

## **Kent State By Deborah Wiles**

### **Perspective is EVERYTHING!**

#### **Reading Informational Text Standards:**

1. RI.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
2. RI.9-10.2 Analyze informational text development.
  - a. Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details
  - b. Provide an objective summary of the text that includes the development of the central idea and how details impact this idea.
3. RI.9-10.3 Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.
4. RI.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).
5. RI.9-10.5 Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).
6. RI.9-10.6 Determine an author's perspective or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that perspective or purpose.
7. RI.9-10.7 Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.
8. RI.9-10.8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.
9. RI.9-10.10 By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

#### **Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies:**

1. RH.9-10.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
2. RH.9-10.2 Analyze content-area-specific text development. a. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source. b. Provide an accurate and objective summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
3. RH.9-10.3 Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.
4. RH.9-10.5 Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.

5. RH.9-10.6 Compare the perspectives of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.
6. RH.9-10.9 Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.
7. RH.9-10.10 By the end of grade 10, read, comprehend, and respond to history/social studies texts in the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

### **Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies:**

1. WHST.9-10.2 Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.
  - a. Establish a clear and thorough thesis to present information.
  - b. Introduce a topic and organize ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
  - c. Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.
  - d. Use varied transitions and sentence structures to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
  - e. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic and convey a style appropriate to the discipline and context as well as to the expertise of likely readers.
  - f. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
  - g. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).
2. WHST.9-10.9 Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

## Study Guide

### Tension between Progress and Status Quo:

1. What were some of the students' fears at Kent State and other universities across America?
  - a. Racial Tensions/Injustices
  - b. Vietnam Conflict
  - c. First Amendment Freedoms: free press, free speech, free religion, freedom to assemble peacefully,
2. What history might have informed those that favored the war?
  - a. Fear of communism in the face of Western Ideology.
3. What fears did some of the Kent townspeople hold?
  - a. The students, who were not from Kent, did not care about the dangers and damages that would result from the protests. The townspeople were concerned about their businesses, homes, families, and lives. They believed that the students at KSU did not respect the town and its people.
4. How were many of the students and their parents "normal" Americans?
  - a. Middle class families/individuals that worked, owned homes, paid their taxes...
5. What were many learning about protests and activism at this time?
  - a. The generation of college students (ages 17-25) were finding their voice(s). They were exploring their rights to free speech and freedom to assemble. The exercise of these freedoms were not typically met with amicable attitudes from older generations and the government (local, state, or federal).
6. There are accusations on all sides. What were these views?
  - a. The newly found freedoms often scared older generations that just wanted this generation to "Fall in line" and be "Patriotic". There was a clash of perspectives and a sense of national duty. The older generations were seen as old and out of touch with the current generation of college aged students.
7. How did race tensions inform each party/perspective's actions?
  - a. Racial tensions were at a national high during this time. Groups such as the black panthers and black student activists were moving around the country and contributing to civil protests against war and racial injustices. For many in the older generations, this was "scary" or "unnerving" due to systemic racism. The college-aged generation seemed to embrace the civil rights movements and the merging of the two causes into the call of one political movement.
8. The USA was encountering several movements at the same time in the 1960s-1970s including the Vietnam Conflict and Civil Rights Movements. What was the government's response to these movements?
  - a. There was an overwhelming sense of "Obliterate by force" in response to civil protests and calls for justice (both for the end of war and racial inequities).
9. There is a focus of constitutional rights in this text and opposing views as to what this meant. How does each side feel these rights were either violated or not?
  - a. The First Amendment rights were perceived as being violated by those actively involved (press, speech, religion, protest...). From those in government and older

generations, they believed that those rights were being violated by those involved with protests and demonstrations due to the interest in national security and infringement on the rights of other Americans that were remaining “Peaceful” and “compliant”.

### **Friday, May 1, 1970**

1. What were some of the students planning to do with a copy of the Constitution? Why?
  - a. Page 12: Bury the Constitution as a protest against President Nixon invading a sovereign nation without a declaration of war and for instituting the draft to kill innocent US citizens for this foreign war. Plan to bury the Constitution at 12:00 in front of the Victory Bell as a memorial for those killed in the war.
2. Why were there additional people (radicals) coming to the campus?
  - a. Page 15: To stage protests and promote and vote for change. In many cases, this went “too far” for the comfort of the townspeople and caused major tensions between the townspeople and the KSU students.
3. Where did some of the students go that weekend to have fun?
  - a. Page 18-19: The Kent town newspaper was holding a party for the Kentucky Derby. They had special permission from the police to host the party after the town imposed curfew.
4. What were some incidents that got out of hand?
  - a. Pages 20-21: The protest included 500+ students. Someone started a trashcan fire. Then, as the crowds grew, the fire spread, stores were being looted.
5. What was happening at Ohio State during this time as well?
  - a. Page 24: Student protests led by civil rights student activists seeking equal admissions, housing, education, and treatment of black students. The National Guard was present. Things turned violent, students were clubbed, tear gassed... 7 were shot, 400 arrested, 100 injured.
6. The National Guard was also busy with what other events during this time?
  - a. Page 28: Truck Drivers’ Riots. Replacement drivers were protected by the Guard.

### **Saturday, May 2, 1970**

1. What are the two conflicting views on authority expressed at the beginning of this section? Why are these viewpoints so important to the development of events?
  - a. Page 37: View 1: Screw Authority! View 2: Do everything authority says! When the Guard arrives later, view 1 continues to directly defy authority. View 2 expects those in view one to do everything they say. Things turn violent and bloody.
2. Why was a curfew enacted and enforced? What was the reaction to the curfew by the protestors?
  - a. Page 38: The curfew was enacted to protect the town and its citizens from the potential dangers of the activists. It was enforced because activists went “too far” and trashed the town and its buildings with trash, looting, and fires. It was not

received well by the protestors. It was received as another way that the government was forcing the activists to comply and give up rights.

3. What are the dangers of the stereotypes of Kent State students that were expressed through the dialogue on Saturday, May 2?
  - a. The towns people, Guard, and government stereotyped all KSU students as disrespectful, defiant, violent arsonists that have no clue what they are standing for being against the war.
4. Why was the National Guard called to Kent State?
  - a. Page 42: The town of Kent was on fire because of the violent protests and looting. The Guard was called in to provide order and restore peace.
5. When events escalated and buildings were burned, how did a series of miscommunication and misunderstandings contribute to the escalating tension between the National Guard and the student protestors?
  - a. Pages 43-47: The Guard were told that there were thousands of protestors that were lighting flags on fire and stomping on them. When the Guard arrived, the ROTC building was burning and some firecrackers went off inside the building. It sounded like gun fire.
6. How many National Guard men/women were deployed to Kent State?
  - a. Page 47: 1,196 National Guard from the 107th Armored Cavalry Regiment and 145th Infantry Regiment.

### **Sunday, May 3, 1970**

1. Reflect on Sandy's life. What do we learn about her physical life? What do we learn about her personality?
  - a. Pages 61-64: She loved scrapbooking about her family vacations, traveling, summer camps, going to the movies, and dances. She was very close with her sister and dad (a holocaust survivor). Her parents immigrated to the US after WWII so their children could be "Free". She was at KSU to become a speech pathologist.
2. Though Allison hadn't been involved in the weekend events, why was she there talking to the Guard?
  - a. Page 78: She was placing lilacs and daisies in the barrel of Guard guns and passing flowers to passer-bys to promote peace.
3. How was Allison feeling at this time? What did she have in her pockets?
  - a. Page 66: She was angry. She had been chased through campus by the Guard and was locked in a dorm that wasn't hers for an entire night. She had gravel in her pockets.
4. Reflect on Jeff's life. What do we learn about his physical life? What do we learn about his personality?
  - a. Page 67: He was very smart. He loved math, motorcycles, the Mets, and music. He played the drums in a band. He vehemently opposed the draft and the war. He grew up in the Bronx with the influence of NYC. He went to Michigan State before transferring to KSU. Nickname: Short Mort.
5. Though Bill was against war, what previous involvement did he have with war?

- a. Page 69: At 16, Bill signed up for a 10 year commitment to the military (4 years in ROTC, 4 years in military, 2 years in reserves).
- 6. Reflect on Bill's life. What do we learn about his physical life? What do we learn about his personality?
  - a. Page 69: Bill was from Lorain, Ohio. Initially, he wanted to be a geologist so he went to a school in Colorado, then transferred to KSU to study psychology so he could be a psychologist in the army. He loved history, sports, poetry, band, reading.... He worked at Ford company.
- 7. Governor James Rhodes gave a warning. What was his message?
  - a. Page 72: The protestors were going to be "eradicated". "There is no sanctuary for these people"
- 8. How did Allison feel about war?
  - a. Page 78: She wanted peace for everyone involved. She was a flower child.
- 9. The National Guard was called in to restore order, and while some viewed this as a threat, how did the guard feel?
  - a. Page 79: The Guard were forced to be there.
  - b. Page 81: The Guard was there to protect the city of Kent and its citizens.
  - c. Page 82: The Guard was just following ordered to keep the activities in order and disperse them back to their dorms.
  - d. Page 84: The Guard was severely outnumbered and felt threatened.
  - e. Page 85: The Guard was protecting bystanders as well. They let peaceful non-protestors go to their dorms and escape the area.

### **Monday, May 4, 1970**

- 1. What impact does the fact that the author asks the reader to insert their name in between those who were shot have? Why did she choose to do this?
  - a. Page 91: This was done to remind the reader that it could have been anyone that died. It was random and uncontrolled. Anyone, including the reader, could have died in the events of this weekend. There was no accountability or reason for these deaths.
- 2. What miscommunications were there between students and the Guard?
  - a. Page 92: According to the Guard, the rallies were banned. According to President White of KSU, the rallies were allowed. People were confused. There were over 2,000 people at the protest, not all activists.
  - b. Page 94: The activists and students thought the Guard bullets were fake (rubber bullets). The Guard were using M1 rifles with 3 inch ammunition.
- 3. Tensions were the highest at this point in the text. What was the Guard actively doing? What were students/protesters doing?
  - a. Page 94: The Guard was in a single file line, ordered to be "Locked and Loaded", with gas masks on.
  - b. Page 97: Guard starts marching on protestors, launching tear gas grenades, carrying loaded M1s with bayonets. The people in the common area were being divided and conquered by the Guard. Protestors threw rocks, screamed in protest, taunted with flags and propaganda.

4. What were the circumstances surrounding Sandy, Allison, Bill and Jeff's death?
  - a. Page 99: The activists thought everything was over. They were dispersing. One Guard accidentally shot. The Troop G (28 Guard) started shooting. 13 seconds, 67 shots.
    - i. Sandy: Shot in the neck. Died on campus.
    - ii. Allison: Shot in the arm, went through her side, shattered her bones and internal organs. Died on campus.
    - iii. Bill: Bullet to the back, shattered his rib, pierced his left lung. Died in surgery at the hospital.
    - iv. Jeff: Bullet through his mouth, exited base of skull. Died on impact.

### **Elegy**

1. Each side believes they have truth to their story. What are their truths? What did everyone want? Examples-Power? Someone to listen?
  - a. Page 110: Want power, someone to listen, to be heard.
  - b. Page 112: Want to not be silenced, share opinions, Protect the first amendment freedoms, free of hate crimes, freedom to be safe.
2. Why is it important to understand and reflect on events in history?
  - a. Page 116: So the events are not repeated. So those who sacrificed their lives can be honored. So the government is held accountable for past mistakes. So America can change. So people can be informed citizens. So we can stand up for what is right.
3. Why is freedom of assembly and freedom to dissent so important?
  - a. Page 112: When the government takes away these rights, it effectively silences the people.
4. The author mentions more recent tragedies such as Columbine, Parkland, as well as names who were individually targeted- Tamir Rice. What can we continue to learn from these violent acts?
  - a. Page 115: "When the Power of Love overcomes the Love of Power the world will know Peace."
  - b. Page 116: Need to continue to hold the government accountable for the freedoms promised in the Constitution and Bill of Rights.
5. The author leaves us with the opportunity to seek our own truth and leaves us with advice in leading our own lives. How has this book impacted your thoughts not only on past events but current as well? Do we need to make changes going forward?
  - a. Page 117: Be "on fire for change, for hope, for love."

### **Making Connections: These questions can be used as discussion questions or as short/longer essay responses.**

1. Why might the author have written in the structure of prose?
2. What effect does this have on the reader?
3. Consider the book's cover and fonts. How does the book cover convey the central conflict? How does the font choice for each narrator reflect their respective voice?

4. Do you believe the book came to any agreements of things that were first an argument?
5. Were there any arguments left unsettled?
6. How were students during 1970 much like those of today?
7. This book covers many viewpoints. What are reasons one might want to hear all sides before forming an opinion?
8. Remember. What do those who provided their viewpoint want you to remember?
9. What role did media and reporting play in the Kent State massacre? How has media and reporting evolved since 1970 and what role does it play in modern activism?
10. Deborah Wiles closes her prelude by saying, "This book chronicles the four days in May 1970 when America turned on its unarmed children, in their schoolyard, and killed them." Based on your knowledge of the time period and the May 4th protests, is this an accurate categorization of the events and its participants?

## **Timeline of Perspectives:**

For each day, students are to chronicle the perspectives and actions for each of the different voices in the story.

Friday, May 1, 1970

- KSU Student Activists:
  - Perspective:
  - Actions:
- KSU Student Non-Participants:
  - Perspective:
  - Actions:
- Kent Townspeople:
  - Perspective:
  - Actions:
- Ohio National Guard:
  - Perspective:
  - Actions:
- Civil Rights Activists:
  - Perspective:
  - Actions:

Saturday, May 2, 1970

- KSU Student Activists:
  - Perspective:
  - Actions:
- KSU Student Non-Participants:
  - Perspective:
  - Actions:
- Kent Townspeople:
  - Perspective:
  - Actions:
- Ohio National Guard:
  - Perspective:
  - Actions:
- Civil Rights Activists:
  - Perspective:
  - Actions:

Sunday, May 3, 1970

- KSU Student Activists:
  - Perspective:
  - Actions:
- KSU Student Non-Participants:
  - Perspective:

- Actions:
- Kent Townspeople:
  - Perspective:
  - Actions:
- Ohio National Guard:
  - Perspective:
  - Actions:
- Civil Rights Activists:
  - Perspective:
  - Actions:

Monday, May 4, 1970

- KSU Student Activists:
  - Perspective:
  - Actions:
- KSU Student Non-Participants:
  - Perspective:
  - Actions:
- Kent Townspeople:
  - Perspective:
  - Actions:
- Ohio National Guard:
  - Perspective:
  - Actions:
- Civil Rights Activists:
  - Perspective:
  - Actions:

## Cross Curricular Connections

### Music/Art:

- [Kent State: May 4, 1970 Playlist](#): The list includes general protest songs from the Vietnam war era, songs created in response to the shooting, and songs referenced in the book.
  - Mini Lesson: Play a specific song. Ask students to journal and write emotional responses to the song. Have students discuss the different perspectives on the song as it relates. Use those responses for a discussion about how the people involved with the Kent State Massacre felt at the time of the events and how they would feel listening to the songs now.
  - Mini Lesson: Have students listen to two or three of the songs on the playlist to connect in a short essay on themes in both the songs and the book.
  - Mini Lesson: Students listen to a single song, connect it to a section of the book, create a piece of artwork that represents the emotional impact the song and book have on them.
- [Kent State's May 4th poetry collection](#)
  - Mini Lesson: Use the poetry to discuss the aftermath of the events. How did people respond to what happened? Interpret the poetry in the context of events and draw a direct connection to a specific perspective/event in the book.
  - Mini Lesson: Have students compose their own poems about a global/national event that was emotional for them. If students wish, share the poems with the class, describing the event and discussing why it was important. How did it change the nation/world? More importantly, how did it change them as an individual?
  - Mini Lesson: Connect a poem and song about May 4. Have students connect the two to a section in the book analyzing the interpretation and emotional impact based on artistic mediums and perspectives. How does the emotional response change based on those factors?

### History:

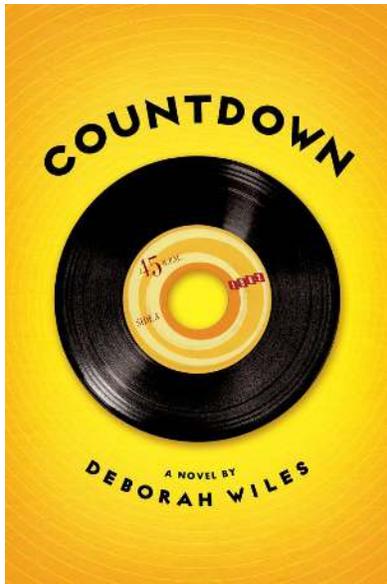
- President LBJ:
  - This short article outlines LBJ's active role in the Vietnam Conflict, "Johnson's War", as well as the history of how LBJ came to be the President of the United States. <https://prde.upress.virginia.edu/content/Vietnam>
  - Short biography of LBJ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bKrMdQY7nWc>
- President Richard Nixon
  - Short biography of Nixon <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrXr1zksNEs>
  - The end of the war announced!  
<https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/nixon-declares-vietnam-war-is-ending>
- Vietnam War
  - Encyclopedia Britannica explanation of the Vietnam Conflict.  
<https://www.britannica.com/event/Vietnam-War>

- Draft- A Brief description of the Vietnam Draft.  
<https://www.usatoday.com/vietnam-war/draft-picker/>
- General US disapproval- Historical look at the general disapproval and roots of discontentment with the Vietnam Conflict.  
<https://www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war/vietnam-war-protests>

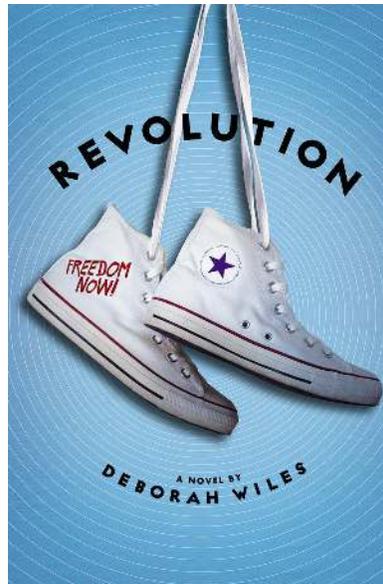
## Further Reading by Deborah Wiles:

The Sixties Trilogy:

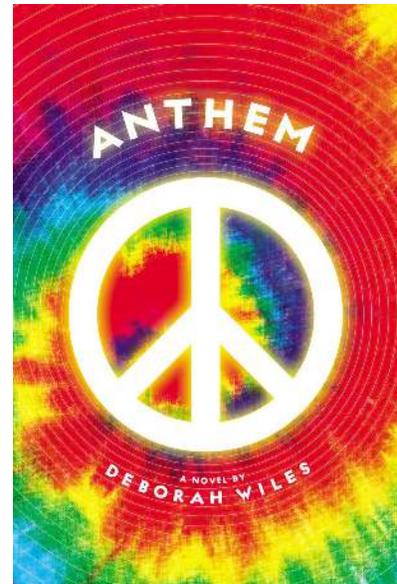
These “documentary novels” defy genre classification. Part fiction, part non-fiction and packed with primary source materials, these books are a 1960s history highlight reel.



Book 1: Cuban Missile Crisis



Book 2: Freedom Summer



Book 3: Counterculture

## Supplemental Resources:

- This additional resource was developed in 2021 by Kent State professor Karen Gedeon to be used when teaching the Kent State shootings to middle school students. [Making Meaning of May 4](#)
- [Kent State's May 4th webpage](#) is a hub for historical resources and official commemoration information. Within the website, the following may be of particular interest:
  - The "[Making Meaning of Kent State](#)" page hosted by Kent State's College of Education, Health, and Human Services, features an extensive collection of lesson plans and a vast annotated bibliography for further reading.
  - Kent State Professors Jerry M. Lewis and Thomas R. Hensley have published "[The May 4 Shootings at Kent State University: The Search for Historical Accuracy](#)" as a guide for high school social studies teachers.
  - "[Through the Looking Glass](#)" digitizes an immersive physical exhibit. The exhibit features 3D scanned artifacts from the National Guard, shooting victims, and on-scene journalists. A 3D scan of the shooting site is overlaid with excerpts from an audio interview with Alan Canfora, a shooting survivor (run time: 14:35 minutes).
    - \* There is the use of some inappropriate language in this resource.
- The Kent State University Library has archived a collection of physical materials related to the events of May 4, 1970. The library's complete extensive, digital archive collection can also be found [here](#). Within the digital archive are the following resources which may be of particular interest:
  - [Kent State Oral History Project](#): Featuring interviews with students, administrators, veterans, and community members, the Kent State Oral History project is an ideal primary source companion for teaching diverse May 4 perspectives.
  - This resource from the History Channel that explores the topic of the Kent State shootings. <https://www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war/kent-state-shooting>
  - Use this video for background information with a discussion to follow. <https://www.kent.edu/may4kentstate50/may-4th-voices-video-presentation>