



LESSON PLAN: CHILD SOLDIERS

Outcome

The purpose of this lesson is to inform students about the use of child soldiers throughout the world.

Materials/Resources

- Quotation from Child Soldier (attached)
- Computer Lab
- Child Soldier Activity Sheet (attached)
- Child Soldier Activity Answer Sheet (attached)
- Child Soldiers Map
- Child Soldiers Research and Poster Assignment
- Organizer for Child Soldier Research

Activities

Introduction: Read the quotation from the child soldier.¹ After reading the quote, have students describe who they think might have spoken those words (age, sex, country of origin, etc).

Provide students with Child Soldiers Activity Sheet and have them complete it to the best of their ability. Once students have completed the Activity Sheet, ask which points they found most interesting or surprising.

Show the Sierra Leone segment of "Musicians in The War Zone". Using the questions from the Teacher's Study Guide, debrief the segment with students.

Provide students with a map of the locations of child soldiers all over the world.

Students will complete a research project to gain a better understanding of the use of child soldiers. Students will be divided into groups where they will each choose a different country to focus on. Students will be required to gather the following information about their specific countries:

- approximate # of existing child soldiers
- role of child soldiers
- method of recruiting child soldiers
- financial funding for the recruitment of soldiers
- conflict for which child soldiers are required
- steps taken to eliminate child soldiers

Provide students with the Organizer for Child Soldier Research, and direct them to the Global Report 2001 at www.child-soldiers.org.

Based on their research, have students create an educational poster about child soldiers. Students will be assessed holistically for their abilities to work collaboratively with group members during the research project.

¹ Quotation can be obtained from: www.liberia-leaf.org/reports

Have students present their posters to the class and educate others about their country of focus.

During the presentations, students listening will be required to come up with the answer to the following questions:

What country has done the most to eliminate child soldiers?

What else can be done to eliminate the use of child soldiers?

Is enough being done to eliminate the use of child soldiers?

Extension

Students can conduct research about the economic issues that are contributing to the use of child soldiers (e.g. poverty, conflict diamonds, coltan etc).

QUOTATION FROM A CHILD SOLDIER:

“...We had to go fight on the front. The days we fought we got food. But if we didn’t go to the front, we weren’t given anything to eat. I fought through the entire war. I don’t know if I killed people, but I fired a lot. I didn’t enjoy it but I had to do it because I had nothing to eat. I was afraid, but when they gave me drugs, I was brave.”

- *Momo (a child soldier in Liberia from the age of 10)*

CHILD SOLDIERS – FACT SHEET

More than _____ children under the age of 18 are currently fighting in conflicts around the world.

Hundreds of thousands more have been recruited into armed forces and could be sent into combat at any moment. **True or False?**

Recruitment starts at age _____, and the use of even younger children is not uncommon.

Children are easily manipulated and can be drawn into violence that they are too young to resist or understand. **True or False?**

Only boys may be sent to the front lines of combat or into minefields ahead of other troops. **True or False?**

No children have been used for suicide missions or forced to commit atrocities against their own family and neighbors. **True or False?**

Child soldiers also may be _____ or given to military commanders as _____ slaves.

Child soldiers suffer far lower casualty rates than adult soldiers. **True or False?**

Child soldiers who survive may be permanently disabled, or bear psychological scars from being forced to both commit and witness horrific atrocities. **True or False?**

Children are easier to _____ and they do as they are told.

Children are also less likely than adults to _____ and they do not demand _____.

Parents volunteer their children for the army because it may be the only way to secure _____, and _____.

In some places, the guerrillas provide clothes and two square meals a day. **True or False?**

Once recruited, children are subjected to a brief period of terror and physical use in order to socialize them to violence and train them as soldiers. **True or False?**

Children have been forced to witness or take part in the _____ and _____ of their own relatives.

Child soldiers are often fed _____ or other _____, before they go to neighboring villages to torture and kill.

Being small and inconspicuous, children also have particular value as _____ or as _____.

Child Soldiers – Answer Sheet²

More than 300,00 children under the age of 18 are currently fighting in conflicts around the world.

Hundreds of thousands more have been recruited into armed forces and could be sent into combat at any moment.

Recruitment starts at age 10, and the use of even younger children is not uncommon.

Children are easily manipulated and can be drawn into violence that they are too young to resist or understand.

Both boys and girls may be sent to the front lines of combat or into minefields ahead of other troops.

Some children have been used for suicide missions or forced to commit atrocities against their own family and neighbors. (Others serve as porters or cooks, guards, messengers or spies.)

Child soldiers also may be raped or given to military commanders as sexual slaves.

Child soldiers suffer far higher casualty rates than adult soldiers. Those who survive may be permanently disabled, or bear psychological scars from being forced to both commit and witness horrific atrocities.

Children are easier to intimidate and they do as they are told.

Children are also less likely than adults to run away and they do not demand salaries.

Parents volunteer their children for the army because it may be the only way to secure food, protection, and survival. In some places, the guerrillas provide clothes and two square meals a day.

Once recruited, children are subjected to a brief period of terror and physical use to socialize them into violence and train them as soldiers.

Children have been forced to witness or take part in the torture and execution of their own relatives.

Child soldiers are often fed crack or other drugs, before they go to neighboring villages to torture and kill.

Being small and inconspicuous, children also have particular value as messengers or as spies. (They are even sometimes sent out ahead in waves over minefields.)

² This fact sheet can be obtained from: <http://www.mediaworkshop.org/mhss/hicks/didyouknow.htm>

WORLD MAP OF CHILD SOLDIERS (2000/2001)³

Note: This map indicates only situations in which children have actively participated in conflict. It does not show all countries where children are recruited into government armed forces or armed groups. Please refer to individual country entries in the Child Soldiers Global Report (2001) for further information.



List of Countries with Child Soldiers Fighting in Recent and Ongoing Conflicts
(G: government armed forces, P: paramilitaries, O: armed opposition groups)

Colombia (P,O) Mexico (P,O) Peru (O)

Russian Federation (O) Turkey (O) Yugoslavia (former Rep. of) (P,O)

Algeria (P,O) Angola (G,O) Burundi (G,O) Chad (G) Republic of Congo (G,O)
Dem. Rep. of the Congo (G,O) Eritrea (G) Ethiopia (G) Rwanda (G,O) Sierra Leone
(G,P,O) Somalia (all groups) Sudan (G,P,O) Uganda (G,O)

Iran (G,O) Iraq (G,O) Israel and Occupied Territories (G,O) Lebanon (O)

Afghanistan (all groups) India (P,O) Indonesia (P,O) Myanmar (G,O) Nepal (O)
Pakistan (O) Philippines (O) Solomon Islands (O) Sri Lanka (O) East Timor (P,O)
Tajikistan (O) Papua New Guinea (O) Uzbekistan (O)

³ Map obtained from:

<http://library.amnesty.it/cs/childsoldiers.nsf/f30d86b5e33403a180256ae500381213/7445a2592ce7f97580256ae60024e981?OpenDocument>

CHILD SOLDIER RESEARCH AND POSTER ASSIGNMENT

Step 1: Research an African Country

You have received a map that indicates which countries around the world have child soldiers. Using the Internet, find out more about these countries and their use of child soldiers.

- ❑ In pairs you will choose a country to focus on
- ❑ You will receive a handout with a number of questions that you must answer during your research
- ❑ Once we get to the library visit the website <http://www.child-soldies.org>. Along the left-hand side of the page you will see a link to a document called Global Report 2001. This is where you will find specific information about your country.
- ❑ You should do some additional research on your country and its use of child soldiers.
- ❑ This research will provide you with the information you will need to complete the next step in this assignment

Keep in mind:

- ❑ You must complete Step 1 to be successful in Step 2
- ❑ Take advantage of the library period
- ❑ If there is something you don't understand, please ask for clarification

Step 2: Create an Educational Poster!

Using the information you have learned about a specific country and its use of child soldiers your group will create a poster. You will present your findings to your classmates through an oral presentation where you will showcase your poster. Your posters will be placed around the school to educate others on the issue of child soldiers.

Your poster should include:

- 1) Information about your country (name, location-map, population)
- 2) Pictures showing the situation (a child soldier, weapons used)

3) The information that you have collected and recorded during class

- ❑ The number of child soldiers in this country
- ❑ The kind of conflict happening here
- ❑ Description of how children are being used
- ❑ How children are being recruited
- ❑ Role of child soldiers
- ❑ What steps are being taken to eliminate child soldiers

4) Any additional information that you think is important

Remember to make your poster

- ❑ eye catching and creative
- ❑ easy to read
- ❑ informative

Your oral presentation should include all the same information that is on your poster. Consider yourself the expert on the country that you have focused on. It is your job to present this information clearly to your classmates. All members of your group must participate in the oral presentation.

Remember to:

 speak slowly, clearly and loudly

 be prepared

 make your presentation informative and interesting

 HAVE FUN!

Organizer For Child Soldiers Research

Using the Global Report 2001 answer the following questions:

Country Name?	
Population?	
Population under 18?	
Compulsory Recruitment Age?	
Voluntary Recruitment Age?	
How many child soldiers?	
Signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol?	
Overall picture of the use of child soldiers	
What kind of conflict is occurring that requires child soldiers?	

How are children recruited?	
What is the role of the child soldiers?	
What steps have been taken to eliminate child soldiers?	
Additional Information	

RESOURCES

Global Report on Child Soldiers 2001 Launch: Child Soldiers – An Overview

http://www.unicef.org.uk/aboutunicef/Policy/pdf/overview_child_soldiers.pdf

This is a very thorough article explaining the impact of soldiering on children. Detailed in its description, this article presents the harsh realities of children soldiers and the atrocities which they are forced to accept as part of their lifestyles.

Global Information Networks in Education

<http://www.ginie.org/ginie-crisis-links/childsoldiers/>

A valuable website for teachers and students, the Global Information Networks in Education provides a detailed perspective on child soldiers through case studies and personal stories.

Media Workshop

www.mediaworkshop.org/mhss/hicks

A very useful website providing teachers with activities and assignments relating to child soldiers.

War Child Canada

www.warchild.ca

Useful to both teachers and students, the War Child Canada website provides a brief overview of the conflict diamond situation.

Resources for Coltan/Conflict Diamonds

Congo and the Role of Coltan

<http://www.american.edu/TED/ice/congo-coltan.htm>

An excellent study exploring the consequences of coltan conflicts on the people and wildlife of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Diamonds and Armed Conflicts in Sierra Leone

<http://diamonds.net/news/newsitem.asp?num=4159&type=all&topic=Conflict>

An excellent article discussing the affects of illicit diamond exports on the economy of Sierra Leone

Guns, Money and Cell Phones

http://www.thestandard.com/article/0,1902,26784,00.html?body_page=1

This article examines the correlation between western consumer habits and civil warfare in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This is a very comprehensive and useful guide in helping teachers and students understand the interdependency between international communities.

Physicians for Human Rights:

http://www.phrusa.org/campaigns/sierra_leone/diam_q&a.html

This website provides comprehensive answers to FAQ's regarding conflict diamonds. It provides very useful background knowledge about the issues surrounding the diamond industry as well as the reasons why the Western world should be concerned with conflict diamonds.