

Teaching Resource: In Plain View

Author: Kim Hoskins

Publisher: John Douglas Publishing Ltd

Curriculum Levels & Duration

Suitable for: Upper-secondary (Years 11–13) or first-year tertiary (Social Studies, History, Literature)

Duration: 5 × 60-minute lessons

Learning Objectives

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

Summarise Kim Hoskin's experiences in Borneo and Vietnam.

Analyse how personal narratives shape historical understanding.

Evaluate the role of „intelligence-led operations“ and local partnerships in counter-insurgency.

Discuss ethical and cultural dimensions of colonial and military presence in Southeast Asia.

Produce an analytical piece comparing Hoskin's approach to modern intelligence practices.

Materials & Resources

Core Text:

Selections from In Plain View (approx. 120 pp.)

Supporting Documents:

Map of Borneo (Sarawak) and the Rung Sat Secret Zone (Saigon Estuary)

NZ Army editor's review (NZ Army News, Aug 2021) highlighting intelligence system evolution

Brief synopsis handout

Multimedia (optional):

Documentary clip or interview with veterans discussing NZ intelligence corps (if available)

Lesson-by-Lesson Breakdown

Lesson 1: Introduction & Context (60 min)

Activity:

Introduce historical backdrop: Borneo Confrontation (1963–66) & Vietnam War (1965–72)

Student mapping: locate Sarawak, Rung Sat, Hong Kong

Read Hoskin's early Borneo experiences

Discussion Questions:

What is „undeclared warfare“ and how does it differ from full-scale conflict?

How does Hoskin's perspective as a platoon commander differ from mainstream war narratives?

Lesson 2: Borneo – Local Community Engagement (60 min)

Reading:

Sections on the Gurkha Rifles and Border Scouts in upriver tribal communities

Paired Activity:

Analyse management of cultural relationships and trust-building techniques

Discussion:

What are the benefits and risks of integrating with indigenous groups during conflict?

Homework:

Reflective journal on cultural liaison in military operations

Lesson 3: Vietnam – Intelligence Innovation (60 min)

Reading:

Hoskin's deployment with an ANZAC battalion, development of intelligence systems, community relations

Group Work:

Identify key intelligence methods – “outside the wire” liaison, use of local paramilitaries

Case Study Debate:

Pros/cons of using Provincial Reconnaissance Units in swamps

Homework:

Draft 200-word opinion: „Should intelligence officers directly collaborate with local paramilitary groups?“

Lesson 4: Reflection, Ethics, Legacy (60 min)

Reading:

Post-war reconnection passages

Whole-class Discussion:

How does Hoskin reconcile his wartime actions in civilian life?

What insights does this offer on veteran reintegration and memory?

Writing Task:

Essay outline: „The evolving face of military intelligence: Hoskin's Borneo and Vietnam to modern parallels.“

Lesson 5: Assessment & Presentation (60 min)

Student Presentations: 5-minute presentations on one of

Cross-cultural engagement in Borneo

Intelligence system foundations in Vietnam

Ethical dilemmas of wartime collaboration

Peer Review: Feedback on clarity, evidence, connection to text and broader history

Wrap-up Discussion: Emergent themes – intelligence, culture, memory, leadership

Assessment & Evaluation

Formative:

Journal reflections

Group debate participation

Summative:

Final presentation plus a 1,000-word analytical essay exploring Hoskin's contribution to military intelligence and his narrative's wider implications

Extensions & Adaptations

Extension:

Compare Hoskin's strategies with modern NZDF or international intelligence corps using recent scholarship

Adaptations for Diverse Learners:

Provide shorter extract sets

Use graphic organizers for visual aid

Offer oral presentation alternatives

Key Themes & Takeaways

Uncommon History: Focus on undeclared conflict and grassroots intelligence

Intelligence-led Operations: Hoskin's early intelligence frameworks resonate with contemporary NZIC SOPs

Cultural Integration: Building trust "outside the wire" as core to effective counter-insurgency

Ethical Complexity & Memory: Reconciling wartime actions with post-war humanity

This plan offers a robust blend of historical context, critical thinking, cross-cultural exploration, and personal narrative.