VIEWING GUIDE FOR THE SAPPHIRES

How have Aboriginal Australians experienced and responded to [various] significant historical events?

1. Despite the non-diegetic music (from the late 60s) in the opening sequence, the film establishes a sense of time and place. How is this achieved? Consider the techniques used by Blair, the director.
2. What is the effect of the insertion of black and white archival footage in the film? To what historical events does it refer?
3. What significant event in Australia’s indigenous history has happened between the opening of the film and 1968?
4. What does the song contest in the local pub reveal about the attitude of white Australians to Aboriginal people?
5. Research the Vietnam War – how long it ran, who was involved and why, Australia’s part in it.
6. How would you describe Gail, Cynthia and Julie? Why do they wish to go to Vietnam?
7. Describe Dave Lovelace. Why does he wish to go to Vietnam?
8. How does the film make it clear that there is tension between Kay and Gail? What unites them?
9. How is the audition in Melbourne different from the contest in the pub? What techniques are used to emphasise the significance of this occasion?
10. Consider the fight between Gail and Kay. Explain the reasons for their antagonism.
11. Examine the occasion when the group is held up by the Vietcong. What does this scene say about Aboriginal people? About Kay?
12. How does Blair emphasise the need for unity and acceptance? Choose a scene where this is clear and analyse the techniques used.