnam because of the weaknesses of the US armed forces. Many US soldiers were drafted, so were inexperienced and young, and would return home after a year, just as they were learning how to fight. Soldiers also lacked training in the guerrilla tactics used by the Vietcong, and their weapons were ineffective in the Vietnamese jungle. This led to an increased number of casualties, which further reduced soldier's morale. Therefore, the USA failed in Vietnam because the US soldiers were not ready for the conditions and tactics used by the Vietcong.

Feedback:

This answer would get 12/12 marks because the pupil has identified 3 reasons why the USA failed in Vietnam (Vietcong tactics, foreign support and weaknesses of US army). They have explained each point in depth using historical information, and directly linked to the question throughout.

