

Unfortunately, the homepage is mainly text-based, which may put off teenagers, especially those with visual learning styles.

Navigation is relatively easy, although some students might have difficulty at first. At the top on the left side is a “Quick Search” box and a drop-down menu for searching within the title, using an author or keyword, or to search across titles. On the left side are green tabs called “About The Book” and “My Bookmarks & Notes.” The first supplies bibliographic information and the second enables students to take, organize, and access notes virtually.

Green tabs at the top are “Home,” “My Bookshelf,” “Help,” and “About.” “My Bookshelf” permits the creation of virtual libraries with quick access to ABC-CLIO references. Librarians and other education professionals should encourage students to explore the “Help” area before using this tool; so they can take advantage of its features. The “Help” area gives succinct information about reading, researching, and navigating. Other options are print, email, cite, dictionary, persistent link option, enlargement of the font sizes, and a page turner. The print and cite features permit citations to be generated in standard styles, and the cite feature permits content to be exported to the online citation organizational tools RefWorks and EasyBib.

This resource will attract many teenagers, because it presents reliable information about reproductive and sexual topics, such as HIV and AIDs, pregnancy, and relationships, about which they often want information. The encyclopedia commendably deals with subjects that other resources might omit or censor. Several contributors are clinical psychologists, who offer comprehensive coverage of issues affecting teens’ mental health, such as bullying, cyber-bullying, and social networking relationships.

The set encourages critical thinking by allowing youngsters to draw their own conclusions. For example, the section entitled “What People Are Saying Teen Opinions” offers answers incorporating multiple perspectives to controversial questions, such as “What are some of the challenges of being a teen parent and trying to finish high school?”

In addition to answering personal questions that high school students may ask, this reference is designed to support high school instruction and curricula, making it suitable for report writing. Therefore, this resource is recommended for all secondary school digital collections.—*Caroline Geck, Library Media Specialist, Newark Public Schools, Newark, New Jersey*

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***Vietnam War: The Essential Reference Guide.*** Ed. by James H. Willbanks. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2013. 341 pages. acid free \$89 (ISBN 978-1-61069-103-1). Ebook available (978-1-61069-104-8), call for pricing.

Moments after first setting eyes on this book I began questioning how it could possibly have scaled-down the broad and very complex topic of the Vietnam War into such a tiny, single-volume “compendium” without having left substantial content behind on the cutting room floor. I was right to

question, as I soon realized that in this particular case, the “cutting room floor” is ABC-CLIO’s *The Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War: A Political, Social, and Military History* (1998, 2011), a work from which almost all of the present title’s content derives. And what I mean by “derives” is that the smattering of entries here have been extracted, repackaged, and republished verbatim. I suppose I could stop here by simply recommending that if your library already owns said “full version” of the book, you can pass-up this 2013 Essential iteration, but I won’t. For all the little siblings of the publishing world, I will give this one its due review.

The book opens with an incredibly brief (three pages, one of which contains a large map) “Overview of the Vietnam War,” followed by a series of short essays addressing the “Causes,” “Opposition,” and “Consequences” of the war. Additional essays include: “Communist Strategy,” “The Tet Offensive and the Media,” and “U.S Involvement in Indochina.” Scant as they are, these introductory pieces do at least touch on some of the context-providing topics and themes that are essential to understanding the scope and historical gravitas of the war. The following section—the alphabetized “Reference Entries” comprising the heart of the book—is much less panoramic in its treatment of the subject. A cursory perusal quickly reveals that the emphasis of this work is placed very heavily on how the actual “war” itself was played out; battles, operations, tactics, generals, politicians, policies, etc. Glaring omissions include things like: the antiwar/protest movement, the draft, casualties, public opinion, veterans and PTSD. To be fair, however, I must acknowledge that the essays up front do in fact mention each of these and other bigger picture aspects of the war—“Causes” and “Consequences” contributing the most substance in this regard. There is a short entry on “The Kent State University Shootings”, which is perhaps the closest the book comes to fleshing out the antiwar movement in more detail. The back matter includes five “Primary Source Documents” (This publisher’s “other” Vietnam War reference work also has all of these . . . plus 220 more), a “Chronology” and a decent “Bibliography,” but again, nothing new or unique here.

Admittedly, I am in no way an expert on the subject (editor, James H. Willbanks is) but as a librarian I have worked almost every semester for the past several years with a college course in which students write a research paper related to some—any— aspect of the war. Therefore, it is from this unique perspective that I am experiencing this book, and asking myself, “How useful would it be to students in this class?” My answer, as previously alluded to, would have to be: “Not very.” My library does own the abovementioned *Political, Social, and Military History* as well as *The Vietnam War Reference Library* (Gale, 2001), both as ebooks, and in contrast, this new Essential Reference Guide is a mere skeleton. Perhaps it would be an appropriate reference for high school or middle school students, but really, with at least two more comprehensive, readily available works on the same topic, why sell them short?—*Todd J. Wiebe, Head of Research and Instruction, Van Wylen Library, Hope College, Holland, Michigan*