

Through the Eyes of a Child: A Multi-genre Study of Children of War, 2009

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Synopsis

This unit will serve as a review for the eighth grade Language Arts End of Grade test. Therefore, throughout the unit students will study child soldiers in the context of non-fiction, fiction, poetry and drama. The wars I have focused on in this unit are WWI, WWII, Vietnam and Sierra Leone's civil war. WWI is the first time children are used in war and they are motivated mostly by the adventure and glory of war, without realizing the harsh realities. WWII will bring into light the way so many young boys were influenced by Nazi propaganda and therefore imbibed the edicts of the Hitler Youth so willingly. The section on Vietnam will examine both American child soldiers and Amerasian children living in war-torn Vietnam after U.S. troop withdrawal. The civil war in Sierra Leone will be studied using Ishmael Beah's memoir, *A Long Way Gone*, in which he beautifully describes his role as a child soldier. All of the abovementioned segments of the unit will center around the underlying questions, *When is a child accountable for his actions? When does a child lose his innocence? What effects does war have on a child soldier?* The texts used in this unit are mostly all written from the perspective of children.