**Draft Dodging**

In this lesson, students will experience the stress of being “drafted” in war while evaluating the experiences of Tim O’Brien and a local Vietnam veteran.

**Lesson Summary**

In this lesson, students will experience the stress of being “drafted” in war while evaluating the experiences of Tim O’Brien and a local Vietnam veteran. Students will read “On the Rainy River” as well as view videos to understand the emotions associated with the draft. Students will participate in class discussion, leading to a written reflection and evaluation.

**Time allotment**

1 50-minute Class Period; however, designate time for a pre-lesson video and a night for reading “On the Rainy River”

**Learning Objectives**

RL.3 Analyze how and why characters and/or textual elements develop and interact over the course of a text.

RL.9 Analyze and evaluate how two or more texts within and/or across time periods treat similar themes or topics.

**Supplies**

“On the Rainy River” from *The Things They Carried* by Tim O’Brien

Steve Stenehjem’s story from Prairie Memories <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ykr_pOwqXSE> (18:00-19:38)

Draft Simulation Activity <http://www.historynet.com/whats-your-number.htm>

CBS News Lottery Draft <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-p5X1FjyD_g>

**Learning Activities**

1. Prior to assigning “On the Rainy River,” students should view Steve Stenehjem’s story in class.
2. As homework, students should read “On the Rainy River,” paying special attention to O’Brien’s internal conflict regarding his draft notification. The teacher may choose to have students complete a graphic organizer identifying O’Brien’s internal conflict as it compares to Stenehjem’s story.
3. Using the Draft Simulation Activity, students should determine their selection number at the start of class (prior to any activity from step 2).
4. Show students the CBS News Lottery Draft video, with the instruction that should their selection number be called, they are now drafted. (Other lottery clips are available for use at teacher discretion.)
5. Explain to students who are drafted they have four options: (all students should choose one option, even if their number was not called)
   1. Go to Vietnam
   2. Go to Vietnam by choice via enlistment in the National Guard or Reserves
   3. Burn/rip your draft card, which could result in 5 years jail time and pay $250,000 in fines
   4. Burn/rip your draft card and go to Canada, but you cannot reenter the U.S.—ever
6. Using a 4-corners activity, have students select the corner matching their choice from above. Students must be prepared to defend their choice.

**Culminating Activity**

In a journal, students should reflect on O’Brien’s choice in the novel, discussing their understanding of O’Brien’s internal conflict after experiencing the simulated draft.

**Extension Activity**

Students can research men who chose to dodge the draft, focusing on how their lives turned out.