

**A TEACHER'S
RESOURCE BOOK FOR
MAY 4TH VOICES:
*KENT STATE, 1970***

Teaching History and Social Justice in the Classroom

*Edited by John L. Morris, Ph.D.
with contributions by educators from
around the United States*

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SCENE THREE: THE WHOLE TOWN IS BURNING

Saturday and Sunday

David Massucci, Teacher of English, Theodore Roosevelt High School, Kent, Ohio

SYNOPSIS

The intensifying emotions and violence of Friday night have carried over into Saturday and produced more destruction. The ROTC building has been burned to the ground, and the National Guard has arrived on campus in full force. Students provide their perceptions of a situation they do not completely understand and a town they cannot fully recognize. Members of the National Guard describe the still escalating tensions and recount various confrontations with students, citizens, and protestors. With no end to the conflict in sight, all sides struggle to find their paths to an increasingly elusive resolution.

CONTEXT AND CONNECTIONS

Governor Rhodes (Sept. 13, 1909–March 4, 2001)—James A. Rhodes was governor of Ohio from 1963 to 1971 and again from 1975 to 1983. On May 2, 1970, in response to a request from Mayor Leroy Satrom, Governor Rhodes sent the Ohio National Guard to Kent State in an attempt to suppress the protests on campus. Although Rhodes was popular with Ohioans (he was elected governor four times), his reputation was damaged by the May 4 shootings and his role in them. In the years that followed, Rhodes was one of several defendants in a civil lawsuit filed by the victims and their families.

Mayor Satrom (Feb. 4, 1919–Sept. 8, 2004)—Leroy M. Satrom was mayor of Kent from 1970 to 1972. On May 1, 1970, Mayor Satrom declared a state of emergency in Kent. Concerned that his police force would be unable to prevent a dangerous situation from occurring, Mayor Satrom asked Governor Rhodes for help in the form of the Ohio National Guard. Mayor Satrom's tenure as mayor was brief, as he was elected Portage County engineer in 1972.

Martial Law is a form of military rule that can be instituted if the local government and/or police force

are unable to maintain security and order. Martial law is temporary and can be enforced by state or national military forces.

National Guard is a reserve military force. The National Guard serves both state and federal governments. Although National Guardsmen can be called for combat service, they are often utilized in their home states during emergencies and following natural disasters. Members of the National Guard usually hold regular jobs, as the required training is limited to one weekend per month and a two-week period each year.

INITIAL UNDERSTANDING

1. What is a Student Union?
2. What is an MI?
3. What does it mean to “lock and load”?

INTERPRETATION

1. What do the City Bank's large pillars symbolize?
2. Why was it important to the captain for his men to march in cadence?
3. Why did the National Guardsmen remove their name tags from their jackets?
4. What is significant about Guardsman 1's statement that they “were there to preserve the peace”?

REFLECTION

1. Male Student 2 mentions rumors involving a cache of weapons and snipers. How might such rumors have influenced the events in town?
2. What caused the contrasting reactions of the citizens to the National Guardsmen? In your response, consider the examples of the students throwing rocks and the grey-haired lady offering cookies.
3. There are several manifestations of the “us versus them” mentality discussed in this scene. What are

some of the examples? Why did this form of conflict—us versus them—seem to be so widespread?

EXTENDED RESPONSE WRITING PROMPTS

1. Female Student 1 refers to Governor Rhodes' remarks being broadcast on the radio. Conduct some research to learn his exact statements and write them down. Then, as Female Student 1, write Governor Rhodes a letter responding to his comments.
2. Write a persuasive essay analyzing the response/presence of the National Guardsmen. Your analysis

must be in paragraph form and contain a thesis statement. Provide details and examples from the scene as support.

SCENE SPECIFIC CROSS-CURRICULAR PROJECT CONNECTIONS

Geography Connection—Create a topographical map of the Kent State Campus during the shootings.

Speech/Rhetoric Connection—Find a transcript of Governor Rhodes speech and identify what might have been considered inflammatory speech/rhetoric at the time.



Emotions intensify as the National Guard arrives on campus. Photo by Mathias Peralta. Courtesy KSU Wick Poetry Center.

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