

## A Question of Objectivity

*Only when lions have historians, will hunters cease being heroes. – African Proverb*



Think about the African proverb above. If lions, or their defenders, authored history books, hunters may have been demonized as ruthless, conniving, violent offenders.

Has there ever been a time when you and a friend experienced something together, but discover that each of you remembers it a bit differently? As individuals, our personal contexts and backgrounds influence our perceptions of the events in our lives. Just as the hunter and the lion would describe hunting very differently, the retelling of history depends upon perspective, and that the source of information directly impacts its validity.

Objectivity is an integral part of historical accounts, yet true objectivity is difficult to achieve, especially in the case of polarizing events such as the Vietnam War. Our history textbook suggests certain causes and effects of America's involvement in Vietnam. It provides descriptions of events associated with the Vietnam War both abroad and domestically. How can you determine if the textbook provides an objective retelling of these historical events?

You are challenged with evaluating the objectivity of our history textbook and sharing your findings with the publisher. What biases might the text hold? Can we trust our historians?